

Romney easily wins Nevada caucus

By Mark Z. Barabak, Los Angeles Times

LAS VEGAS – Mitt Romney spent years cultivating voters in Nevada, and it paid off with a commanding victory that not only pushed him closer to the GOP nomination but laid a strong marker in a state both parties will fight to carry in November.

Romney also won the Nevada caucuses in 2008, one of the few impressive performances of his failed bid for the Republican presidential nomination, and he never really stopped campaigning here. The only question was whether Romney on Saturday would top the 51% he received four years ago; he was winning just less than that in early returns.



Mitt Romney

Trailing far behind were former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Rep. Ron Paul of Texas, who were locked in a fight for second. Former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, who eked out a win in Iowa but has faded since, was a distant fourth.

“Thank you, guys. What a great showing,” an exuberant Romney told supporters Saturday night in Las Vegas, as they waved white-and-blue placards reading, “Nevada believes.”

“This is not the first time you gave me your vote of

confidence,” he said, “and this time I’m going to take it all the way to the White House.”

Gingrich, at a late-night news conference, said he would stay in the race until the late-summer national party convention.

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