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Forum organizers say all governor candidates invited to Bemidji event, but only DFLers will attend

By Joe Kimball | Published Thu, Jan 14 2010 2:27 pm

Organizers of a gubernatorial forum tonight in Bemidji say all candidates were invited to participate, but only DFLers are expected to attend.

The forum is billed as a nonpartisan forum on American Indian issues, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the American Indian Resource Center on the Bemidji State campus.

“All the candidates — both Democratic and Republican — were invited on Dec. 17 by phone,” Greta Bergstrom, communications director for TakeAction Minnesota, one of the forum organizers, told the [Bemidji Pioneer](#).

A flap arose Monday when the local campaign coordinator for Republican candidate Rep. Marty Seifert questioned the non-partisan status of the event with all 10 DFL candidates confirmed to attend and no Republicans.

But Bergstrom said the Republicans got calls, too, and one, Tom Emmer, responded that he had a previous engagement. “We never heard back from any of the other (Republican) candidates,” she said.

Scheduled to attend are: Minnesota House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Sen. Tom Bakk, former U.S. Sen. Mark Dayton, former House Minority Leader Matt Entenza, former Sen. Steve Kelley, Sen. John Marty, Rep. Tom Rukavina, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak and Rep. Paul Thissen.

Another DFL candidate, Ramsey County Attorney Susan Gaertner, has canceled her appearance.

Bergstrom did tell the paper that perhaps a follow-up call or letter could have been sent to the Republicans. And the papers notes that there will be a Republican-candidate-only forum in Bemidji on Jan. 26, also at BSU.