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Tea Party to rally on tax day

By David DeMille

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ST. GEORGE — Buoyed by a still-strong conservative tide, local supporters of the Tea Party movement are looking to exert more political influence after this Friday's tax day rally.

The Washington County Tea Party Coalition is set to host a rally Friday at Vernon Worthen

Park in St. George. According to organizers, the event will "commemorate and raise awareness of the importance of learning about America's current political events and our liberties and freedoms under the Constitution."

What started as a rally against taxes has morphed into a countrywide movement of conserva-

IF YOU GO

TEA PARTY RALLY

» **When:** 5 p.m. to dusk, with speakers scheduled for 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Friday.

» **Where:** Vernon Worthen Park, 300 E. 300 South in St. George.

» **Cost:** Free.

» **Online:** Washington County Tea Party Coalition on Facebook.

tive groups railing against government regulation.

Congress has its own Tea

Party Caucus, and a number of Republican candidates won elections last fall by adopting tea

party platforms and capitalizing on the energy generated by the nation's right wing.

In conservative Washington County, where previous rallies have drawn crowds of 1,500 or so, the goal this year will be to funnel some of that enthusiasm into more political influence,

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Event to display WWII models



Norm Pakulski works on putting together a model of a tank at his home Monday in Ivins. Pakulski's has been displaying his military models throughout the community. JUD BURKETT / THE SPECTRUM

By Tiffany De Masters

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IVINS — Korean War veteran Norman Pakulski has been building models for 40 years.

"I started with cars," he said. "I started building World War II models when I got out of the service."

Originally from Wisconsin, Pakulski, 64, has lived in Ivins for almost three years. With about 60 models, all depicting different scenes from WWII and tanks, he said, a kit could take from 15 hours to 70 hours to build.

"I do it because I love it, and it keeps me busy and creative," Pakulski said.

Pakulski has shown his models to the public at Tuacahn High School and

the Senior Citizen's Center. They will go on display again Friday at the Dixie Center at the Veterans Administration event put on by the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs.

Veterans Coalition of Southern Utah Chairman Bill Toole said the event will have a variety of booths meant to provide information for local veteran groups.

Toole said Pakulski asked him three weeks ago if he could put his models on display.

Toole thought it was a good idea.

"There's a fairly good number of WWII veterans," he said. "It could be a little bit of nostalgia there — it's a way to visit your past. Lord knows, it's the largest war this planet has ever known."

Toole said he wants to see what the models look like.

"From what I've been told the models are really well done," he said. "It shows a lot of care on the part of Norm. He loves to talk about his hobby."

Pakulski enjoys showing off his work.

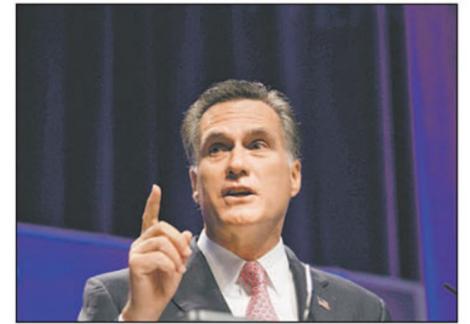
"It's fun to take them (models) because you get to hear peoples' stories," he said.

Each piece in the model is detailed. Pakulski is careful to make the models, although small, as realistic as possible.

Pakulski pointed out trees, shrubs and dirt on the models.

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Romney to explore campaign



Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney addresses the Conservative Political Action Conference in Washington on Feb. 11. ALEX BRANDON / AP

By Philip Elliott

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, the closest to a front-runner in a wide-open Republican field, took a major step toward a second White House candidacy Monday, formally announcing a campaign exploratory committee.

Romney declared that "with able leadership, America's best days are still ahead," vigorously asserting that President Barack Obama had failed to provide it.

The Republican, who has been plotting a comeback since losing the GOP presidential nomination to John McCain three years ago, offered himself as the person best able to lead a country struggling to recover from economic crisis.

"It is time that we put America back on a course of greatness with a growing economy, good jobs and fiscal discipline in Washington," Romney, a former venture capitalist with a record of turning around failing companies, said in a video posted on his website and on Facebook. He also announced the formation of the committee, which will allow him to raise money, in a Twitter message.

See CAMPAIGN, Page A6

Events designed to help veterans find employment

By Scott Kerbs

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ST. GEORGE — Two organizations dedicated to assisting veterans are hosting events in St. George this week in an effort to expose local veterans to information about benefits and help them as many search for employment in trying economic times.

The Utah Department of Veterans Affairs is set to provide local veterans and their family members with a wealth of valuable information regarding services and benefits

during its annual benefits fair at the Dixie Center Friday, said the Larry Dawson, outreach coordinator for the department.

