

Thompson likely to be in Iowa straw poll

by UPI

DESMOINES - Former Sen. Fred Thompson is likely to be on the Republican ballot for the Iowa straw poll even if he has not announced his presidential candidacy.

Members of the Iowa Republican Party, not the candidates, decide who will be on the ballot for the Aug. 11 straw poll, which draws thousands of Republicans to Ames, Iowa, and serves as a party fundraiser.

"It's our party, and we decide whose name is on the ballot," Iowa GOP executive director Chuck Laudner told the Web site politico.com Thursday.

"I predict (Thompson) will be on the ballot one way or another."

Aides said Wednesday Thompson will likely join the race for the Republican nomination in July.

Laudner said aides to Thompson and former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani have already called about the straw poll, which he said has helped thin the herd of candidates in past primary seasons.

Poor standings in the Ames straw poll have left "a lot of chalk outlines in the past," Laudner told politico.com.

Thompson has given up his role as District Attorney Arthur Branch on "Law & Order" in apparent preparation for a run.

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