

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Saying the many leadership roles he's had during his adult life would serve him well as a Nebraska state senator, Dan Hughes of Venango has announced he's running for the 44th District seat.

That seat will be up for election in 2014, after current State Sen. Mark Christensen is term-limited out of the position.

Hughes, a farmer and small business owner, said it's been a goal for a long time to be a state senator.

"I've thought about it many, many election cycles," he said Monday.

"The timing is right now."

Hughes, a registered Republican, said he isn't going to go into a full-blown campaign now, but just wanted to "put it out now because a lot of people are looking at this race."

And, he wants people in the district to know he'd like to do this.

"I feel my prior leadership roles as an adult have prepared me well to take on this challenge in Lincoln," he said.

His public service began with the Chase/Dundy Wheat Growers Association, eventually working up to president of the Nebraska Wheat Growers Association. He then served on the board of directors of the National Association of Wheat Growers.

He currently serves on the Nebraska Wheat Board and is chairman of the U.S. Wheat Associates, the national organization for wheat producing states which promotes U.S. wheat around the world.

Citing water, taxes and education as key issues for the district, he puts water at the very top.

"Water is a huge issue in this district," he said.

Hughes noted it depends on if you're a farmer or not, or an irrigator or not, but water has been proven to have a huge impact in this area.

"We have to do all we can to continue to get access to the water, use it wisely and be good stewards of it," he said.

Other public service on Hughes' resume includes the Nebraska Ethanol Board, to which he was appointed by then Gov. Ben Nelson; service as a Chase County FSA committeeman; and 12 years on the Grant/Perkins County School board of education.

He is also a member of the Grant United Methodist Church, the Venango Lions Club, the Nebraska Farm Bureau and the Nebraska Ag Builders Club.

Hughes was born and raised in northwest Chase County, and graduated from Venango High School in 1974.

After receiving an agriculture degree from Northeastern Junior College in Sterling, Colo., he joined his family's farming operation as a third generation Nebraska ag producer.

Today, he is joined in the family operation by his wife of 36 years, Josie, and their adult children, Tyler and Ellen Hughes and Ashley and Tim Colglazier.

Their farming operation includes irrigated wheat, corn and pinto beans and dryland wheat, corn and millet.

The family also operates Hughes Farm Supply, and has a mini-storage business in Grant.

Dennis Berry of McCook has also announced his intention to seek the 44th District seat.

