



2026

**A PRACTICAL
PATH TO VICTORY**

THE CENTRAL STRATEGIC JUDGMENT

Chuck Messler can win by assembling three blocs: the dependable Republican vote, persuadable ticket-splitters in high-value swing precincts, and working-family voters who respond to competence, accountability, and a union ironworker—not another officeholder moving through the county courthouse rotation.

STRUCTURE. DISCIPLINE. TRANSPARENCY.

THE RACE AND THE OPENING

Chuck faces Gina Pimentel, the current Lake County Recorder, after incumbent Auditor Peggy Katona lost the Democratic primary. The contest therefore offers a clean choice: continue the courthouse succession system in which established Democratic officials rotate among offices, or elect a working, union ironworker with no political baggage and a specific plan to rebuild financial controls. The contrast should be firm and documented, never personal: this is about whether public office belongs to officeholders or taxpayers.

The campaign begins with less than \$1,500 cash on hand, but with unusually strong nonfinancial assets: a professional volunteer campaign manager, 20–25 weekly volunteers, voter-file and texting access, 2,500 email contacts, 1,500+ texting contacts, 10,000+ cross-platform followers, strong organic reach, an existing donor list, and a county party fundraiser whose venue and food expenses are covered up to \$2,000.

WHAT THE DATA SAYS

Evidence	Finding	Strategic Meaning
County Baseline	370,466 registered; 212,198 turnout in the supplied precinct analysis	A countywide paid-media approach is unaffordable; targeting is mandatory.
Republican Performance	Average modeled Republican vote: 69,812 (40.23%)	The base alone is insufficient. Chuck must outperform normal down-ballot Republicans.
Ticket Splitters	42,763 modeled voters (24.65%)	This is the decisive persuasion pool for a competent, nontraditional Republican.
Top 25 field precincts	37,917 registered; 24,692 2024 voters	22 of 25 are core swing precincts—candidate contact belongs here.
Top 50 mail precincts	72,079 registered; 46,418 2024 voters	Mail should be household-targeted within these precincts, not blanket-mailed.
Top 100 digital precincts	120,278 registered; 77,062 2024 voters	Digital can efficiently cover persuasion, margin reduction, and reinforcement.



VICTORY STANDARD



The operational goal is not to win every municipality. It is to maximize the Republican base in the south and southwest, win or closely contest the swing corridor, and reduce the Democratic margin in selected northern precincts. The campaign should manage to a working target of approximately 95,000–105,000 votes, then update that target when the 2026 voter file, absentee activity, and comparable countywide turnout become available. Every expenditure must either identify, persuade, or turn out a voter inside that coalition.

1. THE VOTE-GETTING PLAN

THREE DISTINCT VOTER UNIVERSES

Universe	Primary Objective	Message and Tactic
Base turnout	Bank dependable Republicans early and prevent down-ballot drop-off.	"Vote the whole ticket." Early-vote chase, doors, texts, signs, and volunteer recruitment.
Core swing persuasion	Win voters who split tickets and value competence over party habit.	Biography + reform: ironworker discipline, internal controls, monthly reconciliation, transparency. Candidate doors and two-touch mail.
Loss mitigation	Identify Republicans and persuadable working families in Democratic territory; reduce the margin.	Low-cost digital, union/community validators, targeted texts, and event presence—not expensive blanket canvassing.

FIELD DEPLOYMENT

Candidate time should follow the supplied Top 25 Field list. Those precincts contain 24,692 recent voters and are overwhelmingly persuasion targets. The heaviest clusters are Highland (6 precincts), Schererville (5), Hobart (4), followed by Crown Point and Griffith. Priority launch sequence: CP 19, CP 31, MER 12, SCH 17, SCH 16, HO 04, HO 22, SCH 10, HO 11, then HL 04/10/26/23. WT 10 and SJ 12 are high-volume base-turnout exceptions.



Do not treat a literature drop as a completed contact. Recycle not-homes by phone, text, digital retargeting, or a second walk.



Weekend standard: two coordinated walk locations, 20–25 volunteers, 2.5–3 hours, with Chuck rotating through the highest-value turf.



Candidate goal: 150–200 quality doors per weekend; **team goal:** 1,000–1,500 attempts weekly once Advantage is active.



Every contact receives one recorded result: support, undecided, opposed, not home, issue, volunteer, sign, or early-vote commitment.



Use persuasion scripts through mid-October. Shift supporters to absentee/early-vote chase and Election Day planning after identification.

COMMUNITY AND COALITION STRATEGY

Chuck's working-class biography is the bridge across party lines. Union halls should be used for listening and personal introductions, not a parade of endorsement logos. Attendance at the Lowell Labor Day Parade and East Chicago Mexican Independence Day Parade demonstrates countywide respect and gives the campaign culturally and geographically different content. Attend Republican events when useful, but do not allow the schedule to become an echo chamber of people already voting Republican.

