

One's a contender, one considers it

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Others may be waiting for a perfect alignment of political moons, but not Ellen Sauerbrey. She's running now.

The Baltimore County Republican has a billboard posted along U.S. 50 on the way to the Shore proclaiming her candidacy for governor. She hired an airplane to tow an "Ellen Sauerbrey for Governor" banner over Ocean City during the Fourth of July weekend.

She and her aides telephoned 700 supporters in Baltimore County recently to measure potential financial and volunteer support. Twenty-two percent said they would contribute.

She opened a headquarters on York Road "to get the campaign out of my kitchen." She has a campaign manager, Richard "Monti" Montalto. She has a newsletter and palm cards to hand out with biographical and issue material.

She debated on radio with William S. Shepard, her party's last gubernatorial nominee. Mr. Shepard pointedly thanked Mrs. Sauerbrey for co-chairing his 1990 campaign.

Now, she has her own race.

All of this with 14 months to go before the Sept. 13, 1994, primary.

She hopes her decisiveness, communicated by resourceful and low-cost efforts to get her name more widely known, will strike a chord with voters who want a leader.

"People are tired of the good-old-boy, insider, tax-and-spend variety of politics," she says.

Mrs. Sauerbrey, 55, says she is running not because she's frustrated as minority leader in the House of Delegates. Increasingly,

the small but growing number of Republican votes she controls has had an impact on budget-making — the governmental function where most of the important decisions are made.

But after four terms in Annapolis, she is ready for power.

"I want the authority to set priorities that are important for the state, to exert fiscal discipline through the budget. We ought to manage the state's finances with-

out making it harder for citizens to manage their finances," she says.

While others try to have all the financial support and positive poll results securely in hand, Mrs. Sauerbrey moves ahead, confident that her appeal will draw the support she needs. In the meantime, she tries to make a virtue of her commitment.

Mrs. Sauerbrey says her focus is on her own potential and not on possible opponents.

"Anyone who is approaching anything intelligently has to evaluate along the way whether things are coming together as you expect and hope," Mrs. Sauerbrey says. "But so long as the campaign is moving well and people are coming forward and volunteering and the hope of raising money is there, I'm in."

Is the doctor in, too?

Dark horse Dr. Neil Solomon continues to examine what his committee calls "the political landscape." To see if he is "viable" as a Democratic candidate for governor, the doctor and his friends are getting second, third and fourth opinions.

Various political consultants have been engaged, according to Paul Walter, chairman of the committee.

Dr. Solomon, 61, heads Maryland's AIDS and anti-drug abuse

task forces, and has been an adviser to Gov. William Donald Schaefer on reform of the health care system.

Mr. Schaefer is now among those who are encouraging him to explore a race for governor.

Other "Friends of Neil Solomon" include Allan C. Alperstein, an accountant who is campaign treasurer; Dr. Thomas Ducker, an Annapolis neurosurgeon; David Finkelstein, a Columbia food broker, and his partner, wealthy businessman John Kluge; and Hank Greenwald, a retired construction company owner.

For fund-raising and research, the committee has hired Cunningham, Plant & Associates of Charleston, W.Va.

For polling and research, the committee has taken on Bennett, Petts & Associates of Washington.

"BPA's partners earned their reputations working in exceptionally difficult and demanding campaigns," according to a news release from "Friends of Neil Solomon."

The committee has hired a general consultant, Ken Smukler of The Scismuk Group in Bala Cynwyd, Pa.

"Mr. Smukler has established a reputation of successfully handling campaigns which begin with little or no chance of victory," the news release states.

Sounds like the right man for the job.