

The Battle For The Undecided

Republican Candidates Continue To Work For More Votes In Iowa

BY THOMAS BEAUMONT
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — With time running short, Republican presidential candidates Rick Santorum, Rick Perry and Newt Gingrich battled Thursday to win over a pivotal crop of undecided conservative voters. Of all the candidates, only Mitt Romney seemed to largely escape attack as he worked to win a state that long seemed out of reach until this week.

"Don't settle for what's not good enough to save the country," the newly ascendant Santorum implored Iowans at city hall in Coralville, urging voters to put conservative principles above everything else and suggesting that his rivals, and specifically Ron Paul, lacked them.

For the first time, though, the former Pennsylvania senator became a target.

"When he talks about fiscal conservatism, every now and then it leaves me scratching my head because he was a prolific earmarker," Perry, the Texas governor, said of Santorum as the day began, referring to special spending projects members of Congress seek. "He loaded up his bill with Pennsylvania pork."

Santorum defended the practice as part of lawmakers' constitutional role as appropriators, telling CNBC that he owed it to Pennsylvanians to bring money to the state. He said earmarking became abused and that he would support a ban on them if he were president.

Perry also slapped at Santorum in a radio ad and in a new TV commercial that lumps him in with Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Paul and says: "The fox guarding the henhouse is like asking a congressman to fix Washington: bad idea."

The maneuvering underscored the fluid — if not convoluted — state of the GOP presidential race as Tuesday's caucuses loom while cultural conservatives and evangelical Republicans, who make up the base of the electorate here, continue to be divided. That lack of unity paves the way for someone who is seen as less consistently conservative.

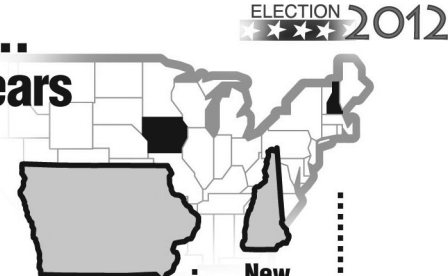
Five days out, public and private polling show Romney and Paul in strong contention to win the caucuses, with coalitions of support cobbled together from across the Republican political spectrum and their get-out-the-vote operations — beefed up from their failed 2008 bids — at the ready. They're the only two with the money and the organizations necessary to ensure big turnouts on Tuesday.

Three others — Santorum, Perry and Gingrich — will have to rely largely on momentum to carry supporters to precinct caucuses. Each was working to convince fickle conservatives that he alone would satisfy those who yearn for a nominee who would adhere strictly to GOP orthodoxy.

Bachmann, meanwhile, worked to convince backers that her cash-strapped campaign was not in disarray after a top supporter in Iowa abandoned her to back Paul.

They're big ... every four years

New Hampshire and Iowa influence the start of the presidential race every four years, but they differ demographically from the nation as a whole.



Data for 2010 unless otherwise indicated	Iowa	New Hampshire	U.S.
Population	3.0 mil.	1.3 mil.	309 mil.
Population percent chg. '00-'10	4.1%	6.5%	9.7%
White	91.3%	93.9%	72.4%
Black	2.9%	1.1%	12.6%
Hispanic	5.0%	2.8%	16.3%
College degree or higher, 2005-09	24.2%	32.4%	27.5%
Unemployment, Nov. 2011	5.7%	5.2%	8.6%
Median household income, 2009	\$48,065	\$60,734	\$50,221
Homeownership, 2005-09	72.9%	73%	66.9%
Poverty, 2009	11.8%	8.6%	14.3%

Source: U.S. Census, Almanac of American Politics © 2011 MCT

Ad War: Late Starting But Nasty

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — At least \$12.5 million and counting has blanketed the airwaves ahead of next Tuesday's Republican presidential caucuses, with hard-hitting commercials awash in ghoulish images and startling claims. Most are coming from a proliferation of new independent groups aligned with the candidates.

To hear the ads tell it, Newt Gingrich is a "serial hypocrite," Rick Perry a "double dips" as governor and the "liberal Republican establishment" is plotting to anoint Mitt Romney as the party's presidential nominee. The attacks, the bulk of the commercials on the air, reflected the volatile state of the race five days before the first votes of the GOP presidential nominating contest.

After a slow start, the ads in Iowa are coming on fast and furious. On Thursday alone, at least five

new commercials were rolled out, including one by Perry castigating his rivals as Washington insiders and saying: "The fox guarding the henhouse is like asking a congressman to fix Washington: bad idea." An outside group aligned with Romney, Restore Our Future, rolled out a new spot that criticizes Gingrich and asks: "Haven't we had enough mistakes?"

