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Laguna Hills mayor may join field of Republicans challenging Jerry Brown

Laguna Hills Mayor **Andrew Blount** may join the field of Republican candidates bidding to unseat Gov. **Jerry Brown** this year.

Blount, a software developer known in Orange County for his massive Christmas light displays, said Friday he will make a final decision on the campaign by early February.

Brown has not yet said if he will seek re-election, but he is widely expected to run. The third-term Democrat has raised more than $14 million, far outpacing his Republican challengers both in fundraising and early polls.

Blount, who has developed real estate and stock-trading software, said he is working on a political application for mobile devices that will allow him to "run an election effectively for a really low cost."

He said the application, Skado, will scour volunteers' contacts for social media, demographic and other information, allowing the campaign to dispatch highly targeted campaign messages to voters, for example about state parks to someone interested in hiking.

Blount, 40, won election to the Laguna Hills City Council in 2012 and became mayor, a position voted on by council members, last month. He also puts on an annual Christmas light display and a holiday tour at his home. ABC featured the display on its program, "The Great Christmas Light Fight" last month.

If he runs, Blount said he will focus on jobs and education. He describes himself as a libertarian on social issues, supporting gay marriage rights, abortion rights and a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

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reasury Department official who is also from Orange County and considering running for governor. Blount said he met with Kashkari at Blount's house last year.

Former Lt. Gov. **Abel Maldonado** and Assemblyman **Tim Donnelly**, R-Twin Peaks, two Republicans who have declared their candidacies, have struggled to raise money, while Kashkari has said his assets total less than $5 million — not enough to self-fund a campaign.

Asked about his net worth, Blount said, "Less than Neel's."

PHOTO: From Andrew Blount's website for his 2012 campaign for city council in Laguna Hills. Photo by Michelle Blount

Categories: Election 2014, Gov. Jerry Brown

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