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Ill. candidates want voters as Facebook friends

Associated Press

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SPRINGFIELD, Ill.

Want to know what type of leftover pizza a GOP candidate for state treasurer is eating for breakfast? Try Twitter.

Following the lead of President Barack Obama's successful straight-to-voters Web campaign, many Illinois candidates for statewide offices are hoping voters will follow their tweets and friend them on Facebook.

State political candidates have collected donations via Web sites for years, but now one site isn't enough. Social networking means staking claims on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and YouTube.

Take Democrat Dan Hynes. The candidate for governor tweets about football and campaign stops. He has a Facebook page and a YouTube video.

And GOP treasurer candidate Dan Rutherford posts casserole recipes on his Web site. His breakfast on Nov. 14? He tweeted it was "OJ & leftover pizza: Giordano's stuffed spinach & sausage and Pontiac Mario's sausage & mushroom."

Hynes' and Rutherford's online outreach is typical of how e-campaigning is expanding for both Democrats and Republicans.

A consultant for Republican governor candidate Jim Ryan says the Web is at the forefront of Ryan's campaign.

"We've managed to get our fingers into every single part," said Curt Mercadante, who is helping Ryan on the Web.

Michael Cheney, a senior fellow at the Institute of Government and Politics at the University of Illinois, said candidates want to be like Obama, taking their message directly to voters. He expects the campaigns to do even more online as the Feb. 2 primary gets closer.

For now, the candidates are online "largely because they want to make sure they have everything in play that they want to have in play," Cheney said.

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Gov. Pat Quinn's campaign in on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. But posting can be time-consuming.

"As you can imagine, Gov. Quinn doesn't have much time for Facebook updates and tweets, so we have a new media team focused on online outreach," Quinn spokeswoman Elizabeth Austin said.

GOP candidate for governor Dan Proft said his goal on Twitter and other sites is "to provide value-added content of a policy nature."

But he's not above an occasional movie review. He recently commented on Twitter that people shouldn't bother seeing the movie "Paranormal Activity":

"Not just with policy ideas I save taxpayers' money. Save the \$10 I spent (on the movie) ..." he tweeted on Nov. 15.

On the Net:

Candidates on Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/danhynes>

<http://twitter.com/QuinnForIl>

<http://twitter.com/KirkDillard>

<http://twitter.com/Bill>(underscore)Brady

<http://twitter.com/jimryan2010>

<http://twitter.com/andy>(underscore)mckenna

<http://twitter.com/adamforillinois>

<http://twitter.com/bob4illinois>

<http://twitter.com/danproft>

<http://twitter.com/Giannoulis>

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