

## Politicians woo West Las Vegas Voters

By Vaughn Roche  
Review-Journal

West Las Vegas, where neighborhood leaders say Nevada's white power structure has long ignored bleak unemployment among blacks, may soon be experiencing an onslaught of political if not economic attention.

The closeness of this year's U.S. Senate race has Democrats and Republicans grasping for every possible vote. And, with polls showing only a slim margin of voters not already aligned with one party or the other, wavering political loyalty on the Westside could be a decisive factor in the race.

Already, the Democratic candidate, Rep. Harry Reid, has set up headquarters in the predominantly black neighborhood and has gone door to door in a drive to register blacks as Democratic voters.

The Republican candidate, Jim Santini, has neither opened a headquarters nor taken to knocking on doors yet, but party officials have sponsored gatherings where potential Westside voters can meet and study the candidates.

Republican attention to the Westside vote is also reflected in Clark County Chairman Ken Sawyer's membership in the Black Chamber of Commerce. Sawyer said he thought it a "little pompous" that blacks should have to come to him, so he went to them.

"I wanted them to know that the Republican Party cares about them," Sawyer said.

All this attention, and the promise of much more before Election Day, comes at a time when the traditionally Democratic black community is questioning exactly which party can be trusted to undo the neighborhood's 40 percent unemployment rate.

"For years we have wholeheartedly supported the Democratic Party, but looking at our economy, we feel we have been betrayed by the Democrats," said the Rev. S.P. Parks, pastor of Grace Immanuel Baptist Church. "We're starting to look at the other side.

For the 28 years he has lived in Las Vegas, Parks said, he has watched the city grow from a small desert town to an economically thriving metropolis. The only

exception, he said, has been the Westside, where it seems nothing has changed but unemployment, and it for the worse.

Of the Westside's longtime Democratic leanings, Parks said, "Traditions are fine to follow, but to follow them in spite of all you see wrong can be detrimental."

Another community leader, former five-term Democratic Assemblyman Lonie Chaney, said the Westside may not be experiencing a revolutionary turn to Republicanism, but he sees signs of change that may favor Republican inroads.

First, there is the Republican conversion of Assemblyman Gene Collins, a man who, according to Parks at least, has the full support of the Westside despite the scorn of his former Democratic colleagues.

Second, Chaney sees a rising tide of registered Republican voters in a state that had long been dominated by Democrats.

Though Chaney foresees the majority of Westside voters remaining Democrats, he believes they have

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## 'MGMer' promoted by Bally

A young black woman who thought "juice" was something to drink came to Las Vegas eight years ago and applied for a job at the MGM Grand Hotel.

She didn't know anybody, she didn't have any "connections."

But as she was qualified, competent and confident, Jeanne Jones was hired as a training specialist in the human resources department.

When MGM was sold to Bally Manufacturing Corp. last month, Jones was one of the 'MGMer' promoted by the Chicago-based company. She jumped from the job of training director to vice president of human resources.

The promotion gave her the distinction of being the only black and one of a

handful of women who have reached the upper echelons of management in the gaming industry in Las Vegas.

The Tropicana has one

women vice president, Marilyn Seay in administration. Caesars has three — Gloria Brown, vice president of personnel at

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