

Emmer returning Monday to Mankato

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MANKATO — Republican candidate for governor Tom Emmer is planning to return to Mankato on Monday for a rally at the GOP headquarters.

It's Emmer's first visit in a while and the first since a Minnesota Public Radio poll showed Democrat Mark Dayton jumping to a sizable lead — a poll that many conservatives dispute. The same poll showed Independence Party candidate Tom Horner capturing 16 percent of the vote, enough to make both of the two big parties nervous.

The Democrats on Tuesday created a video that portrays Horner as “just another Republican,” pointing to various policy positions and statements he's put forth. And the Emmer campaign on Thursday ripped Horner for not submitting his sales tax expansion plan to the Minnesota Department of Revenue for analysis.

“As a result, Minnesotans must ask themselves, what else is Tom Horner hiding from?”

Emmer said in a statement. The Emmer event is scheduled to run from 12:30-1:30 p.m. Monday at party headquarters in Mankato Place.

A pair of House forums this week

Blue Earth County voters will have a chance to scope out their state House choices on Monday and Tuesday.

A forum at 7:15 p.m.

Tuesday for District 23B — which includes Mankato, Skyline, a small portion of lower North Mankato and the townships of Lime and Mankato — will feature Rep. Kathy Brynaert, DFL-Mankato, and challenger Dave Kruse, R-Mankato. The hour-long event is at the AmericInn on Stadium Road.

The rest of Blue Earth County is in District 24B, which also includes parts of Faribault and Waseca counties, and a forum is set for 7 p.m. Monday at the Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial High School for the three candidates in that contest.

Rep. Tony Cornish, R-Good Thunder, is being challenged by Joan Muth-Milks, DFL-Wells, and Mark Meyer, IP-Lake Crystal.

Greater Mankato Growth is sponsoring both forums, joined by the Lake Crystal school board and chamber of commerce for the District 24B event.

Absentee voters get some reassurance

Voters who have already made up their mind and cast their ballots have a new way of absentee ballot tracking through the Secretary of State's website.

Absentee voters have to

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Mapleton

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keep track of the identification number on the absentee ballot application. Using that, their name and their date of birth, the voters will be able to check online to see if their ballot has been received and has been accepted to be counted on Election Day.

If there's a problem with the ballot, voters checking the website will be informed of that and of the reason it's been rejected.

The site — www.mnvotes.org — will also announce when a replacement ballot was sent.

Secretary of State Mark Ritchie is estimating 150,000 Minnesotans will vote by absentee ballot this election, a process that started on Sept. 17.

Walz and Demmer fire away

Congressman Tim Walz is holding a media event this morning near Mapleton to showcase his endorsement by the National Rifle Association. The event will involve Walz and some fellow gun-lovers doing some shooting, and the NRA's pro-Walz radio ad will be unveiled.

One of Walz's opponents also fired some shots this week after Congress adjourned until after the election without passing a budget for 2011. The campaign of state Rep. Randy Demmer, R-Hayfield, criticized the Democratic controlled Congress for that and for failing to pass the extension of the Bush- era tax cuts, set to expire at the end of the year.

Walz and other Democrats said they were willing to pass most of the tax cuts but not those for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans.

Demmer campaign manager Jason Flohrs called the failure to extend the tax cuts "a job killer for any small business planning for growth."