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McCain, Obama fight over the West



Sen. John McCain called himself "a fellow Westerner" and criticized his rival at a rally in Albuquerque, N.M., on Saturday.

By Ben Feller
The Associated Press

RENO, Nev. — Scrambling to win the West, Democrat Barack Obama mocked John McCain on Saturday for aggressively trying to distance himself from President Bush. McCain touted his Western ties and warned that Obama is a tax-and-spend threat to the nation. The financially flush Obama campaign also unveiled a two-minute TV ad that asks, "Will our country be better off four years from now?" The length of the ad, which will air in key states, highlights Obama's fundraising superiority — most campaign commercials run 30 seconds or a minute.

Obama continued to ridicule McCain for distancing himself from



Sen. Barack Obama, at the University of Nevada in Reno, compared his rival and President Bush to Batman and Robin on Saturday.

CAMPAIGN/A15

A special need, a golden dream

A South Bay mom knows a time is coming when she can't be there for her autistic son. She's joining other parents of children with disabilities in a mission to create a 40-acre ranch offering a lifetime of care and productivity.



Rose Hein, whose 15-year-old son Justin is autistic, has helped develop a nonprofit organization to raise funds for a ranch-style center where special-needs children could live and work with supervision. The Manhattan Beach resident estimates the cost at \$50 million.

By Melissa Evans
Staff Writer

Ever since her youngest boy collapsed from his first epileptic seizure at age 2, Rose Hein and her husband have sought a remedy — or at least some relief — for their son.

Justin, a skinny, energetic boy with a fascination for garbage trucks, video games and electronic devices, is also severely autistic. He is shy, sometimes put off by strangers or changes in routine, but has an unparalleled thirst for life.

"When he loves something, he really, really loves something," Rose Hein said.

To control the epilepsy, they put Justin, now 15, on a strict diet of fatty foods for three years. It staved off seizures for a while, but they eventually came

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back.

The Heins tried a number of drugs to help with the autism and enrolled Justin in a special school where he learns social skills, along with reading, speech and other subjects.

But, despite their efforts, the Manhattan Beach family had to face reality, especially as Justin gets older.

"He is going to need 24-hour care for the rest of his life," Hein said, "and we're not going to be here forever."

She and a group of other parents whose children have a range of special needs, including autism and cerebral palsy, launched a nonprofit organization last week with a very specific goal — they want to raise enough money to build a 40-acre ranch for their children and others with similar disabilities.

Just a few months into planning, Hein has a detailed picture of what she hopes the Golden Heart Ranch will include: work opportunities in an organic garden, coffeehouse and restaurants; group exercise activities, including an ATV trail and horseback riding; and art therapy, including sewing, cooking and crafts.

RANCH/A19

"This is my mission right now. It's every parent's worst fear, to think about what's going to happen to my child when I'm gone."

— ROSE HEIN, who helped launch a nonprofit organization to build a ranch for children with disabilities

Aid targets for bailout keep shifting

ECONOMY: Uses for the \$700 billion fund move beyond the original purpose.

By John Dunbar
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — First, the \$700 billion rescue for the economy was about buying devalued mortgage-backed securities from tottering banks to unlog frozen credit markets.

Then it was about using \$250 billion of it to buy stakes in banks. The idea was that banks would use the money to start making loans again.

But reports surfaced that bankers might instead use the money to buy other banks, pay dividends, give employees a raise and executives a bonus, or just sit on it.

Insurance companies now want a piece; maybe automakers, too, even though Congress has approved \$25 billion in low-interest loans for them.

Three weeks after becoming law, and with the first dollar of the \$700 billion yet to go out, officials are just beginning to talk about helping a few strapped homeowners keep the foreclosure wolf from the door.

As the crisis worsens, the government's reaction keeps changing.

Lawmakers in both parties are starting to gripe that the bailout is turning out to be far different from what the Bush administration sold to Congress.

In buying equity stakes in banks, the Treasury has "deviated significantly from its original course," said Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby, the top Republican on the Senate Banking, Housing

BALLOUT/A18

Line for help gets longer

LOBBYING: Firms in trouble make bids for a share of the rescue money.

By Martin Crutsinger
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The bailout is now the hottest lobbying game in town.

Insurers, automakers and American subsidiaries of foreign banks all want the Treasury Department to cut them a piece of the largest government rescue in U.S. history.

The bet is that many with their hands out will be successful, especially with financial markets in a stomach-churning dive and predictions the economy is about to tumble into a deep recession.

These groups argue that the credit squeeze is so severe and the risks to the economy so dire that their industries need financial support as well.

The Treasury is considering requests from a variety of industries, but has not decided whether to expand the program, officials said Saturday.

Lobbying efforts are intensifying.

The Financial Services Roundtable wrote Treasury officials on Friday

LOBBYING/A18

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