

Dan Caplis

Popular drive-time radio talk show host who has been itching to run for office himself. His phone lines are regularly clogged with calls from the top political figures in the state.

Tamra Ward

As senior vice president of public affairs and communications for the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, she wields significant influence inside the Capitol and among those who aspire to get there.

Chris Howes

Political consultant who represents the Colorado Retail Council.

Tony Gagliardi

Runs Colorado chapter of the National Federation of Independent Business. His endorsement is a must-have for Republican candidates.

Marc Massey

Worked on Ryan Frazier's losing 2010 congressional campaign and coordinated 2008 McCain volunteer efforts in Colorado. Seen as a bright, fresh voice despite recent losses.

Mike Beasley

Former Owens staffer, now a lobbyist with unmatched political acumen. Doesn't do day-to-day campaign work, but candidates who don't seek out or listen to his advice suffer at their own peril.

Todd Shepherd

Award-winning reporter who moved to the Independence Institute, where he ferrets out government fraud and waste. Has created Complete Colorado, a state-level version of the Drudge Report that has become a daily must-read for anyone interested in politics.

Stephanie Cegielski

Runs Colorado Government Accountability Project that's designed to ensure (largely Democratic) public official compliance with Colorado law. Makes highly charged comments and accusations during campaign season.

Sandra Solin

Runs Capitol Solutions, a lobbying firm with ties to major business interests in the state. Served as spokesperson for group during last election trying to make "card check," a labor-backed means of simplifying unionization, a prominent issue among voters. Former Owens staffer.

Rich Beeson

Has worked on Colorado, national and international campaigns for last two decades. Involved in much of the 527 and 501(c)(4) activity on the right during the last cycle. Served as Republican National Committee political director during 2008 cycle. Reportedly named political director of the as-yet-undeclared 2012 Mitt Romney presidential campaign.

Kent Lambert

Republican state senator who makes no apologies for his overtly conservative views. Plans to sponsor Arizona-like illegal immigration legislation despite worries from some in his own party that it will further alienate moderates.

Scott Gessler

Longtime Republican campaign lawyer rode the party's wave to the secretary of state's office last fall. Will now oversee elections statewide with an increased amount of scrutiny due to his overtly partisan past.

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