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news BY ALAN PITTMAN



Nancy Nathanson

Buying a Mayor

Developer cash backs Nathanson.

Mayoral candidate Nancy Nathanson has the cash backing of development interests who stand to rake in money on urban sprawl and freeway projects if she's elected.

Development interests — including real estate speculators, builders, construction companies and local timber barons — contributed \$10,350 to Nathanson's campaign as of April 1. Nathanson, who has a solidly conservative and anti-environmental voting record as a city councilor, is backed by the Chamber of Commerce, but opposed by local environmental and good government groups.

Nathanson's single biggest contributor is the Giustina timber family and their various companies who gave a total of \$2,600, according to required contribution reports. The Giustinas have speculated on large tracks of land on the edges of Eugene and could stand to make millions from urban sprawl.

The local Wildish clan, owners of sand and gravel and construction companies as well as land holdings, are Nathanson's next biggest backer with \$2,000 in total contributions. Wildish does millions of dollars in local highway construction work and stands to make millions more on projects like the \$130 million West Eugene Parkway. Nathanson backs the controversial, sprawl-inducing freeway project through wetlands.

Delta Sand and Gravel, which also hopes to make big money from the parkway, gave another \$1,000 to Nathanson. Hamilton Construction Company, another road building company, gave Nathanson \$1,000 more.

Greg Demers has speculated on hundreds of acres of land west of Eugene and in Veneta that could soar in value with the construction of the West Eugene Parkway. Demers gave Nathanson \$1,000.

The Gonyea family, land speculators who sold Hynix land for its factory, gave Nathanson \$750.

Many of Nathanson's biggest funders are also big contributors to George Bush and right-wing politics. The Giustinas recently gave \$50,000 to the Republican National Committee's efforts to re-elect George Bush and his friends. The Wildish clan recently gave \$2,000 to Republicans nationally, \$5,000 for the pro-parkway campaign two years ago and \$2,000 to the Gang of 9's attack adds against City Council progressives.

Demers recently gave \$25,000 to national Republicans, \$10,000 to Oregon Republicans, \$10,000 for the West Eugene Parkway and \$2,500 to the Gang of 9.

The Gonyeas gave Bush \$8,000 last year, the national Republican Party \$25,000 and

the Oregon Republican Party \$10,000. Delta Sand and Gravel gave \$5,000 to the parkway and \$1,000 to the Gang of 9. Hamilton contributed \$2,000 to the parkway.

Even some of Nathanson's smaller contributors are pro-Bush activists. Jack Courtemanche gave Nathanson \$100. Courtemanche is a former assistant to President Ronald Reagan and was Nancy Reagan's chief of staff. When Dick Cheney came to Eugene in 2000 for a campaign stop, Courtemanche picked him up at the airport in a motor home for a rally at Country Coach where Courtemanche was CEO, the Associated Press reported.

Nathanson has consistently voted against environmental and other regulations opposed by business and has won the strong backing of the local conservative business community in her bid for mayor. Business interests, including developers, gave Nathanson a total of \$18,750 by April 1. The Eugene Chamber gave Nathanson \$1,500, Nike board member and attorney John Jaqua gave \$1,000 and Industrial Source, a welding supply company, gave another \$1,000. The Woolley family, which owns much of downtown Eugene, gave \$500, Redhead Real Estate \$500, and Pepsi Bottling another \$500.

Almost a quarter of Nathanson's funding, including donations from the Gonyeas, Hamilton Construction and Demers, came from companies and individuals outside of Eugene.

Nathanson's opponent Kitty Piercy reported a total of \$38,446 in contributions from local progressives, environmentalists and unions. Big donors include organic food-maker Mel Bankoff, LCC faculty member Mark Williams and James Gang Publishing who each gave \$1,000. The Eugene firefighters union gave \$3,000.

The firefighters could benefit directly from a friendly mayor, but most of Piercy's other contributors appear to have little to gain other than good government, environment and quality of life.

Piercy's donations reflect her broad populist support. Piercy reported receiving 293 donations of \$50 and under for a total of \$11,251. Nathanson reported only \$800 in such small contributions.

Piercy has reported raising more money than Nathanson — \$38,446 to Nathanson's \$24,360. But few expect that early lead to last and more spending reports are due May 6. In the last hotly contested mayor's race, Republican Jim Torrey outspent his progressive opponent Jim Weaver five to one, paying \$76,000 for the mayor's seat. **EW**