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Palin's rally on Monday moved to larger Germain Arena in Estero

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Poll: If you have tickets to see Sarah Palin at Monday's local rally, are you among the undecided and hope to gain more insight into the GOP ticket?

2:05 p.m. update

Florida Gulf Coast University plans to bill the Republican National Committee \$3,049.89 for canceling its facility rental contract. The fee represents 25 percent of the \$10,291.54 rental fee, plus sales tax. It also includes a \$450 hospitality suite inside Alico Arena that Republicans rented Thursday night.

The Republican party's contract contained language similar to any other group that rents Alico Arena. An opt-out clause allows groups to cancel events with no penalty up to two days prior to an event. Although Palin's rally was scheduled for Monday afternoon, setup was to commence on Sunday.

That meant Friday's cancellation put the Republican party within that two-day restriction.

Earlier Friday morning, FGCU President Wilson Bradshaw said university officials were still planning logistics for Palin's rally, adding that college campuses are the ideal place to host political forums.

"If there is any one place that encourages free and open debate and discussion, it's in the environment of academic freedom at universities," Bradshaw said. "In large part, I think they're seen as non-partisan, providing a vehicle for free and open debate and discussion."

12:33 p.m. update

Vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin's rally scheduled for Monday in Southwest Florida has been moved from Florida Gulf Coast University's Alico Arena to Germain Arena in Estero.

Germain Arena seats 7,082 people. Alico Arena's capacity is listed at 4,500.

Palin is making three stops in Southwest Florida on Monday. She will make two stops in Naples late in the morning and early in the afternoon before the rally at Germain Arena.

The rally at Florida Gulf Coast University was scheduled to start at 3 p.m.

Check back with news-press.com throughout the day for updates on this story, information about tickets and the starting time for the rally.

10:29 a.m. update

The first two people lining up in Cape Coral for tickets to Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin's rally Monday were undecided.

Army Reservist Roberts Fowler and his friend Christopher Senecal, both local college students and astute political observers saw the event as a means to a closer look at Sen. John McCain's pick for running mate.

They joined 80 or so people lined up outside the Cape Coral Republican headquarters on Del Prado Boulevard looking one of 500 free tickets to the rally. The doors opened at 10 a.m.

Senecal, a formerly ardent supporter of Sen. Barack Obama, said he cringed at Obama's choice for a running mate, Joseph Biden, but hasn't made up his mind on Palin.

"She did better than everybody expected," Senecal said of Palin's televised debate Thursday with Biden. "I want to hear what she has to say (Monday)."

The election, Fowler said, is one of the most important decisions facing the American public in decades.

"The next eight years are going to affect our economy, our jobs," Fowler said. "This is so important for this country."

Outside of the Fowler and Senecal, who had stood in line since 8:30 a.m., this morning, most of the crowd was solidly in line with Palin.

"I think we need change, and I think Sarah (Palin) will be that change," said Charles Colmeny, of Lehigh Acres. "I think the only hope for the country is with Sarah (Palin) and (John) McCain."

"I think that with this campaign, people are more excited," said Republican volunteer Maria Martins of Cape Coral. "People want to make sure they're going out to vote and are doing their part."

—Brian Liberatore

9 a.m. update: Where can I get tickets for the rally?

Tickets for the campaign rally of Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin in Fort Myers will be distributed today again in several Southwest Florida locations.

According to the McCain-Palin campaign website, tickets may be picked up between the hours of 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. at the following Victory Offices on Friday, October 3rd:

Charlotte Victory Office
2171 Tamiami Trail
Port Charlotte, FL 33948
941-743-7335

Collier Victory Office
194 Tamiami Trail North
Naples, FL 34102
239-732-0885

Hendry Victory Office
192 North Main Street
LaBelle, FL 33935
863-612-0015

Lee Victory Office
2002 Del Prado Blvd South, Suite 103

Cape Coral, FL 33990
239-321-9219

Sarasota Victory Office
6360 S Tamiami Trail
Sarasota, FL 34231
941-927-7146

Sarasota Victory Office
250 S. Tamiami Trail
Venice, FL 34285
941-927-7146

From this morning's editions of The News-Press

Julie Montano is looking forward to seeing GOP vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin up close.

She assured herself of the opportunity Thursday by being the first person in line when tickets were distributed for a Palin rally scheduled Monday at Florida Gulf Coast University.

"They say they are giving four tickets per person and I'm planning to use them all," said the 39-year-old Montano, who arrived just before 8 a.m. at the Lee County McCain-Palin Victory campaign office on College Parkway in south Fort Myers.

Behind Montano were more than 120 individuals trying to get tickets for the rally, which is scheduled to be held at FGCU's 4,500-seat Alico Arena.

Gary Lee, Lee County Republican Executive Committee chairman, said the size of the event could become an issue at Alico Arena, but could not confirm the Palin campaign was looking for a new location. Lee said about 9,000 tickets could be handed out for the event.

Palin has a busy schedule for the Southwest Florida leg of her Florida trip.

She will start her day in Clearwater, the first stop of a two-day, four-city Florida swing. She is scheduled to be in Pensacola and Jacksonville on Tuesday.

The Alaskan governor's first stop here is Naples, where she is scheduled to attend two fundraising events - one at the Naples Beach Hotel and Tennis Club and the other a reception at the Port Royal home of John Donohue.

Doors open for the 11 a.m., \$1,000-per-person beach club event at 10:30 a.m., and at 11:30 a.m. for the \$10,000 donation-per-person noon luncheon at Donohue's home.

Tickets to the FGCU rally are free.

Anticipation is high for Palin's visit.

Shery Kodan, 46, of Cape Coral, was one of many female supporters waiting in line Thursday. For her, this is "history in the making ... Palin has ambition, motivation, and maverick skills, but with her own identity" Kodan said.

Brent Nelson, 31, also from Cape Coral, said the reasons behind his support for Palin are "she shares (his) same core values and support for small governments and pro-life stances."

For the FGCU event, the McCain-Palin Victory Campaign Committee in Lee County had about 2,000 tickets available to give away, according to Craig Briscoe, the local committee chairman. The campaign's offices in Cape Coral, Naples and Charlotte County also had additional tickets, although numbers had not been confirmed.

Some tickets will be available at other Lee County McCain-Palin Victory campaign offices today, according to the Lee County GOP Web site.
