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Blum thinks economy is key

By JON ERICSON

jonathan.ericson@wfcourier.com

WATERLOO — Rod Blum doesn't expect to stray far from his core message as he tried to capture Iowa's 1st Congressional District seat.



Rod Blum

"People ask me what are the top three concerns out there. The top three are the economy, the economy and the economy. But first and foremost, the economy," Blum said.

Blum, a Dubuque business owner and real estate developer, is one of two Republican candidates who have already declared they will try to unseat Braley. Steve Rathje, a Cedar Rapids businessman, has already started campaigning. Ben Lange, an Independence attorney who came within 2

percentage points of Braley in 2010, is also considering a second run at the office.

To get the economy rolling, Blum would like to see government become much more simple. He wants to rid the country of tax loopholes, favoring a flat tax or as close to one as he could get. Blum doesn't want to see targeted tax breaks that choose winners and losers.

He also thinks the nation's economy can't really take off until it gets the federal deficit and national debt under control.

Blum tells a story of how his parents lived within their own modest means, not spending more than they took in and managing to save for the future. He believes people know how to balance their own budgets and expect the same from their government.

"We just knew we couldn't spend more than we took in," Blum said. He's excited about the opportunities to

shrink the federal government in the current political climate.

Blum calls himself a tea party Republican and professes a strong belief in citizen legislators. He pledges that if he is elected to Congress, he would limit himself to three terms.

Blum owns a software company that specializes in architecture and structural engineering and has been doing residential real estate development in Dubuque. He also wrote a conservative political column for the Dubuque Telegraph-Herald newspaper, which he gave up this month to run for office.

That business experience is what Blum says gives him a good grasp of the economy, and he's eager to take that perspective to Washington.

"What we're doing today is arguing over pieces of pie, but the pie is shrinking. I want the pie to grow," Blum said.