

EXCLUSIVE: GOP Mega-Donor Diane Hendricks is pushing Tommy Thompson To Run For Governor

By Mark Belling, WISN-AM

In a potentially huge development, one of the most influential Republican donors in America, Beloit's Diane Hendricks, is urging Tommy Thompson to run for governor.

Thompson, the outgoing acting UW System President, was elected governor a record four times but is now 80 years old. Many have found his flirtation with a run this year as curious but the support of Hendricks could mean several million dollars in his campaign coffers.

Hendricks has been listed a support of presumed frontrunner Rebecca Kleefisch. If she actually prefers Thompson, the GOP race for governor is suddenly wide open. The state's giant Republican donors are split in the race. Husband and wife Dick and Liz Uihlein of Uline Corporation aren't even on the same page. Dick supports Kevin Nicholson while Liz is backing Kleefisch.

In the meantime, former President Donald Trump hasn't endorsed anybody yet. Trump is a confidante of Hendricks and if the two of them back the same candidate, that one would likely be the favorite.

And then there's Tim Michels. The head of the giant pipeline company that bears his family name is still thinking about running and his significant personal financial wealth would allow him to be able to self fund his campaign.

The campaign that appears to be going nowhere is that of State Rep. Tim Ramthun who jumped in the race after a rift with Assembly Speaker Robin but has so far attracted little support.

It is stunning that the GOP field remains influx at this late date. The August primary election is only four months away. The reason for all of the Republican interest? It is widely believed that Democrat incumbent Tony Evers can be beaten

Mark Belling
April 8