

ELECTION 2007

Study: Brainard donors are firms, not folks

Majority do business with city or seek OKs from it, Koven supporter finds

By Bruce C. Smith

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A majority of Mayor Jim Brainard's campaign contributors are companies and professionals who do business with the city or must ask for city permits or approvals, says a supporter of GOP mayoral challenger John R. Koven's.

Retired Eli Lilly and Co. statistician Charles B. Sampson, Carmel, who contributed to Koven's coffers, said he spent hours analyzing Brainard's campaign finance reports from 2004 to mid-April.

He concluded the incumbent's financial support is not from average citizens.

Categorizing nearly 600 contributions on campaign reports, Sampson said more than 94 percent are from businesses or business groups. An additional 3.25 percent are from political action committees and similar associations. About 1.35 percent are from residents not from Carmel, and 1.2 percent from unaffiliated Carmel residents.

Brainard sees his fundraising, which

exceeds \$300,000 and is climbing, a bit differently.

"It shows that our campaign (for reelection) and our plans for Carmel have a lot of support," he said Wednesday.

"Many of our contributors live in Carmel or own or operate businesses in Carmel, or nearby in Indianapolis and Zionsville, where Carmel has an impact on them."

Brainard is seeking nomination for a fourth four-year term against Koven, a former City Council member. The winner will face Democrat Henry Winckler on Nov. 6.

Koven has reported less than \$30,000 in contributions — including the most recent report, filed April 25, listing a \$10,000 loan he made to his campaign.

"It can be difficult to get the message out unless I tell it myself."

The campaign finance system seems stacked to favor the incumbent, he said.

For example, the mayor is frequently seen on the city's public access cable TV

See donations

To view the candidates' campaign finance reports, visit www.co.hamilton.in.us/ and click on Campaign Finance Reports on the right, toward the bottom.

station Channel 16, he said.

But points to his own grass-roots supporters helping his campaign and fundraising, including Sampson.

His analysis shows that among business donors, 32.9 percent of contributions are from architects and engineers, 23.6 percent from builders and developers, and 15 percent are from attorneys and other legal professions.

The largest contributor has been Pedcor, the Carmel-based development and construction company in a \$300 million public-private partnership with the city's redevelopment commission to build City Center. Pedcor has made 15 contributions totaling \$33,700, according to the campaign reports.

Next largest is Indianapolis law firm Sommer Barnard, with 10 contributions totaling \$26,275. The top-five list is

rounded out by American Consulting Engineers, \$25,300; Crossroads Engineers, \$24,300; and CSO architects, \$20,200, according to Sampson's figures.

"Looking at the campaign finance reports, you will know the constituency of Mayor Brainard, and it's not the citizens of Carmel," Sampson said.

A Brainard campaign official disagrees.

Many solicitations are at company events where the mayor talks about the city's plans, according to Allan R. Sutherland, chairman of public relations firm Stakeholder. It is managing the mayor's campaign and fundraising.

"It's hard to make allegations of favoritism when everyone is participating in the city, and they are all excited about what's going on," he said Wednesday.

Brainard touts a new City Center with an \$80 million Performing Arts Center. He's also pushing for a rebirth of Main Street and the old town center.

The administration has nearly doubled the city's utility system and built roads and roundabout intersections.

"It costs a lot of money to get that message out and to talk about the issues in the community," Brainard said.

★ Call Star reporter Bruce C. Smith at (317) 444-5526.