

Hansen holds key to GOP primary

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Idaho Republicans who are anxious to win back the 2nd Congressional District seat held by Democrat Rep. Richard Stallings may find the cards stacked against them.

That's because of what appears to be a crowded field looming for the Republican primary election next May. At that time voters will choose the Republican who will oppose Stallings in the 1986



George Hansen

November general election. The key to the situation will be former Republican congressmen, George Hansen, who is keeping his own counsel as to whether he will run.

At present, Hansen is a lobbyist for a conservative action group and his decision to run apparently will depend on how successful he is in this endeavor.

This much appears certain, however: If three or more Republicans enter the primary and Hansen is one of them, Hansen likely would win.

The rule of thumb is that an office holder or former office holder can generally hold his followers while his

contenders must split the opposition vote.

Several have indicated they may enter the Republican primary. Two now appear certain, Sen. Dane Watkins, R-Idaho Falls, and Dan Adamson, Jerome attorney.

Watkins has formed a campaign committee and is collecting campaign funds.

Adamson told this writer he planned to seek the position.

Adamson lost to Hansen by only 1,600 votes in the 1984 primary and likely would be considered a formidable challenger.

He is reputed to be in considerable debt as result of his 1984 primary campaign, which could cast some clouds over his running again.

Others interested in the race include four Idaho Falls legislators, Reps. J.F. Chadband and Linden Bateman and Sens. Mike Crapo and Ann Rydalch.

Added to this list are Rep. Robert Geddes, Preston, House assistant majority leader; and Sen. Larrey Anderson, Twin Falls.

Of this group, Chadband appears the most serious in his desire to run, especially if Hansen doesn't.

Chadband announced plans to hire a professional survey organization to draw up questions testing his viability. He said many long-time Hansen supporters have urged him to run.

"A lot of people think that Hansen has played himself out. I won't say if

I agree or disagree but that's what people are telling me," he is quoted as saying.

It was Chadband who was primarily responsible for launching an investigation on behalf of Hansen for alleged voting irregularities in Blaine County in last year's 2nd District congressional race, which Stallings won by 170 votes. The allegations were dismissed as having no basis.

Hansen has asked the House Administration Committee to order a recount and the request has been taken under advisement.

Hansen has left word that he wanted to see the outcome of his court cases before he would commit to running again.

Hansen has been convicted of four felony counts for filing false financial disclosure forms, which involved his alleged failure to report \$333,978 in income to the House. His appeal is pending with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

Both Mrs. Rydalch and Bateman said they have been approached about running and have indicated interest. Neither have reported any serious plans for actually getting into the race.

Crapo said he is not aggressively pursuing the campaign but that he has not entirely discarded plans, either.

It is obvious that five Idaho Falls legislators who are considering the

race would only divide the votes in this area and put themselves out of contention.

If any of the Idaho Falls legislators do seek the congressional post it would mean those seats would be wide open for other candidates, Republican or Democrat.

If Hansen were to enter and wins the primary, there would be considerable doubt whether he could win against the incumbent.

Stallings, since assuming the office in January, has shown a keen affinity for the office. He has been assiduously tending to both his congressional and committee duties. Besides that, he has been in Idaho much of the time working closely with his Idaho constituents.

Stallings has aligned himself with a Democratic conservative organization, the House Budget Group. His conservative voting record has generally met approval of Idaho voters.

Even though the 2nd Congressional District is heavily Republican, Stallings would be difficult for either Hansen or a newcomer to unseat.

For one thing, as has been observed previously, the pendulum is swinging more towards the moderate center from the conservative right of the past dozen years. In addition, the magic Ronald Reagan name won't appear on the ballot to help the Republican contenders in 1986.