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Ag broadcaster hopes to take state Senate seat from Dem

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An agricultural broadcaster has decided on a campaign for a state Senate seat in an area that extends from Billings to Miles City.

Republican Taylor Brown of Huntley wants the post in Senate District 22, a position held by a Democrat.

"I feel strongly that we need more leaders in the Legislature who have experience in business," Brown said. "The survival and growth of small family-owned businesses like ours is critical to the future of our state, and I will work hard to increase that opportunity."

Brown owns the Northern Broadcasting System, a regional radio and television network. A recognized voice and an advocate for agriculture, he is a past president of the National Association of Farm Broadcasting.

This is Brown's first campaign for public office.

Senate District 22 is made up of portions of Yellowstone, Treasure, Rosebud and Custer Counties.

It includes the Briarwood and Lockwood communities on the south edge of Billings, then runs down the Yellowstone River to the edge of Miles City.

It includes Colstrip on the south, and runs north to include all of Treasure County.

The seat is held by Sen. Lane Larson, D-Billings, who is expected to run for a second term in 2008.

Raised on his family's cattle ranch at Sand Springs, Brown moved to Billings to work as a farm broadcaster for the Northern Ag Network in 1979.

After six years he purchased the company from former Sen. Conrad Burns, R-Mont., when Burns began his own political career by running for the Yellowstone County Commission.

Brown, 51, is involved in ag youth leadership programs including 4-H, FFA and Montana Range Days, and he serves on numerous boards that provide scholarship assistance and support for students.

For the past three years, Brown has chaired the committee to build the first animal and range science building at Montana State University in Bozeman.

He received his bachelor's degree in agricultural science at MSU in 1979. Construction of the \$16 million Animal Bioscience Building is scheduled to begin this spring.

Montana's primary election is June 3, with the general election on Nov. 4.