

Obama wins at the county fair

BY DAVE PARRO

Two recent straw polls taken by the local Democratic parties at county fairs put Sen. Barack Obama far ahead of Sen. Hillary Clinton among presidential contenders. That's hardly surprising, given Obama's rock-star status in Illinois.

In Kane County, 53 percent voted at the Democrats' booth for Obama, while 27 percent picked Clinton. In DuPage County, 60 percent favored Obama vs. 25 percent for Clinton. Mark Guethle, chairman of the Kane County Democratic Party, said "that is pretty much mirroring the rest of the state."

But do those numbers suggest anything at all about the eventual 2008 party nominee?

In national polls, Clinton is holding nearly 40 percent support while Obama is coming in around 30 percent. While that gap is not insurmountable, it suggests Obama still has a lot to prove outside the Land of Lincoln. But with Illinois moving up its primary election date to Feb. 5, a huge showing in his home state could make a big impression.

Here's a closer look at the DuPage County Fair poll. And the raw numbers from the Kane County Fair:

Barack Obama: 53 percent (148 votes)
Hillary Rodham Clinton: 27 percent (75)
John Edwards: 10 percent (28)
Bill Richardson: 4 percent (11)
Dennis Kucinich: 3 percent (7)
Joe Biden: 2 percent (5)
Mike Gravel: 1 percent (2)
Chris Dodd: 0 percent (1)

The Illinois Republican Party plans to hold its statewide straw poll Aug. 16 on Republican Day at the state fair in Springfield.

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