

U.S. House candidates hit hot spots in county

By Mark Lewis

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Vermont might not be big enough for both Bernard Sanders and John Carroll, but Chittenden County apparently is. The U.S. House candidates blitzed the vote-rich county by land and by radio airwaves Thursday, but never crossed paths.

Only five days before the election and with the race considered tight, both campaigns were shifting into overdrive.

Sanders, the independent incumbent, began his day with a Dunkin' Donuts coffee and an earful of aggressive questions from WKDR listeners.

"Bernie, I hear that you don't support American troops," one said.

"That's one of the NRA lines, and it's an absolute lie," responded Sanders, already hoarse at 9 a.m. He was referring to a National Rifle Association radio ad attacking him.

Later that morning Patty Sheerin, a POW/MIA activist, recorded a rebuttal radio ad for Sanders, praising his work to help veterans.

Carroll, meanwhile, was holding forth at a news conference at Halvorson's restaurant on Church Street.

While Burlington Mayor Peter Brownell and local business owners looked on approvingly, the Republican nominee attacked Sanders as a "liberal fringe" candidate.

"You can't be for jobs and against business," Carroll said. "It's time for a change."

By then it was midmorning, and Sanders was visiting with senior citizens at Three Cathedral Square, talking about protecting Social Security.

Then it was on to the University of Vermont for a rally with Vermont House candidates Dean Corren and David Zuckerman.

Sanders looked professorial standing on the steps of the Bil-

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lings Student Center, urging students to get involved in environmental activism and "the fight for social justice."

Carroll walked up those same steps a few hours later, after a quick visit to the Winooski Senior Center.

At UVM he encountered another senior, Helen Simino.

"I heard you were against Social Security or something," she said.

Not so, Carroll said, explaining his idea to help reduce federal spending by lowering benefits for seniors with incomes more than \$70,000.

"That's a good idea," said Simino, mollified.

Carroll later fielded some skeptical questions from Sanders supporters, who are numerous at UVM. He clearly relished the idea of invading what many would consider Sanders' political home territory.

"It's very energizing," Carroll said later. "It's probably like it is for Bernie when he goes to Rotary."

And indeed, Sanders at about the same time was receiving similarly skeptical questions from Colchester Rotary Club members, and handling them with equal aplomb.

"I will fight to raise taxes on the very wealthy," he told the business-oriented crowd.

Sanders then headed to Rutland. There he told journalists that congressional Democrats recently indicated that if re-elected, Sanders likely would chair the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee.

Carroll ended his day in Colchester meeting with small business owners and holding a fund-raising event.