



America's Newspapers

Idaho Values Alliance overcomes funding hurdle - The organization received enough donations to stay in operation through the first half of 2008.

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Recent donations have kept the struggling Idaho Values Alliance afloat, Executive Director Bryan Fischer said Thursday.

The Boise group, which champions many socially conservative causes, sent out an urgent plea for donations in November, saying it would fold without additional money. Since the plea, supporters have donated money equal to about roughly half the group's annual budget, Fischer said, though he would not specify the amount.

"Obviously we are gratified that enough Idaho families see the value in the work of the IVA to want to see its voice continue," Fischer said.

The nonprofit group has a budget of roughly \$89,000, and Fischer made \$47,000 in 2006, according to federal tax returns. Fischer is the alliance's only paid member.

According to the group's newsletter, the alliance will stay in operation "as funding allows." Fischer said it has enough money to make it through about half of 2008.

"We still have some work to do, but we know we have enough support to move full-steam ahead into 2008," Fischer said.

Fischer is best known for lobbying unsuccessfully to keep a Ten Commandments monument in Julia Davis Park. He said he's looking forward to lobbying the Legislature to get rid of the grocery tax, enact an education tax credit and restrict no-fault divorce.

Dennis Mansfield, a prominent spokesman for the local Christian right before Fischer formed the values group, praised Fischer's work. Funding ebbs and flows as an organization's donors change, Mansfield said.

"I think it's a natural phenomenon," he said.

In 1990, Mansfield co-founded the Idaho Family Forum, which folded, in part due to financial problems, in 2000, a year after Mansfield left.

Mansfield, who now runs a faith-based drug and alcohol treatment program for former inmates, said he's learned over the years that it's easier to get supporters by reaching across political divides, rather than looking for support from one group of like-minded people.

"I'm a recovering bomb thrower, and I've learned that shaking hands and loving people is so much more productive than finding divisions," said Mansfield, who also runs what he calls a "progressive conservative" blog.

Caption: Bryan Fischer

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