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CENTS

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Jose "Joey" Torres

\$790,218.70

Lawrence Spagnola

\$53,290

James A. Kuykendall

\$29,024

Vera Ames-Garnes

\$2,000

Tommy Silva

\$50



# FOLLOW THE MONEY

## Candidates cast wide net for cash

By TOM MEAGHER

Herald News

**PATERSON** — For a city whose residents have long complained about the influence of outside businesses and their money on local politicians, this year's campaign would seem to only confirm their fears.

More than 72 percent of the largest donations raised thus far by the five mayoral candidates came from out-of-town individuals and businesses, a Herald News analysis of state campaign filings found. More than 58 percent of the money came from donors outside of Passaic County.

Mayor Jose "Joey" Torres' re-election war chest far outstrips those of his rivals. Since shortly after Election Day 2002, he has raised and spent thousands of dollars on electioneering, nearly \$460,000 by Jan. 1. In total, he has raised more than \$790,000.

The Election Law Enforcement Commission limits individual donors to give no more than \$2,600 to a candidate during an election cycle.

Some groups are permitted to give as much as \$8,200. The commission also requires candidates to itemize any donation greater than \$300 from a single donor during a campaign. The Herald News' analysis paints a picture only of these bigger donors.

Most recently, the mayoral hopefuls filed forms totaling the money raised 29 days before the May 9 election.

Today, candidates must file an updated, 11-day pre-election report with the state.

The newspaper compared the 29-day pre-election reports for the three mayoral candidates who filed them — Torres, the Rev. James A. Kuykendall and Lawrence G. Spagnola. Fourth Ward City Councilwoman Vera Ames-Garnes, who is waging a write-in campaign, has declared only \$2,000 in donations from a single Paterson donor: N.J. Sweeping and Maintenance on Wood Street. Candidate Tommy Silva said in a recent interview that he has collected only \$50 for his run at City Hall.

Please see FUNDS, A14

### Money raised in the mayoral election

Figures reflect totals from reports the candidates filed this month to the state elections commission.



# Whence comes the money

*People in cities, towns and boroughs around North Jersey have given money to Paterson's mayoral candidates as they stump for the May 9 election.*

## 1. PATERSON

Of the money given to the potential mayors, Paterson donors account for \$163,585 – less than 28 percent of the total raised.

## 2. NEWARK

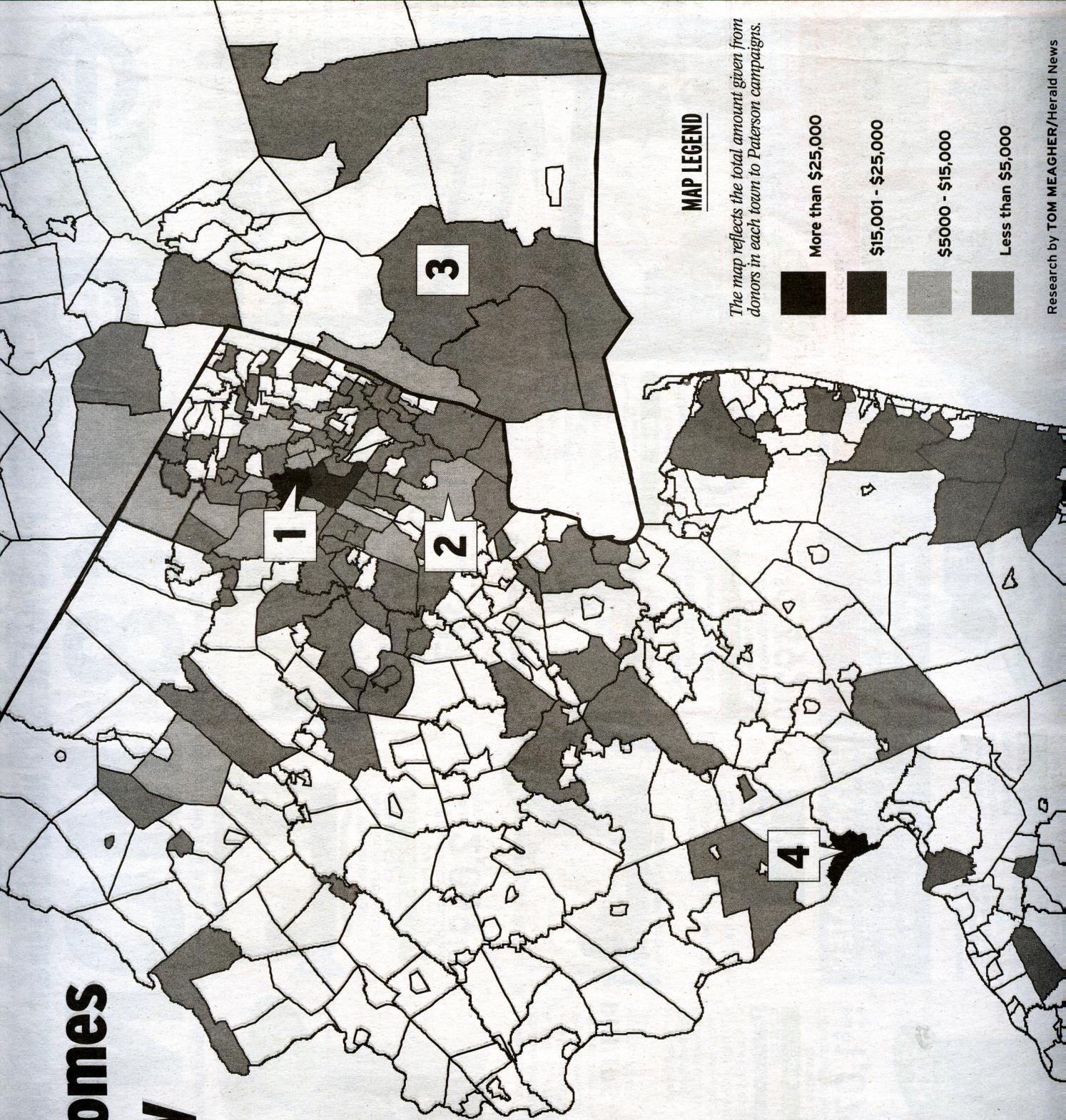
In Newark, business and law firms contributed more than \$7,800. The city's bond counsel, McManimon and Scotland, gave Torres \$2,000.

