

# State GOP to work on ethics code

## Task force to develop guide for party leaders

By **MIKE RAMSEY**

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CHICAGO — Illinois Republican Party Chairman Andrew McKenna Jr. plans to assemble a task force today that will draft ethical guidelines for members of the GOP's State Central Committee.

McKenna said Thursday he has tapped former U.S. Attorneys Anton Valukas and Bill Roberts and former Illinois Attorney General Ty Fahner to serve on the task force. They'll work with three members of the State Central Committee, including MaryAlice Erick-

son of Peoria and Jerry Clarke of Champaign, McKenna said.

The plan will be unveiled today to the State Central Committee, which meets at 1:30 p.m. at Springfield's Crowne Plaza Hotel. Task force recommendation could be approved at the committee's next meeting, in August, McKenna said.

The policy probably will include financial disclosure requirements and guidelines for avoiding conflicts of interest, McKenna said.

"In terms of people who are core workers and are core donors, the policy will have substance because they're working hard to build this party," McKenna said. "They want to make sure the people who are leading it are not benefiting financially from decisions of the party."

The ethics initiative comes as the weakened Illinois GOP prepares to try to retake the Executive Mansion from Chicago Democrat Rod

Blagojevich. The self-styled political reformer was elected in 2002 as Republican incumbent George Ryan was mired in a corruption scandal that hobbled GOP candidates. In recent months, however, Blagojevich has been dogged by allegations of mismanagement and conflicts of interest.

Erickson, a longtime member of the State Central Committee, said personal ethics policies are common for boards that run not-for-profits but "rather unusual" for the directors of political organizations. She said it's a good idea to have a policy in place before committee elections in April.

McKenna said the ethics guidelines would also apply to him. He said he's not sure whether the policy will cover Illinois' two Republican National Committee members.

Republican National Committee-  
man Robert Kjellander of Spring-

field took heat from some Illinois party members in 2003 when his consulting firm earned more than \$800,000 in fees from a \$10 billion pension bond sale floated by the Blagojevich administration.

Blagojevich campaign adviser Pete Giangreco scoffed at McKenna's ethics proposal for GOP leaders. He said the Republican Party lacks credibility, especially when weighed against the Democratic governor's ability to pass sweeping reforms in the legislature.

Republicans "were the party in power for 26 years and never once tried to pass meaningful ethical reforms," Giangreco said. "I think they're a day late and millions of dollars of George Ryan's tainted money short."

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