



## Republican enters 21st Congressional race

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By: Britt Godshalk



SCOTIA, N.Y. -- When running for Congress, most candidates pray for good weather. Most. But not Jim Buhrmaster.

"What we need is cold, snow and wind, and it's not very good today," Buhrmaster said.

He comes from a long line of Schenectady County residents who make their living heating things up.

"My grandfather started this business in 1913, delivering coal with that horse drawn wagon right over there," Buhrmaster said.

As he stood by the carriage and the recognizable name on it, several Republicans stood by him. But he's the first to point out, he's not running as one.

"I'm the Republican candidate I guess, but I'm running on a platform of being independent," Buhrmaster said.

As a current Schenectady County legislator he has been known to cross party lines for a vote. But calling himself independent may also be political strategy. In 88 years, the seat has only been held by a Republican once, for four years, back in the 1960s.

Still, Assemblyman Jack McEneny warns Democrats against assuming voters who have been in their corner will stay there.

"I think counting people out based on enrollment is always a mistake," McEneny said. "It's especially a mistake when you have an open seat."

"And you're saying that as a Democrat," I assumed.

"Well I'm saying that as the former County Historian," he said. "But {speaking} as a Democrat, of course, {I think} he doesn't have a snowball's chance."

It's a challenge Republican John Faso knows all too well. In 2006 he lost his run for governor to a now infamous Democrat.

"I have been down this road before," Faso said. "Any Republican has to appeal to Democrats and Independents, and I think Jim's record is one many Democrats and Independents, many of them will respond to."

"There's no question that he's the underdog, that it will be an uphill challenge," McEneny said. "But you know, the reason people follow sports and the reason they follow politics, just when you think it's predictable, it isn't. And you've seen that just this month in the New York State government."

As unpredictable, perhaps, as the weather. And not only does Buhrmaster welcome a storm, he banks on it.