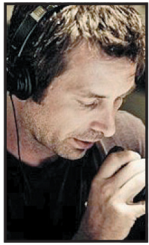


Former Congressman Berg selling oil in the Bakken ... by the quart

"I am selling oil out in Western North Dakota," former U.S. Congressman Rick Berg said. "But I sell it by the quart."

Berg, who is better known for his real estate development business, has entered into a partnership involving several Jiffy Lubes across the region and his partner



JASON SPIESS
For Bakken Breakout
Weekly

thought the Bakken may be a good fit. So they did some market research, scouted some locations and held some meetings.

"We just opened up in Watford City a week ago," Berg said in an interview conducted Aug. 27.

Berg sees the Bakken as a modern day gold rush and his Jiffy Lubes are just part of the shovel and pick offerings.

"It's kind of like I always thought back in the Gold Rush in California the people who were the most successful were the people who had the hardware store not necessarily all the miners," Berg said. "So I thought what are the services missing in the Bakken, so I thought a car wash and a Jiffy Lube are a couple of those projects. I just love (doing business in) western North Dakota."

Berg grew up in western North Dakota and believes it still has a hold on him.

"Yes, I am from West River country," Berg said. "My mom is still in Hettinger and we always get back there over the Fourth of July. Hettinger is one of those communities that does a free meal after the parade and everyone from about 50 miles around comes. So it is a great time in a great community."

Berg attributes his drive for community development and contribution from his early western North Dakota days.

"I think that is where I learned to give back to the community," Berg said. "Hettinger is unique but its small town like those throughout Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, Minnesota and North Dakota that have the same values and small town ways."

When asked about some of the changes, specifically the infrastructure in the Bakken, Berg stressed time and cooperation need to continue to achieve the



JASON SPIESS, For the Tribune

Former Rep. Rick Berg, left, speaks with Jason Spiess for Building the Bakken Radio on Aug. 27.

collect goals.

"The whole challenge we have had in western North Dakota is how the infrastructure has lagged in all the development. It's kind of like you have the pri-

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— Former Rep. Rick Berg

private sector and you have government," Berg said. "Generally it takes government years and years and years to build something or fund something. So when you have something like the oil impact we've had in North Dakota it's happening now."

This is where cooperation and time become tested, because risk and account-

ability become involved for decades.

"In western North Dakota that's been the huge pinch," Berg said. "Obviously there is a bit of a slowdown right now, but we are going to see it make western North Dakota a lot stronger and the potential for future oil development even better because this infrastructure is going to catch up."

Berg then shared a conversation he had with Governor Jack Dalrymple shortly after Dalrymple announced he would not run for another term as governor.

"I talked to Jack Dalrymple this week, and I think he has done just an outstanding job as governor, he and I were elected to the North Dakota House at the same time," Berg reminisced. "He was kind of reflecting saying 'You know, the things we wanted to accomplish back when we first got elected it takes time for so many of them to happen and how they evolve.'"

Berg sees his work in office along the same lines.

"For me, so many of the things I have worked on from a policy standpoint, both in North Dakota and at the national level, I think it will be another 10 or 20 years before we start to see some of those things start to happen. So it is hard not to be passionate about wanting to see the

outcomes," Berg said. "Quite frankly I think we still need a balanced budget, we still need a strong economy."

Berg slightly hinted he wished more capitalists and entrepreneurs would look at running for office or become involved.

"It's always been fun for me to have a foot both in the private sector as well as the political sector," Berg said. "And there are very few people who do that. Typically most of the people that are in an elected office that is their full time job. That's there full time job for 10, 20, 30 years. They don't do anything else. Or you have business people who are too busy to run for something or be in something. So it gives you a different perspective, and now I feel like I am an interpreter sometimes."



Jason Spiess is a multi-media journalist and host of Building the Bakken Radio. Building the Bakken Radio can be heard in Bismarck on SuperTalk KLXX 1270AM on Sundays at 10am CT. To see if your listening area carries the radio program or see the entire Building the Bakken Media Network, visit www.buildingthebakken.com. Spiess can be contacted at jason@buildingthebakken.com.