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Republicans in area excited by selection

By Dan Abendschein
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PASADENA — Sen. John McCain's choice of Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin to be his presidential running mate sparked excitement among area Republicans on Friday, but political experts cautioned that vice-presidential picks rarely affect voters' decisions at the ballot box.

Palin was described by local GOP members as someone who would energize the Republican base, but could also draw moderate and conservative women who might not otherwise vote for McCain.

"She's a rock star ... I feel sorry for Joe Biden when it comes to debate

Please turn to REACTION / Page 6

INSIDE

- Analysis: John McCain's risky choice of Palin gives him a running mate who doubles down on his maverick image. A7
- In two short years, Palin moved from small-town mayor with a taste for mooseburgers to the governor's office and now — making history — to John McCain's side as the first female running mate on a Republican presidential ticket. A7

REACTION GOP lawmakers approve

Continued from page 1

time," said Mike Spence, head of the local California Republican Assembly, referring to the Democratic vice-presidential choice. "I think that you'll see a Palin bump over the next couple of days when you look at the polling."

Rep. David Dreier, R-San Dimas, said he thought Palin's executive experience as governor would make her valuable to McCain.

"This gives the ticket a great boost of excitement, enthusiasm, and optimism," said Dreier. "I think she complements Sen. McCain perfectly."

Dreier added that he had not yet met Palin, but was eager to get the chance at the Republican convention, scheduled to start Monday in St. Paul, Minn.

Jack Pitney, a government professor at Claremont McKenna College, cautioned against attaching too much

importance to the pick. "VPs can help a little or hurt a lot," Pitney said. "It looks like Palin will help a little, but not change the election."

He added that the choice of Palin would likely be most effective with the party's conservative core.

"You might see some more enthusiasm among the base," Pitney said. "There hasn't been a huge amount of enthusiasm for McCain, so this could lead to more people volunteering, which would help if the election becomes a turnout battle."

Assemblyman Bob Huff, R-Diamond Bar, who supported Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney — often mentioned as a potential McCain running mate — in the presidential primary, said he was thrilled with Palin.

"I would have been happy with Romney, but I think she will be even better," Huff said.

Palin, 44, is a popular governor who ran for office on a platform of ethics reform, one of McCain's causes.

The GOP hopes she will help McCain appeal to women disillusioned with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's loss to Barack Obama in the Demo-

cratic primary. Palin is the youngest governor in Alaska's history.

Her strict anti-abortion views, however, will likely make it difficult for her to convert Democratic women voters, said Barbara Stone, a Whittier Republican activist and former political science professor.

"I don't think committed Democratic women voters are going to abandon their views just because she is a woman," Stone said.

Geneviève M. Clavreul, former president of the Pasadena Women's Republican Club, said she expected Palin to appeal to moderate women who are not awowedly pro-choice.

Clavreul said she would have considered voting for Clinton for president, and was appalled at how the New York senator was treated by the press and some in the Democratic party.

"She was so mistreated," said Clavreul. "She was not even vetted for the vice presidency."

Staff Writer Airan Scruby and The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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