

GOP Considering Switch to Florida

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Washington

The Republican Party is seriously considering moving its 1972 convention to Miami Beach because of "major problems" in getting facilities ready in San Diego.

"... we are presently proceeding with our plans to open the convention in San Diego August 21. However, it is my obligation to attempt to prepare for any eventuality and to be aware of alternatives," said Richard L. Herman, vice chairman of the Republican convention arrangements committee, in a statement yesterday.

The consideration of Miami Beach as an alternative convention site surfaced yesterday from several sources — including Florida's Governor Ruben Askew, Miami Beach Mayor Chuck F. Hall, Miami Beach City Manager Clifford W. O'Key and Republican national committee officials in Washington.

So far the effort to decide whether it is San Diego or Miami Beach has produced a quick trip to Chicago by Herman to nail down arrangements with San Diego sports arena owner Peter Graham, anger from San Diego businessmen and hope from Miami Beach officials.

Askew said that he had "indirect contacts" with the Republican Party on moving the convention to his state. Hall and O'Key were called from a regular city council meeting yesterday to the office of Miami Beach public relations man Hank Meyer. There they met an unnamed Republican Party envoy to discuss moving the conven-

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tion to Miami Beach.

After the meeting, O'Key said there have been "continuing unofficial inquiries for the past two or three weeks. We're ready. We stand here with open arms. If they want to talk about coming here, let's talk.

"The next move is up to the Republicans," he said.

Party chairman Senator Robert Dole of Kansas, in New Orleans for a speech last night, said: "We have some problems unless the people of California do better."

He said if the convention has to be moved, he would expect such a decision to come soon. He said the major problem in a switch would be equipment requirements for the news media.

A spokesman for San Diego's GOP Mayor Peter Wilson said: "It's mighty damned irritating to all of the sudden get calls that there are rumors here and rumors there that the convention is going to Miami Beach. The mayor is puzzled that if there were problems that were insurmountable that we were not contacted."

Herman said that "the critical problem" is making modifications in the San Diego sports arena in time for the August 21 convention.

He said that the work cannot be completed in time unless it "can begin sooner than the arena owner presently will permit."

"I hope that he can give us more time, and that he will not insist on permanent improvements that are prohibitive in cost," Herman said.

Another problem cited by Herman is that the San Diego Civic Host Committee "has been having some difficulty in meeting the commitments" on providing hotel rooms and money.