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who just moved to Las Vegas from New Jersey, was impressed by the first lady.

"She is such an elegant woman," Auspitz said. "I wanted to see if she stood up to what I thought she was."

Sandy Owens, whose husband runs his own subcontracting company, was also in the audience. She said the Bush tax cuts have helped her and her family, but she also wanted to see if Laura Bush lived up to her expectations.

"She's a great supporter of her husband," Owens said. "I really admire how she looks after him."

Bush told the crowd that she and her husband grew up in West Texas, where the skies — and the possibilities — seemed to stretch on forever.

"My husband brings that optimism, that sense of purpose, that certainty that better days are before us, to his job every day," she said. "With your help he'll do it for four more years."

It was one of the many times Bush used the word "optimism" to describe her husband, whom she predicted would do well at Thursday's first presidential debate.

"This Thursday night in Miami, the American people will see the strong, decisive man I've know for the last 27 years, a man who says what he means and does what he says," she said.

Bush's tax cuts have given all Americans more money in their pockets, allowing them to spend



R. MARSH STARKS / LAS VEGAS SUN

First lady Laura Bush speaks during a campaign rally at the Henderson Pavilion on Tuesday.

as they choose, including to invest more in their businesses, the first lady said.

President Bush will work to make the cuts permanent and help train more workers for the jobs of the future, she said.

"Millions of families and small business owners are spending more of their own money because the president worked to pass the largest tax relief in a generation," she said.

Before the rally, Bush briefly toured the Mammovan, a roaming van that offers free mammograms, breast exams and Pap smears to low-income people who wouldn't normally have access to the preventative tests.

About 10,000 women have been screened around the state in the Mammovan since it started rolling four years ago, and 36 were diagnosed with breast cancer, said Paula Guzman, community outreach coordinator for Nevada Health Centers, a nonprofit group that runs the Mammovan and other health initiatives.

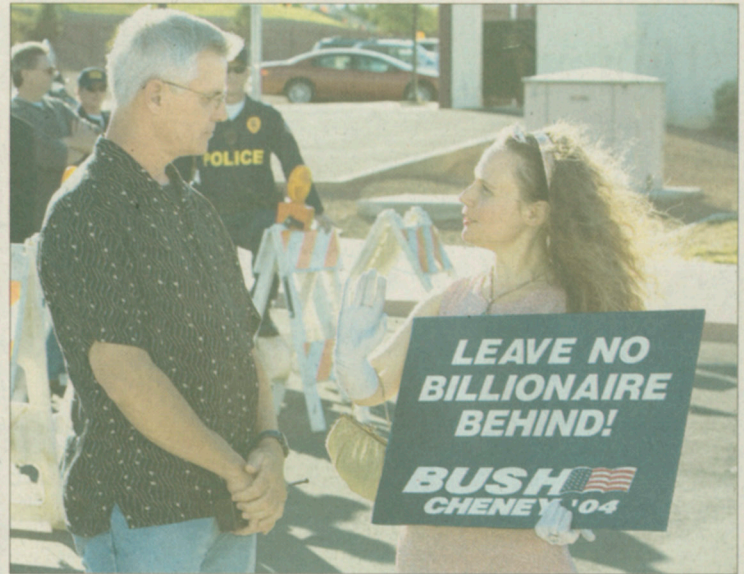
Those women were then linked to treatment through Nevada Health Centers, Guzman said.

Bush later called the van an "exceptional service" and told the crowd that "education, preventative screening and early detection can save lives."

This is the first lady's third visit to Nevada this year. She held her first solo rally of the campaign season in May at UNLV.

In February she visited Advanced Technologies Academy in Las Vegas, where she talked about training students for jobs needed in the future, a theme she and her husband both discuss frequently on the campaign trail.

President Bush visited Reno for a rally in June, and he gave a speech to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of American training building in Las Vegas in August.



Christina Lindhardt of Los Angeles, a member of Billionaires for Bush, asks Henderson Police Sgt. Nick Roble why the group was not allowed to be on the grounds of the Henderson Pavilion Center during Laura Bush's appearance. Roble said Henderson leased the property out to President Bush's campaign for the event and they did not want the protesters on the property.

Survey says single women favor economic security over homeland security

By Christina Littlefield
LAS VEGAS SUN

Millions of single women are cynical and bitter — at least when it comes to voting for one of the two presidential candidates, according to a new survey by the nonpartisan Women's Voices, Women Vote project.

The survey found that the majority of single women — those who have never married, are divorced, separated or widowed — believe that neither presidential candidate is addressing their concerns.

Both President Bush and Sen. John Kerry are spending too much time talking about the war in Iraq, terrorism and homeland security, the survey says, and almost no time talking about the economy, health care and education, issues single women identified as being their top concerns in the 19-state survey that in-

Women's issues

A survey of women who were single, divorced or widowed found that they were most concerned about the economy, health care and education.

Percent of women who said the following issues were important:

Economy and jobs	41
Affordable health care	32
Education	27
Situation in Iraq	23
Social Security and Medicare	22
Terrorism and national security	19
Moral values	16
Taxes	6
Federal deficit	5

What issues are women not hearing enough about:

Equal pay	73
Child care	72
Environment	63

recent reports describing women as "security moms," who want only a strong president who could protect them, Gardner said.

"The only security they are interested in hearing from candidates on is economic security, health care security, Social Security," Gardner said.

About 40 percent of those surveyed said they are hearing too much about the war on terrorism and 34 percent said they were hearing too much on the war in Iraq.

Less than a quarter of women surveyed wanted to hear more about terrorism, Iraq or keeping America safe. But 73 percent said they wanted to hear more about equal pay for both genders in the workforce, 72 percent want to hear more about child care issues, 71 percent the environment, 64 percent retirement and Social Security.

'Vanity War'

Former Air Force chief of staff criticizes Bush actions on Iraq

By Jace Radke
LAS VEGAS SUN

While stumping for Sen. John Kerry in Las Vegas Tuesday, retired Gen. Merrill McPeak, for-



STEVE MARCUS / LAS VEGAS SUN

Retired Gen. Merrill McPeak, a former Air Force chief of staff, speaks at American Legion Post 8 Tuesday.