

Blanchard explains his bid

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Why would a four-term Democratic congressman who loves his work in Washington and hasn't had a difficult Republican challenge in several years want a change?

And why would he want to run for governor of Michigan in an era of revenue slowdown and spending cutbacks, in which his chances of being a hero are minimal?

And why would he do it when a recent poll shows more Michiganders than ever are identifying themselves as Republicans?

"THE MICHIGAN economy is in the worst shape it's been in in my lifetime," said James J. Blanchard, D-Pleasant Ridge, who has been living 39 years. "That's the bottom line. In the Chrysler matter, I've shown and demonstrated I can deliver when the chips are down," said the congressman who, more than any other, was associated with the congressional bills which propped up the No. 3 automaker's credit in 1980.

"It would be a tremendous challenge to revitalize the Michigan economy. I

have a zillion ideas — maybe too many. Having ideas is easy. Implementing them is something else.

"The shortcoming of the current administration is its inability to bring together more than a few political operators in Lansing. I want to develop a consensus of people in business, labor, the universities.

"We're in a global economy. We have to design for the next 10 to 20 years. Lansing is one small arena of debate — maybe the smallest arena."

Blanchard will trade on his experience on Capitol Hill as chairman of the House subcommittee on Economic Stabilization, a branch of the Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs.

BLANCHARD is serious about wanting to run for governor. He said Monday he has filed the necessary legal documents to begin fund-raising and organizational work.

If support is there, a formal announcement could come in December, an aide said. Indications of support have come from 600 Michigan Democrats, including Attorney General Frank J. Kelley, for whom Blanchard worked in 1969-74, and state Rep. Jo-

seph Forbes, D-Oak Park, House majority floor leader, said the aide.

The field is crowded with state senators — Ed Pierce of Ann Arbor, David Plawski of Dearborn Heights, Kerry Kammer of Pontiac, Gary Corbin of Clio, possibly William Faust of Westland — and the perennial candidate, Zoltan Ferency of East Lansing.

But the Draft Blanchard effort and the fact that in 1979 the UAW gave him a distinguished service award named for the late Walter Reuther may be indications the man from Pleasant Ridge has a better than one-seventh chance of getting the nomination.

The Blanchard for Governor Committee has set up shop at 74 Oakdale, Pleasant Ridge.

BLANCHARD was a Watergate era congressman. In 1974 he toppled incumbent Robert Huber in the 18th Congressional District, which includes Troy, southeastern Oakland County and part of Macomb.

In 1976 he defeated then-Mayor John Olsen of Huntington Woods; in 1978, Robert Sallome; and in 1980, Betty Suida. The fact that Ms. Suida, who had never held public office and got little monetary support indicates what Republicans thought of their chances of defeating Blanchard.

Blanchard's decision to run for a job in Lansing would clear up one other



James J. Blanchard
a filing at Lansing

Democratic problem: Michigan's loss of one of its 19 congressional seats. Running for a fifth term in Congress in 1982, Blanchard could find himself thrown into a district with another incumbent.

A native of Ferndale, Blanchard earned a bachelor's degree in history and a master's of business administration from Michigan State University and his juris doctor (law) degree from the University of Minnesota.

Out of college in 1968, he went to work in Lansing as a legal advisor in the Secretary of State's office until 1969, when he became an assistant attorney general for five years. Then he ran for Congress.

County board unit ponders road bills

As county road commission officials lobbied for support, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners established a temporary committee to study a package of bills aimed at boosting road funds.

Richard Wilcox, R-Ortonville, chairman of the county board, picked Commissioner G. William Caddell, R-Walled Lake, to head the group. Caddell is chairman of the planning and building committee.

Other members will be the chairmen of the other five county board committees, the chairmen of the Republican and Democratic caucuses and the chairman of the three-man road commission.

"NOW YOU see why this county is all screwed up," complained Democratic leader Larry Pernick of Southfield. "All Republicans and one Democrat on this committee to go to Lansing and deal with a Democratic legislature."

The Oakland Road Commission is supporting four related bills sponsored by state Rep. Mary Brown, D-Kalamazoo, to generate new road funds for the state, counties, cities and villages. Rep. Brown chairs a House taxation subcommittee.

The bills are "tie-barred," meaning that none would go into effect unless all were passed and signed. They would raise fuel taxes to 11 percent of wholesale price, vehicle weight taxes to a flat \$28 for autos up to 5,000 pounds and truck taxes by 35 percent. It would also establish a formula for allocating transportation funds.

JOHN GRUBBA, managing director of the road commission, said Michigan's roads are still getting battered despite the trend to lighter, more fuel-efficient autos.

"I have a standard response to that," Grubba said in an interview as the board meeting droned on.

"Small cars can't take the kinds of chuckholes which larger cars can take. Therefore, we have to repair our roads to a higher standard."

"The greater proportion of small cars has required us to revisit all our roads' passing lanes and repoint and re-sign many of them because small cars have less visibility."

"These bills are not a tax revenue increase. Road revenues have gone down. We're trying to restore them to what they would have been" without the gasoline price inflation of the late 1970s.

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Teen-agers can enter pageant

Young women between 13 and 18 years of age are invited to enter the Metro-Detroit Miss National Teen-ager Pageant to be held Nov. 20-22 in the Plymouth Hilton Inn. It is a preliminary to the state pageant.

Contestants will be judged on scholastic achievement, leadership, poise, personality and appearance. There is

no swimsuit competition.

The girl who wins the Metro-Detroit pageant is eligible to compete for a \$500 cash scholarship, a \$4,000 college scholarship, a modeling course and other prizes. Those who are between 13 to 18 as of Aug. 15 may enter by contacting Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Scarborough, PO Box 2838 Pensacola, Fla. 32503 or call 904-432-0069.

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