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Roberts to announce intentions Tuesday at State Capitol

By

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State Rep. Rod Roberts, R-Carroll, this morning sent a press release across Iowa announcing a news conference at the State Capitol in Des Moines for next Tuesday.

Roberts, a five-term legislator who represents Carroll County and parts of Sac and Crawford counties, is expected to announce the formation of an exploratory committee for a possible run for governor.

The news conference will be held at 11 a.m.

"My early conversations and travels have gone extremely well," Roberts said in an interview this morning.

On Thursday night Roberts spoke with Greene County Republicans in Jefferson. That followed several other speaking appearances before GOP audiences across Iowa in recent weeks.

Roberts withheld any more comment on his political future until Tuesday.

If he forms an exploratory committee, Roberts would start by transitioning his legislative fund-raising and campaign apparatus to a gubernatorial one.

Should he later decide to drop out of the governor's race he could transfer the campaign account back to a legislative effort.

The GOP field eyeing an opportunity to challenge Democratic Gov. Chet Culver is widening. The list of candidates is expected - at this point - to include Sioux City businessman Bob Vander Plaats, Roberts, State Rep. Christopher Rants of Sioux City, State Sen. Jerry Behn of Boone, GOP eastern Iowa activist Christian Fong and State Sen. Paul McKinley of Chariton.

"The race is wide open at this point and the entrance of Representative Roberts adds another candidate for grassroots Republicans," said Tim Albrecht, a Republican strategist who operates one of the state's more prominent conservative Web logs, TheBeanWalker.com.

Albrecht says the GOP in Iowa has a strong chance at ousting Culver because of the public's frustrations with the Democrat's handling of state finances.

For his part, Roberts lines up with Republicans on key issues, Albrecht said.

"Rod is not afraid to let people know what he thinks but does it in a non-abrasive manner," Albrecht said.

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