In the final days of the Iowa campaign, most of the ads are deeply negative, thanks in large part to the proliferation of outside groups, known as super PACs, that are doing the dirty work for candidates they support. Gingrich has been the biggest target, withering under attacks from Ron Paul and Rick Perry's campaign as well as from several outside groups like the one aligned with Romney. Polls show that Gingrich's standing in Iowa has slid accordingly.

For Iran, Cost Of Closing Strait May Outweigh Gain

BY LEE KEATH
Associated Press

CAIRO — With missile batteries, fleets of attack boats and stocks of military hardware, Iran can disrupt traffic through the Strait of Hormuz but probably cannot completely shut down the world's most important oil route, military analysts say. The question for Iran's leadership is whether it is worth the heavy price.

Trying to close the strait would bring down a powerful military response on Iran's head from U.S. forces in the Gulf and turn Tehran's few remaining international allies against it.

That Iran is making such dire threats at all illustrates its alarm over new sanctions planned by the U.S. that will target oil exports — the most vital source of revenue for its economy. Iran's leaders shrugged off years of past sanctions by the U.S. and United Nations, mocking them as ineffective. But if it cannot sell its oil, its already-suffering economy will be sent into a tailspin.

"It would be very, very difficult for Iran even to impede traffic for a significant period of time," said Jonathan Rue, a senior research analyst at the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War. "They don't have the ability to effectively block the strait."

What the Iranians can do, Rue and other analysts say, is harass traffic through the Gulf — anything from stopping tankers to outright at-

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JONATHAN RUE

tacks. The goal would be to panic markets, drive up shipping insurance rates and spark a rise in world oil prices enough to pressure the United States to back down on sanctions.

The strait would seem to be an easy target, a bottleneck only about 30 miles (50 kilometers) across at its narrowest point between Iran and Oman.

Tankers carrying one-sixth of the world's oil supply pass through it, from the fields of petrogiants Iran and its Gulf Arab neighbors, exiting the Persian Gulf into the Arabian Sea and on to market. They move through two-mile-wide shipping lanes, one entering the Gulf, one exiting.

In recent years, Iran has dramatically ramped up its navy, increasing its arsenal of fast-attack ships, anti-ship missiles and mine-laying vessels. Its elite Revolutionary Guards boasts the most powerful naval forces, with approximately 20,000 men, with at least 10 missile

patrol boats boasting C-802 missiles with a range of 70 miles (120 kilometers) and a large number of smaller patrol boats with rocket launchers and heavy machine guns, according to a recent report by Anthony Cordesman at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The navy has three submarines and an unknown number of midget subs, capable of firing "smart" torpedoes or laying mines. It also has a large scale capability for laying mines using both small craft and commercial boats, according to the report.

The Revolutionary Guard has also deployed a heavy array of anti-ship Seersucker missiles with a range of up to 60 miles (100 kilometers) along its coast overlooking the strait, on mobile platforms that make them harder to hit.

The Guard's naval forces and the regular navy "have been the most favored service. The Iranian air force and ground forces have not seen the same level of attention in domestic procurement and weapons systems," Rue said. "They realize their navies are the best options for inflicting casualties" on the U.S. or Arab Gulf nations.

Still, those forces would not likely be enough to outright seal the strait, given the presence of the U.S. 5th Fleet based in the Gulf nation of Bahrain. On Wednesday, Pentagon spokesman George Little warned that any "interference with the transit or passage of vessels through the Strait of Hormuz will not be tolerated."

NYC Mayor Says Work On 9/11 Museum Has Stalled

BY DAVID B. CARUSO
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Work on a planned museum at the World Trade Center has ground to a halt because of a financial dispute, and there is now no possibility it will open on time next year, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg said Thursday.

The underground museum commemorating victims of the 9/11 attacks was scheduled to open in September on the 11th anniversary of the disaster, a year after the opening of a memorial at the site that has already drawn 1 million visitors.

But in recent months, the National September 11 Memorial & Museum foundation has been fighting with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey over who is responsible for paying millions of dollars in infrastructure costs related

to the project. The Port Authority, which owned the trade center and is building the museum, claims that the foundation owes it \$300 million. The foundation claims that the authority actually owes it \$140 million, because of delays in the project.

The dispute has been simmering for some time, and some details of the work slowdown were reported in November, but Thursday marked the first time that the mayor and other officials have acknowledged that the fight would mean the museum will not open in 2012.

"There is no chance of it being open on time. Work has basically stopped," Bloomberg said. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said on a recent radio program that the Port Authority was "on the verge" of suing the foundation, but both the mayor and the Port Authority said Thursday that negotiations over the matter continue.

"I'm sure we are going to work something out with the Port Authority," Bloomberg said. "They've got a difficult budget situation. I'm sympathetic to that."