## 3. QUEENS

Six donors, all from Queens and all associated with the Alma Realty Corp., gave Torres \$4,500. Alma Realty is owned by Steve Vailotis, one of two principal members of the Ridgewood-based Center City Partners development company. Nearly all the money came to Torres one day after a ceremonial groundbreaking he held last May for the long-delayed downtown Center City project.

## 4. TRENTON

Three donors from Trenton made it the second-most generous city to Paterson mayoral candidates. The state Democratic committee, the New Jersey UAW Political Action Committee and MBI GluckShaw lobbying firm accounted for all \$41,500 that flowed from the capital to Silk City mayoral campaigns.



## MAP LEGEND

*The map reflects the total amount given from donors in each town to Paterson campaigns.*

More than \$25,000
\$15,001 - \$25,000
\$5000 - \$15,000
Less than \$5,000

# Funds: Paterson donors put up about 28% of candidates' totals

## Continued from A1

For Torres, Kuykendall and Spagnola, most of the money fueling their campaigns has come in large sums, much of it from those who want to do business in Paterson. And it's coming from across the state.

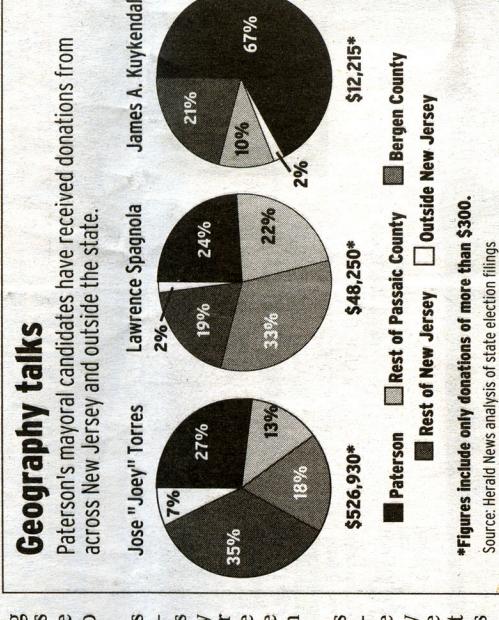
In Paterson, it's nothing new for gadflies and political hopefuls to complain about the fundraising of incumbents. The recently deceased taxpayer advocate Andy Torcillo made a similar argument when he waged a write-in campaign in 1998 against then-Mayor Martin G. Barnes.

"All this fundraising tells me that Barnes will owe a lot of favors to contractors and lawyers," Torcillo said at the time. "Quite a bit of his funds are coming from outside Paterson."

