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NEWS

Jindal touts values in Iowa

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Associated Press photo by KEVIN SANDERS/

By **MICHELLE MILLHOLLON**

Advocate Capitol News Bureau

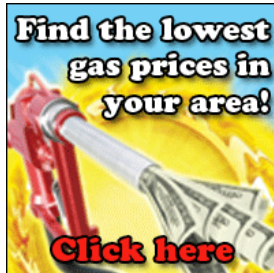
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WEST DES MOINES, IOWA — Gov. Bobby Jindal told a “family values” crowd Saturday night that he came to Iowa to talk about the American culture, not politics.

“I’m not here to give you a speech about politics ... Enough is enough already,” Jindal said, warning hundreds of people in a hotel ballroom that they might go home disappointed.

Despite his declaration, Jindal did talk about politics — or at least the politics important to the conservative supporters of the Iowa Family Policy Center. He discussed the importance of spending time with your family, tougher penalties for sex offenders, the U.S. Constitution, religion and fiscal conservatism.

Jindal was the keynote speaker at a “Celebrating the Family” banquet for the Iowa Family Policy Center, whose supporters are strident about their conservative values. The dinner drew 800 people, including a number of families with small children, and sparked speculation that Jindal is laying the groundwork for a White House race.

Iowa is one of the first stops on the presidential campaign trail because of its January caucus. Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, who made a failed bid for the Republican presidential nomination this year, won the GOP Iowa caucus with the backing of this group.

Huckabee also traveled to Iowa earlier in the week.

Throughout the day — in Cedar Rapids and later in West Des Moines — Jindal downplayed speculation that he wants to live anywhere but the Louisiana Governor’s Mansion.

The banquet focused on citizenship, marriage and family.

governor with a smile before handing a camera to a member of the governor's staff for a photo opportunity with Jindal. Saturday was the first time she attended the annual Family Policy Center banquet. She said Jindal was the draw.

"He's new and he's making a difference," Cavanaugh said.

Before addressing the crowd, Jindal said it is premature to talk about future presidential races. He noted that Barack Obama has not even been sworn in as president.

The governor said he is not looking to run for the White House in 2012. He deflected questions about the 2016 race.

"There is so much focus on who the next messenger is," he said. "My focus needs to be on Louisiana."

The banquet attracted a number of national reporters. Employees of the Louisiana Democratic Party also made the trip. Their presence at the back of the ballroom attracted the attention of Iowa Family Policy Center staff, who demanded to see their tickets.

In Cedar Rapids, the governor again deflected questions about possible presidential ambitions.

However, Jindal was game to talk about the recent election and the challenge of rebuilding the national party even as he

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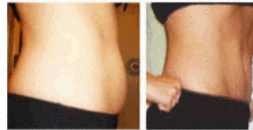
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