"A lot of veterans don't know about the benefits they've earned," Dawson said, underscoring the need for the annual event. "This is that attempt to get that information out."

Featuring representatives from about 30 organizations, Dawson said the event was also designed to inform veterans about new programs and recent changes to their benefits.

"There are a lot of wonder-

FOR INFORMATION

BENEFIT FAIR

» **When:** 2 to 7 p.m., Friday.

» **Where:** Dixie Center at 1835 S. Convention Center Drive.

WORKSHOP

» **When:** 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Thursday.

» **Where:** Hilton Garden Inn at 1731 S. Convention Center Drive.

ful programs to assist veterans, but there is a great pall of ignorance," said Bill Toole, chairman of the Veterans Coalition

of Southern Utah. "There is a plague of misinformation."

Dawson said the event is expected to provide information about a program that offers financial assistance to help cover the costs associated with assisted living facilities for veterans.

While some companies charge veterans to complete paperwork related to certain programs, Dawson said representatives at the expo are set to show veterans and their family members how to receive free assistance when they apply for benefits.

"They charge them up to \$2,000 to help them fill out a couple of forms," he said of some companies.

In addition to information about applying for benefits, a representative from the Governor's Office of Economic Development is also scheduled to offer information about business opportunities available to Utah's veterans at the event, he said.

Dawson said the information fair is especially important this

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Party

Continued from A1

said Steven Swann, a coalition member.

"The biggest problem in the movement is people have a lot of pent-up energy and they don't know where to focus it," he said.

Booths at the rally will be used to disseminate information on the Constitution and the political process, Swann said, aiming to help people find ways to get involved. He pointed to the recent close race where Republican congressional candidate Morgan Philpot lost to Democrat incumbent Jim Matheson as an example where the Tea Party could have used more votes to get their candidate elected.

"We have a few thousand people deciding very important elections," he said.

Larry Meyers, local coordinator for the Tea

Party Patriots group, agreed, saying the event would be no pressure, but that those in attendance who were interested could learn how to get involved in the movement.

"It's very important that people actually go out and do something rather than just sit around and complain about what's going on with the government," he said.

For Friday's event, the coalition has invited prominent members of the movement to speak, including Philpot and Utah Rep. Carl Wimmer, R-Herriman. There will also be music and other entertainment.

The movement's influence has already been felt nationally in the past few years, and especially in Washington County.

Freshman Senator Mike Lee, who has become a leading national Tea Party figure, won the Republican Party primary last year largely be-

cause of a big advantage in Washington County. Members of the movement also helped unseat former Sen. Bob Bennett at last year's state convention, and the movement likely played a role in Utah Rep. David Clark, R-Santa Clara, losing his seat as House Speaker - none of the state's freshmen representatives voted for him.

Dean Cox, chairman of the Washington County Republican Party, said the Tea Party movement made it uncomfortable for the GOP establishment last year, but the two sides can come together when it comes to pushing for Republican candidates and conservative ideas. He guessed that about a third of local Republicans were affiliated with the Tea Party.

"The influx of new people and new ideas is fearful a little bit, but in the long haul it's a good thing," he said.

Models

Continued from A1

"I got this dirt from what I swept up in the garage in Wisconsin," he said. "Garage dirt is the best because it's fine and the most realistic."

All the models are replicas of soldiers and tanks from American, Japanese, German and Russian armies.

Pakulski said he's interested in starting a model-building club. For information contact him at 272-4357.

The event Friday is from 2 to 7 p.m.



One of Norm Pakulski's models, a KV-1 Type C Russian tank, sits on display at his home Monday in Ivins. Pakulski's has been displaying his military models throughout the community. JUD BURKETT / THE SPECTRUM

Veterans

Continued from A1

this year because it provides valuable information to veterans amid continued economic instability.

With many veterans struggling to find work in

Utah, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, an organization dedicated to helping veterans obtain employment, is hosting a job training and assistance workshop Thursday at the St. George Hilton Garden Inn, said Bart Davis, state chairman

for ESGR.

Davis said the event was designed to provide veterans with the tools necessary to obtain jobs in an increasingly competitive labor market.

"There is such a high unemployment rate of returning veterans," he said, adding that the free workshop was created to help veterans understand the importance of resume writing, interviewing and networking as they search for jobs. "They just need to be able to set themselves apart from everyone else who is currently looking for employment."

Expecting 30 to 40 veterans to attend Thursday's event, Davis said he wants each attendee to leave the workshop with a rough draft of a resume.

"It's going to be a good, solid six hours of training," he said.

Toole said the workshop is expected to prove valuable, especially for younger veterans.

"Anybody who is young and experienced doesn't really know where to begin," he said. "You've got to make yourself employable."



