

Analyses of the Governor's race

Mead/Simpson/Freudenthal campaign narrowly edges Rita Meyer

Everything considered, Rita Meyer did remarkably well to finish only 717 votes behind the Matt Mead juggernaut.

Most will think it was money that made the difference. That certainly was a factor but, in my opinion, had it not been for the support Mead received from Colin Simpson on the day before the election and from Dave Freudenthal throughout the primary cycle, Rita would have overcame the money disadvantage she faced.

It seems reasonable to question why any sane person would think the position, which pays \$105,000 a year, would be worth \$47.75 a vote to "win." If a candidate were being funded by individual donations, whatever amount of money spent on a campaign would make at least a tiny bit of sense. You can't take it with you - might as well spend it on a campaign.

But to spend \$1.2 to \$1.4 million as wealthy heirs have done in the past two statewide primaries is crazy. And few heirs in Wyoming are wealthy enough not to feel the loss of over a million dollars spent on their own political campaign.

Is there really that much prestige being

governor of the 51st populated "state" in the nation? Yes, Wyoming has fewer people than even the District of Columbia so we're fifty-first out of fifty states.

The only legitimate polling done was for the Casper Star-Tribune (Mason-Dixon) and it had Rita slightly ahead of Matt Mead. That must have been painful to publish as the CS-T endorsed Mead. As did the state's other large city newspaper, Cheyenne's Tribune-Eagle.

Neither newspaper endorsement helped "The Chosen One." Mead lost both of the largest counties to Rita Meyer.

Endorsements seldom help a candidate. For one thing, the donor seldom spends any money publicizing the choice. In this primary election, however, a stealth endorsement might have made a difference.

Here's why. Colin Simpson was no factor in this election from the get-go. His campaign never caught on. First, his choice of a campaign manager left seasoned Republican's shaking their heads. The guy worked for Barbara Cubin but not on her campaigns - that is what he told me in 2006. And the guy was fired from the

Ray Hunkins for Governor campaign that same year. Beyond poor direction, Simpson was trying to ride on his father's coattails and they are no more. Al Simpson is yesterday's news - now an Ivy Leaguer with links to Barack Obama.

Polls showed Sonny Boy Simpson a distant fourth and falling. Yet, he did a last day direct mail piece that was an attack piece on Rita Meyer. Why? Nowhere did it identify Colin Simpson as the critic and nowhere did it state his opposing views to Rita's. It was, by all impressions, a piece designed to hurt Rita and help Matt Mead. Why Mead, not Micheli? Come on. No moderate to liberal Republican like Colin Simpson wanted to see Micheli win this primary. And, knowing that he had no chance to win, he was positioning himself for a job from Matt Mead.

The message on the piece of dreck supposedly paid for by the Simpson camp had nothing to do with current campaign positions or words from Rita Meyer. But what Simpson set out to do was confuse, not inform. In the end, the difference between Matt Mead's vote total and Rita's amounted to 359. If 359 voters who had intended to vote for Rita were confused

by the pro-Mead mailing and voted against Rita, Mead would win. That's all it took on the final day - 359 votes going to another candidate. Are there 359 voters - or even 717 voters - in Wyoming who still had some respect for the Simpson name and might be influenced by the scurrilous message? Probably so. Here's how the cowardly anti-Rita piece ended:

**Can you trust someone who flip-flops to be our next governor?
We can't.**

Between this last second piece Rita that had no opportunity to correct or respond to and Democrat Dave Freudenthal lending his efforts to the Mead campaign, Rita did well to finish so close in the final voting. Some of Dave's support for Matt Mead likely came from both having been U.S. Attorney. Dave has never given his wholehearted support to a fellow Democrat. This primary was no exception. He did not want to take a chance there could be a "Gov Les" or "Gov Pete." Dave had department heads encourage subordinates to vote for Matt Mead. He may have an arrangement with Mead to allow some of those department heads to keep their jobs. And, does Colin has an agreement to become Attorney General? We'll see.

Results of the 2010 primary election for Wyoming Governor

	Matt Mead	Rita Meyer	Ron Micheli	Colin Simpson	
Albany	908	1,314	704	666	Others, Write-ins, Under / Over Votes All Counties Kousoulos - 565 Self - 294 Ubben - 433 Write-ins - 202 Under Votes - 1,152 Over Votes - 46 Total - 2,692
Big Horn	838	721	1,341	667	
Campbell	2,463	1,817	1,864	1,751	
Carbon	770	799	520	301	
Converse	1,165	1,029	756	535	
Crook	679	521	483	388	
Fremont	1,857	2,292	2,143	1,384	
Goshen	1,063	883	889	327	
Hot Springs	436	384	384	226	
Johnson	1,175	939	627	395	
Laramie	4,997	5,634	2,726	1,541	
Lincoln	752	668	2,598	327	
Natrona	3,135	4,043	2,778	1,894	
Niobrara	519	201	248	72	
Park	1,411	1,961	2,027	2,788	
Platte	777	825	725	209	
Sheridan	1,573	1,866	1,034	1,183	
Sublette	736	782	785	169	
Sweetwater	1,162	753	1,519	404	
Teton	1,815	588	305	611	
Uinta	750	506	2,180	133	
Washakie	723	554	688	361	
Weston	596	503	579	348	
Total	30,300	29,583	27,903	16,680	
		-717	-2,397	-13,620	
Counties won	10	7 / 1t	4 / 1t	1	
Receipts -					
Personal	\$1,222,700.00	\$ 41,275.52	\$ 98,813.94	\$ 1,472.60	
Individuals	216,152.95	307,295.14	477,562.86	303,376.47	
PACs	6,025.00	189,425.00	54,925.00	84,725.00	
All other	1,926.40	420.00	1,090.00	4,532.00	
Total	\$1,446,804.35	\$538,415.66	\$632,391.80	\$390,106.07	
Cost per Vote	\$47.75	\$18.20	\$22.66	\$23.39	

Notes on Receipts:
- Rita Meyer's Personal includes a beginning balance of \$40,125.52.
- Assumes all receipts were spent in primary

Source: Wyoming Secretary of State website.