

# ELECTION 2008

## Palin rallies at Bayfront Convention Center

By Jennifer Juncosa

Sarah Palin, the Republican vice-presidential candidate, held a rally at the Bayfront Convention Center in Erie, Pa., Oct. 30.

Thousands of people showed support for the candidate as the doors opened at 1 p.m. Multiple generations filled the center with signs, shirts, and buttons, reinforcing their opinion on which candidate they were supporting.

Before the rally began, Fort LeBoeuf High School's marching band played approximately an hour-long set with about fifteen different songs like "The Hey Song" and Queen's "We Will Rock You" to get the crowd ready for the rally.

The rally began with State Senator Jane Farrell who woke the crowd before Palin made her entrance.

Republican Representative Phil English was invited to speak after Farrell.

The visit shows that she is not a country club republican. It shows that she is down to earth and represents the steel worker and the common person, by bringing the feel of Alaska to Erie," said English.

Former Governor Tom Ridge, was chosen to introduce Palin to the restless crowd. "You know, I was going to ask you to give a very warm, northwestern Pennsylvania welcome to the next Vice President and I might add the first dude," said Ridge, commenting on the vocal approval the crowd gave when Palin came on stage.



KEEGAN MCGREGOR/The Behrend Beacon  
Tom Ridge, Todd and Piper Palin were on-stage at the event.

As expected, Palin touched on all of the issues she and McCain stand for. She touched on abortion and her pro-life stance. "John and I envision an America where every life counts." She also reminded the crowd that decision day was approaching quickly. "We want to work for you, Erie, will you hire us?"

The Republican campaign has heard ridicule for not stopping in the Erie area to campaign. "After

seeing her full schedule, I do not think that this visit was a last minute stop," said Nate Boring, President of College Republicans at Behrend. "I think the visit ignited a lot of Republican votes. It's inspiring to be at the rally, to feel the power of the campaign. You don't feel like one vote when you are surrounded by 7,000 people."

Palin ended the rally by entering the crowd to shake hands.



KEEGAN MCGREGOR/The Behrend Beacon  
Governor Sarah Palin spoke to a crowd of about 5,000 at the Bayfront Convention Center.

### Palin holds closed-doors event at Behrend

(Continued from front page)

Raising questions on what she expected to accomplish and why she chose Behrend, some were skeptical. "Right after she had finished her speech, some others thought she was a visiting member."

College Republicans at Behrend, including Dr. Michael Boring, said the "closed doors" event was a surprise. "I really have no idea why she chose Behrend. From the campaign was looking for an Erie venue, and we were informed Tuesday morning. I think about her plans, but that's it."

At about 5:15, Palin entered through the bottom left door in the conference center, to a dynamic applause from the crowd. Behind her, a panel consisting of former Governor of Pa. Tom Ridge, former CIA director Jim Woolsey, former Secretary of the Navy John Edman, Ambassador Richard Williamson, Admiral Marsha Evans, and retired General Carol Muttter, proudly stood providing a strong backdrop for the Governor.

After Palin thanked the Behrend College for its hospitality, she initiated the speech by rousing the crowd with topics primarily consisting of energy security and following, briefly, with the most relevant issues facing the nation at the moment. After about five minutes, she concluded the first portion of the talk by quoting Senator John McCain. "Senator McCain says we are going to pull through this economic crisis. Just as America the great country has done before."

As the second half of her approximately 12 minute speech commenced, she referred to the latest Obama-Biden commercial, like this: "I don't know how many of you saw that commercial."

Behrend didn't have much to say about our troops or cutting off the funding for them," she concluded. Rolling on with talk of the Democratic Party, she then quoted the vice of Joe Biden. "If you're not ready to be President, "If

you don't believe me, believe Joe Biden." Biden said that Obama was not ready to be President, and he never sounded more certain of anything in his life."

The speech predominantly consisted of Palin reiterating the party's general views on what the country is presently struggling with and how they need to fix it.

Many student Republicans in attendance felt what Palin covered was strongly relevant, while students uninformed to the historic happening wondered why they were not alerted of an event of such great significance.

Byrsten Jones, a graduate student at Behrend, was purely dissatisfied. "Sarah Palin was here? I didn't see that anywhere. That's just frustrating and upsetting."

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-Byrsten Jones

Senior Max Polinski was mystified as well. "It doesn't make sense to me why she would come to a college campus and not provide the opportunity for more students to hear her speak, especially when election time is days away," said Polinski. "It seems that many people from our generation are leaning towards Obama, and she's not even making an attempt to persuade potential voters."

Though a large portion of students were disgruntled over the lack of advertising, many students that had the privilege of obtaining access to the event felt that it was a sure success. Senior Joshua Miller thought it was short, but it was to the point and really hit home. "She covered everything well and didn't stick to just bashing Obama, she really focused on the issues."

Phil Graziani, a senior at Behrend, said that with this and thought that she didn't leave any

powerful issues out of her speech. "It seemed to me that it was a last minute thing, so the setting was good." Both Miller and Graziani agreed that the intimate setting was effective because it felt like she was really speaking to an individual, instead of a large crowd. "I really appreciated that she took the time to come to Behrend," said Miller. When Obama visited the campus in May of this year, before the primary elections, the Junker Center overflowed with supporters that traveled from all over northwestern PA. The fact that the Republican party has struggled to keep up with the Democrats' campaigning methods proves to be problematic to some. Polinski just doesn't understand. "It seems to me that the campaign really doesn't care about the college vote," he said. "It just doesn't make sense."

Dr. Robert Speel, a political science professor at Behrend, was unable to attend the event because he had classes to teach, but provided a possible explanation on why Palin chose to come to Behrend. "Well, it looked good through the media since it was at a new building devoted to business and technology," Speel said. "I think the main purpose was to energize students for the Republican Party and if they let two hundred strong activists in a small, intimate setting they'll agree to work harder."

There is no clear reason as to why the campaign would hold a non-publicized, collegiate setting event for a mere group of 200 supporters, who were already likely to cast a vote for the McCain - Palin ticket. The fact that many students were completely oblivious to her visit doesn't help either. While the people in attendance largely enjoyed the visit, a larger group of people seemed almost angered at the secrecy of it.

"I thank you for your participation. God bless you all," concluded Palin. With a casual stroll off the stage, complete with a wink and a smile, she headed out the door she had entered just 12 minutes earlier.

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