GOP happy with Bereuter decision

By Jim Faddis

Rep. Doug Bereuter's announcement Friday that he is running for re-election to Congress from Nebraska's 1st District came as no surprise to the state's Democratic and Republican Party leaders, they said.

Dave Heineman, executive director of the Republican State Committee, said he expected Republican Bereuter to run for re-election and said he was delighted with Bereuter's decision.

"Bereuter has done an outstanding job in Congress," Heineman said. "He's going to be hard for the Democrats to beat."

Democratic State Committee Chairman Dick White said Bereuter can be beaten.

'It is hard to beat an incumbent but if we have a good candidate, we'll do good against him," White said. White said he thinks Bereuter has done a mediocre job in Congress.

"He has had trouble deciding whether he wants to be moderate or conservative. That has hurt his performance," White said.

Heineman does not expect the Democratic Party to have a strong challenger run against Bereuter. The fact that no Democrats have announced candidacy for the 1st or 3rd District House of Representatives seats yet, shows that the Democratic Party is weak in Nebraska, he said. Rep. Virginia Smith, a Republican, is running for re-election in the 3rd District.

DiAnna Schimek, chairwoman of the Democratic Party candidate search committee, disagreed with Heineman. She said there are no Democratic candidates yet because of the difficulty of defeating an incumbent and the high cost of political campgains.

Schimek said 88 percent of congressional

incumbents win re-election. "Incumbents have the name recognition that

challengers don't have," Schimek said. "For a candidate to seriously challenge an incumbent costs at least \$200,000. Few people are willing to run against an incumbent when the costs are so high and the chances of winning are so low."

Schimek said the Democrats expect to field serious candidates in both the 1st and 3rd District congressional races.



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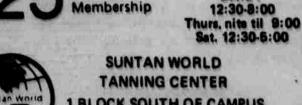
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