While touring a neighborhood hit hard by foreclosures, Mitt Romney reacts as he speaks with neighborhood residents April 1 in Las Vegas. JULIE JACOBSON / AP

Campaign

Continued from A1

Romney's move had been expected and a full-fledged campaign is a near certainty. He has traveled across the country to meet in private with donors and sound out their support. His political committee's headquarters near Boston has been bulking up. And in his few public appearances, he has honed his criticism of Obama.

Romney's strengths are substantial: He's well known and he's an experienced campaigner. He has a personal fortune and an existing network of donors. He has a successful businessman's record.

But his challenges are big, too. They include a record of changing positions on social issues including abortion and gay rights, shifts that have left conservatives questioning his sincerity. He also has struggled to allay some skeptics of his Mormon faith.

Romney oversaw a health care law enacted in Massachusetts that's similar to Obama's national health overhaul, which conservatives despise. His announcement video didn't mention either law.

He invested more than \$40 million of his own money in the 2008 race and counted on early wins in Iowa and New Hampshire that never materialized. He tried

to run to the right of the pack but couldn't persuade enough GOP primary voters.

Former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty has also taken the initial steps toward a White House run in 2012, setting up an exploratory committee. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich is laying the groundwork for an early May announcement.

Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour, former Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania and Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann are also putting together political machines for potential presidential runs.

All are auditioning for the chance to take on Obama, who is seeking a second term asking voters to let him finish the job he won in 2008. An ailing economy and an anxious electorate both dog the president, who won election on the promise of change but now has a record that defines him.

Romney hammered Obama's stewardship of the economy and offered a preview of his expected campaign theme: He is a proven business executive while Obama remains unqualified to repair a fractured economy.

"President Obama's policies have failed. He and virtually all the people around him have never worked in the real economy. They just don't know how jobs are

created in the private sector."

Then Romney makes the case for himself.

"From my vantage point in business and in government, I have become convinced that America has been put on a dangerous course by Washington politicians, and it has become even worse during the last two years," he said. "But I am also convinced that with able leadership, America's best days are still ahead."

Romney, the son of a former governor of Michigan, met his future wife when he was 18 and she was 15, just before he departed for college and then more than two years of Mormon missionary work in France. The couple had five sons, while Mitt Romney went on to earn millions as a business consultant and venture capitalist.

While heading Bain Capital, he helped launch the Staples office supply chain, as well as buy Domino's Pizza.

His public career began in 1999, when he was recruited to take over the 2002 Winter Olympics after scandal and financial deficits threatened the Salt Lake City games.

In 2003, he took over as governor of Massachusetts after a campaign in which he cast himself as a moderate on abortion, gay rights and stem cell research. He had sounded many of the same themes during an unsuccessful 1994 U.S. Senate race against Democrat Edward M. Kennedy.

He chose not to seek a second term and instead turned his sights to the White House.

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-PAID ADVERTISEMENT-

Utah eye doctor helps legally blind to see

Local low vision doctor helps those with vision impairment to see again.

By Elena Lombardi
Freelance Writer

Just because you have macular degeneration (or other vision-limiting conditions) doesn't always mean there is nothing that can be done to greatly improve your vision.

Ever look through a pair of field glasses or binoculars? Things look bigger and closer, and much easier to see. A Utah optometrist, Dr. Jared L. Cooper is using miniaturized binoculars or telescopes to help people who have lost vision from macular degeneration or other eye conditions.

"Some of my patients consider me the last stop for people who have vision loss", Said Dr. Cooper, a low vision specialist who limits his practice to visually impaired patients in his offices throughout the state of Utah. "People don't know that

there are doctors who are very experienced in low vision care, many of my patients have been told that there was nothing left they could do to improve their vision, fortunately this is usually not the case"

"My job is to figure out everything and anything possible to keep a person functioning," said Dr. Cooper. "Monitoring a patient's disease, and not improving their vision and quality of life is unsatisfactory to my style of practice".

A patient of Dr. Cooper, Larry Kay, 88, a retired electrician approached Cooper Eye Care last December, "I could not see my grandchildren's faces, read books or the morning paper anymore."

He was fit with bioptic telescope glasses. "Amazing!", says Larry "to be able to see things far away again." "Even the television is so much better now."



He was also provided with ClearImage Microscope glasses for reading the newspaper.

"Telescopic glasses usually cost over \$2000", says Dr. Cooper, "especially if we fabricate them with an automatic sunglass".

Not all low vision devices are that expensive. Reading glasses start at \$500 and hand magnifiers under \$100. Every case is different because people have different levels of vision and different desires.

Call Dr. Cooper for a free telephone consultation: 1-800-451-2015 Or visit Dr. Cooper on the Internet at the following address:

www.coopereyecare-utah.com

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