

## Whitaker throws gauntlet

### 3rd District Democrat to Womack: Expect a fight

#### BILL BOWDEN ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

SPRINGDALE — Democrat David Whitaker said Tuesday that his Republican opponent in the 3rd District congressional race better expect a campaign instead of a coronation.

Whitaker, a former Fayetteville assistant city attorney, began his “earned-media campaign” last week, e-mailing news releases to media outlets. Next week, Whitaker said, he will begin buying advertising as part of his “paid-media campaign.”

Whitaker said Rogers Mayor Steve Womack, his opponent, has yet to start his campaign for the Nov. 2 general election.

The congressional seat has been in Republican hands since 1967. But, as Whitaker noted, the Democrats held it from the time of the Civil War until 1967.

“All the while, my opponent sits idly by,” Whitaker told a group of about 80 at a meeting in Springdale of the Senior Democrats of Northwest Arkansas. “My guess is what he has been told is, ‘Hunker down, lay low. Don’t say anything, and you can just waltz into office in November.’”

Womack could not be reached for comment Tues- day.

After the meeting, Whitaker said he plans to beat Womack the way John Paul Hammerschmidt, a Republican, beat James Trimble in 1966 — by “traveling around the district and outworking him.” Hammerschmidt served in Congress until 1993.

Last week, Whitaker sent out a news release saying he supports H.R. 1586, a bill the U.S. House of Representatives passed Aug. 10 and is now Public Law 111-226. The law will inject \$10 billion into state education budgets, protecting teacher jobs, and provides \$16 billion to prevent Medicaid shortfalls next year, said Whitaker.

Whitaker also has sent out releases stating that he will protect Social Security, and he favors extending middleclass tax cuts but wants to roll back tax breaks for the richest Americans.

“Less than 2 percent of Arkansas households would be affected by the change,” the release stated.

The original tax-cut legislation was passed almost a decade ago under the administration of then-President George W. Bush.

“It’s obvious that with record deficits, we have to make hard decisions,” said Whitaker. “I fully support retaining the tax cuts for middle class Americans, but when it comes to tax breaks for the rich, we’ve got to say enough is enough.”

Whitaker told the group at the Western Sizzlin restaurant in Springdale that he is the best candidate to represent families and working people of the 3rd District.

Whitaker encouraged the crowd to look at Womack’s website, womackforcongress.com, and read his stance on issues such as the privatization of Social Security.

Womack defeated seven opponents in the Republican primary election on May 18. Whitaker was unopposed in the

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Democratic primary.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/MICHAEL WOODS David Whitaker, a candidate for the 3rd District congressional seat, visits Tuesday at a senior Democrats luncheon at Western Sizzlin in Springdale.



Womack

