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By Craig Lyons

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BERLIN— Congressman Charlie Bass paid a visit to the North Country Monday to continue staying connected to the Second District's constituents.

Bass spent Monday touring the Berlin/ Gorham area and met with a number of local officials to hear what's happening in the North Country. Bass said his visit was an opportunity to sit down with people and find out what's happening and what's on people's minds.

"I am having a great time spending the week going around seeing everyone," said Bass.

"I wanted to find out what's going on and what I can do to help," he added.

Bass said he feels the key to successful representation is personal communication with people.

Bass had a rigorous schedule throughout his day in the area.

He met with the Gorham Town Manager Robin Frost; Berlin Mayor Paul Grenier; the owners of Isaacson Structural Steel; Berlin City Manager Pat MacQueen; the president of the Androscoggin Valley Hospital; representatives from White Mountains Community College; the staff at the Berlin High School Career and Technical Education program; representatives from Tri County community Action programs; staff at the Northern Forest Heritage Park; the new owner of the Milan General Store; the Berlin Airport; and Lowe's Garage.

During each of those stops, Bass said he heard about the issues and challenges people are facing and often the themes of the conversations overlapped.

He said he heard about transportation issues; economic development issues; funding for vocational education; and obviously the funding to get the federal prison up and running.

Bass said these are all problems and challenges that he wouldn't normally hear about without visiting the area.

During his visit to the Berlin Airport, in Milan, Bass briefly discussed economic development in the area.

The federal government has a role to play that can help development in places like Berlin, said Bass.

The government needs to be more mindful of not enacting legislation that puts more costs on small businesses. He added those are the places that are creating jobs and investing in new ventures to promote more business growth in the region.

Bass said the country has been on a path to mediocrity, though that's changing.

"It's beginning to improve but it's going to be long and hard," said Bass.

Even though Bass said he'll do what he can to help, it's not a guarantee things will change.

"I can't wave a magic wand and have things change here," said Bass.