

KUTV: Utahns Contribute Heavily To Mit

Top News

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Utahns Contribute Heavily To Mitt Romn

SALT LAKE CITY Utahns have contributed nearly half of the funds being raised by Massachusetts Gov possible bid for the Republican presidential nomination in 2008, the Deseret Morning News reported :

Records from political action committees in four states and federal campaign disclosures show Utah c than \$1.6 million in contributions, the newspaper said in a copyright story.

Most of the \$732,500 – all of it from 50 Uthans – is being spent to support Republican campaigns an

Only Utah consultants Kirk Jowers and Max Farbman are seeing any Romney funds.

Jowers heads the University of Utah's Hinckley Institute of Politics and is general counsel for the Rom Farbman, formerly raised money for Gov. Jon Huntsman's PACs.

It should be no surprise that Romney would return to Utah to raise money in Utah, Jowers said.

``The people he knew from the Olympics are kind of obvious to initially help him with his causes," h

The bulk of the Utah money raised came from a single Salt Lake City fundraiser in March. Another ev fundraiser is slated for Logan on Monday.

Tickets for the events can run as high as \$1,000 per couple for dinner, \$2,000 per couple for a ``VIP couple for a ``private photo reception" with Romney, according to information from an invitation for been planned for Monday.

On the list of contributors giving at least \$3,000 are former Jazz star Karl Malone, Deseret Book CEO

developer John Price, billionaire businessman James Sorenson and Holladay Mayor Dennis Webb.

Utah billionaire philanthropist Jon Huntsman Sr., father of Utah's governor, is the largest single contributor, recent disclosure records show.

Other large Utah donors include Blake Roney, the head of NuSkin, and Kem Gardner, a developer for Romney friend. Family members of Huntsman, Gardner and others also donated, but not Utah's governor.

Romney's term as Massachusetts governor ends in January. He has not declared his political intentions, but has run PACs in key presidential primary states since 2004.

Credited with rescuing the scandal-scarred Salt Lake Olympics, Romney, who is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is very popular in Mormon-dominated Utah.

Political experts say Romney's campaign efforts here don't appear to be affecting contributions to local candidates, but adding to the party's contributor lists, said Jeff Hartley, executive director of the Utah Republican Party.

"He's in such a different class as a candidate than anybody else. Mitt Romney is a rock star when it comes to raising money," Hartley said. "He's pulling money from people who are not political donors."

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