Despite security hurdles and ongoing construction, tourists from

around the world have already made the memorial at the site a regular stop on their visits to New York City. Since it opened to the public Sept. 12, more than 1 million people have visited the memorial plaza, officials said.

Monitors Re-Energize Syrian Protests

HOMS, Syria (AP) — The presence of Arab League monitors in Syria has re-energized the anti-government protest movement, with tens of thousands turning out over the past three days in cities and neighborhoods where the observers are expected to visit. The huge rallies have been met by lethal gunfire from security forces apparently worried about multiple mass sit-ins modeled after Cairo's Tahrir Square.

On Thursday, security forces opened fire on tens of thousands protesting outside a mosque in a Damascus suburb and killed at least four. The crowd had gathered at the mosque near to a municipal building where cars of the monitors had been spotted outside.

Troops fired live ammunition and tear gas to disperse large protests in several areas of the country, including central Damascus, killing at least 26 people nationwide, activists said. A key activist network, the Local Coordination Committees, said it has documented the names of 130 people, including six children, who died since the Arab League monitors arrived in Syria Monday night.

The ongoing violence, and new questions about the human rights record of the head of the Arab League monitors, are reinforcing the opposition's view that Syria's limited cooperation with the observers is nothing more than a farce for President Bashar Assad's regime to buy time and forestall more international condemnation and sanctions.

Still, the presence of outside monitors has invigorated frustrated protesters and motivated them to take to the streets again in large numbers after months of demonstrations met by bullets had dashed their hopes of peaceful change.

Vt. Reopens Highway Destroyed By Irene

STOCKBRIDGE, Vt. (AP) — After hundreds of thousands of tons of rock were hauled out and tens of thousands of man-hours were spent, Vermont celebrated the completion of the biggest single engineering challenge following the flooding from the remnants of Hurricane Irene.

Just in time for the new year, and four months after the storm hit, Route 107 between Bethel and Stockbridge was reopened Thursday. The state highway, a major east-west thoroughfare, is the last to reopen after being closed by flooding.

The road's reopening was marked with a ceremony at a Stockbridge school, where scores of local residents and state officials tossed fluorescent orange baseball caps into the air.

"It will cut our commute time down, it will lessen our trauma of looking at all the damage and the moonscape," said Stockbridge resident Melissa Thompson, who had to navigate a 70-minute detour to get her son to school and to get to work for the past few months. "We'll probably miss all the flaggers (who) we got to know on the way. It just means so much to us to not have to make that commute every day."

Much remains to be done on Route 107 and across the state, but Vermonters used the reopening as a moment to pause and celebrate. Many people are still struggling to rebuild their homes and their lives. The state is just totaling up the bill, and the Legislature is preparing to deal with a variety of Irene-induced, long-term challenges.

Database Holds Details Of Slave Voyages

WASHINGTON (AP) — Almost two centuries before there was a man named Obama in the White House, there was a man named Obama shackled in the bowels of a slave ship. There is no proof that the unidentified Obama has ties to President Barack Obama. All they share is a name. But that is exactly the commonality that Emory University researchers hope to build upon as they delve into the origins of Africans who were taken up and sold.

They have built an online database around those names, and welcome input from people who may share a name that's in the database, or have such names as part of their family lore.

"The whole point of the project is to ask the African diaspora, people with any African background, to help us identify the names because the names are so ethno-linguistically specific, we can actually locate the region in Africa to which the individual belonged on the basis of the name," said David Eltis, an Emory University history professor who heads the database research team.

So far, two men named Obama sit among some 9,500 captured Africans whose names were written on line after line in the registries of obscure, 19th century slave trafficking courts. The courts processed the human chattel freed from ships that were intercepted and detoured to Havana, Cuba or Freetown, Sierra Leone. Most of the millions of Africans enslaved before 1807 were known only by numbers, said James Walvin, an expert on the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Once bought by slave owners, the Africans' names were lost. Africans captured by the Portuguese were baptized and given "Christian" names aboard the ships that were taking them into slavery.

But original African names — surnames were uncommon for Africans in the 19th century — are rich with information. Some reveal the day of the week an individual was born or whether that individual was the oldest, youngest or middle child or a twin. They can also reveal ethnic or linguistic groups.

KYNT
AM 1450
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WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY
Friday, December 30
7:40 a.m. United Way
(Pam Kettering)
8:20 a.m. Red Cross
(Deb Bodenstedt)

Clinic Schedule New Year's Eve & Day

The Yankton Medical Clinics, P.C. will be open New Year's Eve, December 31st from 8:30AM to 12PM and ConvenientCare will be open 12PM to 5PM. ConvenientCare will be closed on New Year's Day, Sunday, January 1st so that our staff may enjoy the holiday with their families. Regular hours will resume on Monday, January 2nd.

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