Weekly Minimum	Measure
Candidate Contact	150–200 doors; 6 hours of commute calls; 5–6 hours of public events
Volunteer Program	One training touch, one weekend deployment, one recognition/update message
Community Reach	At least one union, civic, ethnic, veterans, taxpayer, or neighborhood engagement
Data Discipline	All contacts entered within 24 hours; Monday dashboard by precinct and universe

THE CONTRAST

The contrast line is: "Lake County does not need another officeholder changing chairs; it needs an Auditor prepared to change the system." Support that claim with public records, office histories, and documented control failures. Avoid the phrase "merry-go-round" in formal materials unless accompanied by a factual office-by-office timeline. Never imply criminal conduct without evidence. The campaign's strongest contrast is structural: career courthouse continuity versus accountable operational reform.

2. FUNDRAISING, MAIL, AND DIGITAL

The campaign must raise quickly because nearly every persuasion tactic requires cash before voters begin paying attention. The \$60,000 goal is credible but demands disciplined call time. The first objective is \$15,000 by August 15, followed by \$30,000 cumulative by September 15, \$45,000 by October 1, and the full \$60,000 by October 20. The party-sponsored fundraiser should be scheduled within three weeks and treated as the launch of a continuing finance program—not the entire program.

CANDIDATE CALL TIME

- \$30,000
- 5–6+ hours weekly; segmented list; 3 asks and 2 follow-ups per prospect.

PARTY-HOSTED FUNDRAISER

- \$12,000
- Target 100–150 attendees; host committee; sponsor levels; expenses covered up to \$2,000.

UNION/BUSINESS OUTREACH

- \$10,000
- Personal meetings and written case for competence; accept support selectively.

EMAIL/TEXT/ONLINE

- \$5,000
- Two finance emails monthly, deadline drives, video asks, recurring option.

SMALL EVENTS/GRASSROOTS

- \$3,000
- House parties and community asks with low overhead.



RECOMMENDED \$60,000 BUDGET

Program	Amount	Purpose
Targeted mail	\$30,000	Two household-targeted touches; approximately 16,500 pieces total per drop at ~\$0.90.
Digital advertising	\$8,000	Video reach, geofenced persuasion, retargeting, and late GOTV.
Field/printing/signs	\$6,000	Walk cards, signs, volunteer supplies, event materials.
Data/text/phones	\$3,000	Advantage access, texting, list work, and contact tools.
Events/community	\$3,000	Non-covered events, parade needs, room materials, and follow-up.
Fundraising/admin/compliance	\$3,000	Processing, postage, donor materials, reporting, and banking.
Election/GOTV reserve	\$4,000	Poll visibility, rides, food, replacement materials, rapid response.
Contingency	\$3,000	Optional third-mail seed or unplanned opportunity.

MAIL STRATEGY

At \$0.90 each, a two-piece universe of 16,500 households costs about \$29,700. The voter file, not total precinct registration, must define the final household universe. **Piece 1 (mailbox arrival September 28–October 3)** introduces Chuck: union ironworker, family man, and reform candidate. **Piece 2 (arrival October 19–24)** makes the choice: documented courthouse continuity versus stronger controls and honest numbers, with early-vote and Election Day information. A **third piece is authorized** only if the campaign exceeds \$75,000 or a partner funds a coordinated communication; it should be a concise GOTV/validator card to identified supporters and high-propensity ticket splitters.



DIGITAL STRATEGY

July–August

organic-first education: what the Auditor does, why controls matter, and Chuck’s jobsite-to-ledger biography.

September

paid video in the Top 100 digital precincts; build 25%, 50%, and 95% viewer audiences and website retargeting pools.

October

synchronize ads with mail. Serve biography to cold audiences, reform/contrast to engaged voters, and voting information to supporters.

Content cadence: 4–5 Facebook posts, 2 short vertical videos, 1 longer explanatory video or live segment, 1 email, and 2–3 story updates weekly.

Measure cost per completed view, landing-page visit, email/text acquisition, and supporter identification—not likes alone.



3. WEEK-BY-WEEK EXECUTION CALENDAR

Week	Primary Objective	Required Deliverables
Jul 13–19	Build the machine	Set finance targets; scrub donor list; reserve fundraiser date; obtain Advantage; assign Top 25 turf; record 3 evergreen videos.
Jul 20–26	Launch fundraising	Begin daily call blocks; recruit host committee; open sponsor sales; volunteer orientation; first swing-precinct walk.
Jul 27–Aug 2	Prove activity	Second walk launch; union-hall outreach; publish “What the Auditor does”; begin weekly KPI report.
Aug 3–9	Fundraiser conversion	Finalize program, table hosts, pledge cards, QR/text giving; candidate personally confirms priority guests.
Aug 10–16	Fundraiser + follow-up	Hold event; 48-hour thank-you/pledge chase; announce momentum; reach \$15,000 cumulative goal.
Aug 17–23	Expand persuasion	Walk Schererville/Hobart/Highland clusters; ticket-splitter phone program; collect two community testimonials.

