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Whitman Republican already eying House seat in 2010

Hopes to oust Dem incumbent McCarthy



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By Nancy Reardon
Patriot Ledger State House Bureau
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BOSTON — Whitman resident Geoff Diehl is hoping to unseat state Rep. Allen McCarthy in November.

Diehl, a Republican, is pushing a platform focused on pocketbook issues that he hopes will appeal to voters frustrated by the state budget and local economy in the 7th Plymouth District, which covers Whitman, Abington and East Bridgewater.

McCarthy, a Democrat, is a former assistant district attorney in Middlesex County and was elected to the House in 2007. He plans to seek re-election, an aide confirmed.

Diehl, who is serving his second year on the Whitman Finance Committee, has never run for office. He plans to formally kick off his campaign Feb. 22 at the Whitman VFW post.

Diehl is already making his campaign known. Last weekend, he marched in East Bridgewater's "Christmas on the Common" parade with Scott Brown, who won the Republican primary for U.S. Senate on Tuesday.

"He's certainly a friend of the campaign," Diehl said. Although he counts no official endorsements yet, he also said Republican gubernatorial candidates Christy Mihos and Charlie Baker have "attended events and supported me financially."

"It will always be an uphill battle for a Republican to take office" in Massachusetts, he said.

Diehl said he was inspired to run when he saw the effects of state aid cuts on town budgets and municipal services.

A position as state representative, he said, is "probably the most effective position to make some change happen."

Diehl said he opposes the recent 25 percent sales tax increase – and higher taxes in general – and believes state government can tighten its own belt before looking to residents.

"Small businesses are having to put on a hiring freeze or pull back on hiring," he said. "But the size of the governor's office has grown."

Diehl said he supports the controversial Quinn Bill – a police incentive program that pays higher salaries to officers who earn advanced degrees – and is critical of the state's tax credit programs.

"I'm not in favor of luring industries that would already want to be in the state," he said. "There are a lot of other reasons than just tax credits for why they should want to be here."

Diehl – who is an account executive at New Bedford sign company Poyant Signs – said if elected, he plans to be a full-time legislator.

"I think what's needed is more time dedicated to solving problems either with state help or finding more creative means to bring businesses into our town," he said.

He said that in 2007, he reached out to Nestle Corp. to fund restoration of the Toll House sign in Whitman.

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"There's opportunity to find revenue streams we didn't think of," Diehl said, noting that with the restoration issue, he "found money that nobody had to come up with in the town."

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