Ingrid W. Reed, the director of the New Jersey Project at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, said it's not unusual to see a lot of money coming from developers and land speculators to an incumbent like Torres, who is trying to revitalize a wounded city. But, Reed said, the especially small share of large donations coming from Paterson donors — about 28 percent for all mayoral candidates — seems below the norm.

"It's just not a tradition (in New Jersey) of appealing to local voters for many contributions. It's not retail fundraising; it's more wholesale fundraising," Reed said.

On the flip side, Reed said that challengers too often draw much of their money from outside their



## JAN HOUSEWERTH/Herald News

Passaic County Democratic Chairman John Currie, who is also deputy vice chair of the state Democratic Party, said the \$40,000 the state Democrats gave Torres was earmarked for a "Get Out The Vote" drive in advance of last November's general election. Currie said it was not meant as an endorsement for Torres' re-election. Torres has also harvested big dollars from companies allied with individual projects in the city. The principals involved in North Riverview Plaza LLC, designed that he feels like a Patersonian. He also said it's a good sign that outside investors want to help city leaders.

"A healthy mix of support from one's local base as well as a positive influx of new interest is good

for expansion and revitalization of the city," Tsapatsaris said Wednesday. "I truly believe that."

According to Torres' campaign reports, he has mostly spent that influx of money on raising more money. Some of the biggest recipients of his campaign spending have been The Brownstone catering hall and Spirit Cruises, which have hosted his fundraisers; and various campaign consultants.

Kuykendall has lagged in the fundraising and raised most of his funds from the grassroots. According to his report, he received more than 59 percent of his money from itemized donations and loans. His 29-day pre-report showed him more than \$2,500 in the red. But Jasun Boone, his campaign manager, said Kuykendall's financial reports were not completely accurate because of inexperience with state filings.

Kuykendall did not return repeated phone calls for comment on this story. The minister, who serves as the pastor of Agape Christian Ministries on Ward Street, as well as a chaplain at the Passaic County Jail, appears to have drawn much of his support from middle-class professionals in social service and church-related occupations. His biggest donors include a nurse, Norma Jackson (\$2,110); Russell Graddy, of Absecon (\$1,500); and the Rev. James Salmon (\$600), pastor of New Christian Missionary Baptist Church on Bridge Street and the president of the Paterson Pastor's Workshop. Kuykendall also loaned his own campaign \$5,000.

## Geography talks

Paterson's mayoral candidates have received donations from across New Jersey and outside the state.

At the same time that Torres tries to complete a number of ambitious building projects, he has wooed the development industry within the city and statewide for money. Nearly two-thirds of the money he has raised came in large donations that must be itemized in state reports.

Although the largest donations to his campaign are from state Democrats and industrial firms, the development industry has heavily subsidized his re-election. More than 22 percent of Torres' largest donations could be identified as having come from real estate, development, construction, engineering, architectural, consulting and contracting firms. Lawyers, as a group, were also among the top five donors.

"If there's anything wrong with it, then one would say you can only do it in your jurisdiction," Torres said Thursday. "I guess elected officials that represent poorer districts would be at a disadvantage. Where else are they going to get the money from? Fundraising does not have jurisdictional boundaries."

Torres' top individual donors, according to his reports, include the state Democratic Committee (\$40,000), the Paterson Firefighters Association (\$5,450), business owner Mehmet E. Akcetin (\$5,100), the law firm Maraziti, Falcon and Healey (\$5,000), and Jorge Goni of Oak Ridge (\$3,700).

In contrast, former police Chief Spagnola has drawn nearly \$53,300, more than 90 percent of it from big donors. In recent speaking appearances, he has claimed that Paterson under Torres' administration has become "a city for outside contractors." But less than one-quarter of Spagnola's money has come from Patersonians.

"I've been getting calls from people that had roots in Paterson that knew me from years and years ago," Spagnola said Thursday. "They wanted to donate to the campaign. Hopefully that will be a first step in starting to identify the people willing to bring back to Paterson what they took off."

Spagnola's biggest donors are not contractors, but those in medical fields, industry and law. His greatest individual contributors each gave \$2,500 and include George Waits, a principal of Lakeview's Crown Roll Leaf, the Wegener and Wagner law firm of Totowa and at least three physicians. Currie said it has become common for candidates running for office in the state's large municipalities to canvas far and wide for money. He pointed to the Newark mayor's race, where former Councilman Cory Booker has raised more than \$6 million from donors across the country.

"If you want to get elected, you've got to raise money, and you raise money wherever you can," Currie said.

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