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By Craig Lyons

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BERLIN — After more than four years outside the political arena, Congressman Charlie Bass is starting off his term by reconnecting with constituents in the Second District.

Bass said it's important that he gets out and re-acquaints himself with everyone.

He swung through Berlin during a week-long tour of the Second District, two weeks ago. Bass said he started on Monday in Salem, hit the North Country later in the week and then worked his way back to the southern portion of the state.

"I'm renewing the good and close relationship I've had with people in Berlin," said Bass.

For the residents of Berlin, Bass said he's been involved with the community since he left office in 2007. He worked with the Laidlaw biomass project as an advisor before he ran for the congressional seat last year.

There are a lot of things happening in the Androscoggin Valley, said Bass, that are important, including the mill in Gorham, the federal prison and developing the overall economy. He added he's aware of the issues that are unique to the area.

"I'm looking forward to working with the city on its challenges and issues," said Bass.

Coinciding with the conclusion of his tour, Bass announced the opening of three offices across the state, in Littleton, Concord and Nashua. Bass said Gene Chandler, of Bartlett, would serve as his North Country representative.

Only a few months into his term in Congress, Bass said he's already starting to deal with some of the issues facing the county.

"I'm laser focused on solving problems," said Bass.

In Washington, Bass said the first priority is stopping the government's growth and getting spending under control. The second is working on health-care issues, he added, including making insurance coverage affordable but keeping the industry competitive.

But for Bass, he said he's also interested in the energy and telecommunications issues.

"It's my passion," said Bass. He added that many issues in these fields could have a direct impact on New Hampshire.

Bass said it's important for rural New Hampshire to host an environment for start-up companies

and creative ventures.

One of the first steps to make that happen, said Bass, is getting affordable high speed Internet available.

He said if companies located in Berlin can still compete and provide products and services, the area could once again become prosperous.

While many of these issues are still playing out in the halls of Congress, Bass said he's working to keep American economically viable and solvent.

Bass said this means cutting the federal budget, which could impact the lives of people in New Hampshire. He added but there the future of the country is in jeopardy if the spending problem isn't dealt with soon.

"I hope people in the region support this," said Bass. "It's really the future of America at stake."