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By CAMERON KITTLE

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HUDSON – Republican congressman Charles Bass has been touring businesses and speaking in several towns in southern New Hampshire this week, including stops in Hudson, Litchfield, Nashua and Salem.

Bass visited New England Small Tube in Litchfield on Monday afternoon and later walked through the headquarters of Airex Filter in Hudson.

He also eyed a few salmon at the National Fish Hatchery in Nashua on Tuesday morning and stopped at several places in Salem in the afternoon to meet with seniors, town officials and firefighters.

"The basic objective of meeting with manufacturers and employers was to emphasize the importance of small businesses and the need to get people back to work again," Bass said. "The employers are people that are smart, that have found niches in the economy to be successful, and I talked to them about what they thought I should be doing."

One man he spoke to was William Carroll, owner of Airex Filter.

Carroll said he gave Bass a tour of the building and explained how the company has been successful enough to expand in a tough economic period.

Airex opened a second location in Hudson this year, on Executive Drive, and they hired 12 new employees in the process.

"We sat down and talked a little bit about business in general, what we've done to expand," Carroll said.

Carroll said he was "somewhat surprised" at how well Bass knew the manufacturing business. It was clear as he took Bass around the building that the congressman knew what he was looking at, Carroll said.

"He's very knowledgeable on manufacturing," Carroll said. "He knows how important it is to keep manufacturing in New Hampshire."

One concern Carroll mentioned to Bass was the decline of small businesses in New Hampshire. Carroll said many of his material suppliers in the area have gone out of business, which makes for more hassle in buying goods.

"We've always supported local businesses, but that's getting tougher and tougher to do," Carroll said.

