

# Businessman vying to challenge Braley

By James Q. Lynch

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CEDAR RAPIDS — Rod Blum thinks the time is right to run for Congress.

"People are fed up with politicians," according to Blum, a Dubuque businessman who is seeking the Republican nomination for Iowa's 1st District House seat. "I'm not a politician."

Blum, 56, is CEO of Digital Canal Inc., which develops and designs software for homebuilders, and a land developer. He's never run for office but has decided that government has grown "too big, too intrusive and too costly."

So he wants to challenge three-term Democrat Rep. Bruce Braley of Waterloo. He joins Cedar Rapids businessman Steve Rathje in seeking the GOP nomination.

Blum has been traveling the district to meet with party leaders in the 20 counties, including Linn, that form the new 1st District. The others are Worth, Mitchell, Howard, Winneshiek, Allamakee, Bremer, Fayette, Clayton, Black Hawk, Buchanan, Delaware, Dubuque, Marshall, Tama, Benton, Jones, Jackson, Poweshiek and Iowa counties.

One of the problems in Congress, according to Blum, is "too many lawyers." Braley is a trial attorney.

"We need people who understand how jobs are created," he said, because more than anything people want job growth.

Even people who are employed are worried about their job security, Blum said.

"They're nervous, so they're not buying and that means employers aren't hiring," he said.

He attributes that to uncertainty about taxes and regulations.

For example, businesses don't know what new health care regulations will cost them, Blum said, and they are concerned by Democrats talking about tax increases.

The voter registration numbers in the new district aren't favorable for a GOP challenger. Democrats outnumber Republicans 214,651 to 169,296. However, Blum points out half the counties, including Linn, are new territory for Braley, so he sees an opportunity for a challenger.

He sees a lot of frustration with Congress and the federal government in general, too.

"There's a sense the game isn't being played fairly anymore," he said. "They don't agree with bailouts, they want to get rid of loopholes, lower the tax rates and get everyone on the same page."

Blum's also promising that if elected he won't serve more than three terms.

"I think that's what the founders had in mind — citizen legislators," he said.



**Rod Blum**  
Will run  
in 1st District

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