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## S.L. County mayor's pocketbook plump

Peter Corroon outraising his Republican opponent 50 to 1 as he closes in on half-million-dollar mark

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Peter Carroon

Considered a lost-cause candidate for Salt Lake County mayor just four years ago, Democrat Peter Corroon has transformed himself into one of the state's most productive fundraisers.

With money-making events ranging from the silly to the staid, Corroon has stoked his campaign with nearly as much cash as Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. who also is up for re-election in November.

Corroon's balance sheet shows a staggering \$240,649 in year-to-date donations, according to financial disclosures filed this week. Not only did he outpace his Republican opponent 50 to 1, he outpaced almost every candidate for state and local offices in Utah.

Only two candidates captured more: Huntsman (\$260,554) and Attorney General Mark Shurtleff (\$242,345).

Overkill, perhaps?

Corroon doesn't think so, despite the political obscurity of his challenger, Michael Renckert. In a valley of almost 1 million people, he says, a half-million-dollar campaign makes sense.

"We aren't raising money for the sake of raising money," he said. "We are raising it to do all we need to do to run a campaign countywide."

So Corroon has sported an Indiana Jones fedora at a "Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" fundraiser and touted his environmental agenda at Squatters Pub Brewery for Earth Day.

But while Corroon's pocketbook appears plump - especially when compared to his challenger's \$7,300 pot - Hinckley Institute of Politics Director Kirk Jowers says it isn't excessive for a campaign in Utah's most populous county.

That's particularly true this year, with the popularity of GOP candidates Huntsman and presidential hopeful John McCain in rosy-red Utah.

"Salt Lake County is by far the most expensive place to run a race in Utah," Jowers says. "Mayor Corroon probably feels some urgency to establish his own brand name to overcome any potential negative effects of straight-ticket voting that could come on the coattails of McCain and Huntsman."

Historically, Corroon's campaign chest is less startĀling.

Former Salt Lake County Mayor Nancy Workman raised \$858,000 to support her 2004 campaign before



dropping out of the race. Corroon, on the other hand, collected \$356,000 to beat out Workman's replacement, Ellis Ivory.

Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker accrued \$590,000 during his successful 2007 sprint for the capital's top job. His opponent, Dave Buhler, raised \$465,000.

Even so, Corroon's 2008 campaign remains one of the state's highest-dollar contests - excluding federal races where Democratic Rep. Jim Matheson already has broken the \$1 million mark.

Corroon needs that money, fellow Democrat Joe Hatch said, in a state where the Republican 'R' is as good as gold at election time.

"It requires that much money for a Democrat to be competitive," the Salt Lake County councilman said. "You cannot take your election for granted. You have to raise [cash] like you are the underdog."

So Corroon hits mid-year with a list of donors that stretches over 28 pages. Among his largest is the Sinclair Companies, which have contributed \$15,000 through company and individual donations.

He also received \$14,000 from auto dealers, \$6,500 from ski resorts and \$6,000 from WordPerfect founder Bruce Bastian.

"I can only imagine the conflicts going on," Salt Lake County Republican Party Chairman James Evans says.

With five months before the November election, Corroon says he'll continue to chase that half-million-dollar mark and four more years in office.

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