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POLITICS NOW

No more exploring: Tim Pawlenty will announce candidacy Monday

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Former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, pictured speaking in Iowa in March, will announce his formal candidacy for president in the state on Monday. (Brian C. Frank, Reuters)

By Michael A. Memoli
May 20, 2011 | 8:11 a.m.

Former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty plans to formally announce his Republican candidacy for president in Iowa on Monday, a campaign aide confirmed Friday.

The announcement will come during a town hall meeting in the lead-off caucus state. His wife will introduce him at the event at the State of Iowa Historical Building.

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There are a number of players in the GOP presidential arena, but only a few have suited up

still in an exploratory phase, waiting until the pace of the campaign picked up before making a showier splash.

In a campaign of tortoises, marked so far as much by who is out as who is in, Pawlenty has been something of a hare. He was among the first to announce the formation of an exploratory committee, doing so with a slick YouTube video on his Facebook page in March. He has been traveling regularly to early nominating states for more than a year, making early contact with key activists.

Lately he's been urging other Republicans to jump in, while potential candidates like Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels and former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin have been content to sit on the sidelines. When Fox News and South Carolina Republicans hosted the first debate of the 2012 cycle, Pawlenty was one of only five candidates who participated, while front-runner Mitt Romney took a pass.

Pawlenty's activity has not yet translated into support in public opinion polls, however, as he still ranks in the lower tier in most state and national surveys. By announcing in Iowa, which shares a border with the state he governed for two terms, Pawlenty signals he is eager to fill a vacuum left by Mike Huckabee, winner of the 2008 caucuses.

Following his kickoff event Monday, Pawlenty will participate in a Facebook town hall meeting on Tuesday in Florida, which is angling to be among the first crop of nominating states. He'll also speak in Washington on Wednesday at the Cato Institute.

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SteveInRB at 9:02 AM May 20, 2011

Is he whacky enough for the Tea Party crowd? What is his crazy quotient?

ggreen48 at 8:59 AM May 20, 2011

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