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Marco Rubio may have presidential announcement date: April 13 at Freedom Tower

BY ADAM C. SMITH - TAMPA BAY TIMES

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In February, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., delivered remarks during the graduation of small business owners from the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program held at the Freedom Tower.

JOE RAEDLE / GETTY IMAGES

Marco Rubio has reserved the Freedom Tower in downtown Miami for an undisclosed event April 13, which appears to be a potential, if not likely, spot for Florida's junior senator to announce his candidacy for president.

A Rubio adviser stressed nothing has been nailed down for any kind of announcement, but the timing makes sense: Likely presidential candidate Rand Paul is expected to make things official April 7, followed by a five-day, five-state announcement tour, so Rubio presumably would not want to share the spotlight during that period.

All-but-announced candidate Jeb Bush appears to be in no rush to shift more formally into campaign mode, but Texas Sen. Ted Cruz made his announcement this week, and Democrat Hillary Clinton is expected to make her campaign announcement in April as well, though nothing has been set.

Rubio, 43, has been preparing for a potential presidential run for at least a year. While behind in most early polls, he has generated considerable buzz as a top-tier contender who offers the party a fresh face, foreign policy experience, charisma and substance.

The Freedom Tower is apparently one of several venues under consideration by Rubio, but it could be an ideal postcard setting to kick off a presidential campaign promoting the promise and greatness of America by the son of Cuban immigrants.

The building is reserved for 5:30 p.m. that Monday, which also happens to be Thomas Jefferson's birthday.

Completed in 1925, the Mediterranean-style building on Biscayne Boulevard once housed the now-defunct Miami News before it moved in 1957.

After Fidel Castro seized power in 1959, the U.S. government used the tower to process and assist refugees fleeing the Communist dictatorship.

The iconic building changed hands a number of times. It was finally acquired by the college in 2005 when developer Pedro Martin donated it to the school.

The tower is home to the Cuban American Museum and it houses the MDC Museum of Art and Design.

In January, the building officially became the headquarters for a "Media Hub of the Americas" under an agreement between the U.S. Department of State and Miami Dade College. The State Department will use the office for hosting foreign dignitaries and engaging Spanish-language and Portuguese media.