3. WEEK-BY-WEEK EXECUTION CALENDAR

Week	Primary Objective	Required Deliverables
Aug 24–30	Message testing	Test biography vs. controls video; finalize mail universe assumptions; price printer and postage; recruit parade team.
Aug 31–Sep 6	Labor Day visibility	Lowell Labor Day Parade; labor/working-family content series; donor deadline push; complete first 5,000 identified contacts.
Sep 7–13	Countywide credibility	Northern-county event/union outreach; approve Mail 1 creative; launch paid video; volunteer phone-bank test.
Sep 14–20	East Chicago presence	Mexican Independence Day Parade; culturally respectful community content; reach \$30,000; submit Mail 1 data/print.
Sep 21–27	Persuasion surge	Candidate doors in CP/SCH/HO/HL; Mail 1 production; retarget video viewers; secure earned-media pitch.
Sep 28–Oct 4	Mail 1 lands	Reinforce biography mail with video, email, doors, and texts; survey recognition; lock Mail 2 contrast language.

3. WEEK-BY-WEEK EXECUTION CALENDAR

Week	Primary Objective	Required Deliverables
Oct 5–11	Voting begins	Early-vote education; supporter chase lists; reach \$45,000; finalize Election Day volunteer and visibility plan.
Oct 12–18	Bank votes	Daily supporter contact; Mail 2 production; community validators; targeted contrast; reallocate ads by engagement.
Oct 19–25	Mail 2 + GOTV	Mail 2 lands; full text/phone/door chase; publish voting locations/hours; decide on any third-piece micro-universe.
Oct 26–Nov 1	Close the race	Daily GOTV dashboard; second/third supporter touches; rides and poll coverage; rapid response; final fundraising for GOTV.
Nov 2–3	Turnout operation	Chase remaining supporters by vote status; Election Day shifts, rides, signs, legal escalation contacts, and results reporting.

WEEKLY OPERATING RHYTHM

Day	Campaign Discipline
Monday	Review dashboard, fundraising, voter contacts, schedule, and content; cut new lists.
Tuesday–Thursday	Commute donor/target calls; events; content recording; volunteer confirmation.
Friday	Finalize turf, scripts, supplies, and weekend attendance; publish volunteer reminder.
Saturday–Sunday	Candidate doors, coordinated canvass, public events, data entry, thank-yous, and next-week recruitment.

4. MANAGEMENT, METRICS, AND THE DONOR CASE

CAMPAIGN DASHBOARD

Metric	Weekly Standard by September	Why It Matters
Funds raised / cash available	\$3,500–\$5,000 raised; obligations and reserves visible	Prevents late mail and digital cancellations.
Donor calls	75–100 attempts; asks and follow-ups tracked separately	The \$60,000 plan depends on candidate-led finance.
Doors	1,000–1,500 attempts; 150–200 candidate quality doors	Concentrates the campaign's strongest messenger in swing turf.
Phones/texts	1,500+ combined attempts, increasing in October	Recycles not-homes and produces supporter IDs.
Supporter IDs	Cumulative target and precinct distribution reported	Turns activity into a measurable turnout universe.
Digital	Reach, completed views, frequency, clicks, sign-ups	Guards against mistaking vanity engagement for persuasion.
Volunteer health	Active volunteers, shifts filled, return rate	20–25 dependable workers are a major competitive advantage.

DECISION RULES

- Protect mail money. Once a piece is contracted, do not raid it for signs, events, or low-value merchandise.
- If fundraising is below \$30,000 on September 15, narrow the mail universe before cutting both pieces; repetition matters more than one broad touch.
- If fundraising exceeds \$75,000, first expand digital frequency and the household mail universe; then consider a third targeted piece.
- If it approaches \$120,000, add professional polling/message research, a third mail piece, broader northern loss-mitigation, expanded text/phone capacity, and a larger GOTV reserve.
- Move field resources based on supporter yield, persuasion conversations, and early-vote performance—not volunteer preference or political familiarity.
- All opponent contrast must pass a documentation check and a “does this help a persuadable voter choose Chuck?” test.



RULES

THE FORWARD-FACING CASE FOR INVESTMENT

WHY THIS RACE IS WINNABLE

The campaign is not asking donors to finance an unfocused countywide advertising experiment. It has a recent precinct model, defined field/mail/digital universes, a candidate capable of crossing normal party lines, professional volunteer management, and a 20–25 person weekly field capacity. Contributions will purchase repeated contact with the voters most likely to decide the Auditor's race.



STRUCTURE. DISCIPLINE. TRANSPARENCY.

THANK YOU

If you would like to join this movement to rebuild the Auditor's Office from the ground up, scan the code below to connect or donate.



SCAN
ME!



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