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Watkins plans to run on his record

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State Sen. Dane Watkins, self-styled Republican challenger for 2nd District congressman, believes his extensive legislative and business record will propel him to victory in both the primary and general elections next year.

"People know me for my past record," Watkins said as he prepared to accelerate his campaign. "The issues will have a profound effect. It's the message that we can take care of ourselves. People know I will represent them the way they want.

"It's the message that government should be limited. It's to have people better off to do things for themselves and with less government."

Watkins said he will avoid a negative campaign, that he feels the Democratic incumbent, Richard Stallings, "is an honorable man but that he isn't representing the people of the 2nd District the way they would like."

"Stallings' allegiance is to the Democratic Party," said Watkins. "He must do what the liberals want. He is canceling out Idaho Congressman Larry Craig's vote on important issues. Idaho is a small state. All four members of our con-



Dane Watkins

gressional delegation must stick together to make our voices better heard."

Watkins, 42, is one of two announced Republican candidates, but there are at least six others who have shown interest. The other announced candidate is Gary Robbins, Dietrich farmer and a first-term state representative.

Others are Dan Adamson, Jerome attorney and a candidate last year, who has indicated he will jump in the fray if former Congressman George V. Hansen does not, and three Idaho Falls contenders. They are State Rep. J.F. Chadband, businessman, who already has sent out letters for campaign contributions; Melvin Richardson, KID radio executive; and State Sen. Ann Rydalch, who has professed interest but who has not yet mounted a serious campaign for funds or circulated campaign literature.

Then, of course, there is Hansen, who said there is about a 50-50 chance of his running but that he won't decide until November.

Watkins points to his record of 15 years in the Idaho Senate at the end of his present term next year. This includes six years as chairman of the Agriculture Committee and eight years as chairman of the Local Government and Taxation Committee. He also is a ranking member of the Joint Finance-Appropriation Committee, the important budget-setting panel.

In business, he and his family

directed the International Harvester Co. for 40 years in Idaho Falls until a couple of years ago. The family is now engaged in Watkins Enterprise, which supervises commercial investment, and rental of farming and commercial property.

Watkins was appointed 14 years ago as state senator by then Democrat Gov. Cecil D. Andrus to replace W. Fisher Ellsworth, who had been recalled for voting for increased legislative salaries.

Watkins just returned from Washington, D.C., where he attended a Republican congressional candidate school. Some 12 aspirants for office from throughout the nation were on hand.

He also attended a JFAC session last week at Boise, where budget analysts said the temporary 2.5 percent holdback must be solved when the Legislature reconvenes in January. At present it looks like the state faces a shortfall of \$14 million, he said. Gov. John V. Evans and the Legislature must take steps early next year to cope with this for the fiscal 1986 budget.

"I'm in the race for certain, regardless who may enter," Watkins said, affirming that Hansen's entry would not deter him.

He said he met Hansen in Washington last week and asked for his support, but the former congressman was noncommittal.

Watkins said he has raised about \$20,000 but plans a war chest of \$150,000 for the primary and

\$250,000 additional for the general election.

Watkins said he expects help from the Republican National Committee should he win the primary. He said he does not believe it would be to the extent of \$2 million, which Stallings says the Republicans are considering to spend to win back the seat.

"I've already received \$5,000 from the National Association of Realtors, which has 3,000 real estate agents in Idaho," he said. "That's the kind of support I'm proud of."

Watkins and his wife, Sherry, are parents of four daughters and three sons. Two of them are attending Brigham Young University, four are in Idaho Falls public schools and the youngest is age 3.

Watkins is a graduate of the University of Utah, where he played football.

Watkins said he is proud of his legislative record in behalf of Idaho business and people. He cited a 1979 resolution he sponsored to balance the federal budget, a matter now an issue in Congress. He also stoutly defended the INEL against attempts to remove its sales tax exemption.

Among other issues, Watkins said he supports firearms ownership and received commendation from the National Rifle Association for his stance, backs the president to maintain close relations with its western allies, believes in fair international trade and reducing the huge U.S. trade deficits with several nations, and seeks reduction of the \$2 trillion national debt.