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WEATHERS ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY
STATE AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER WILL RUN AS REPUBLICAN

S.C. Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers has decided to seek a full four-year term as the state's top agriculture leader. Last September, Gov. Mark Sanford tapped Weathers, a farmer and businessman, to serve out the term left vacant by former Commissioner Charles Sharpe.

In his announcement speech at the State Farmer's Market in Columbia, Weathers said his agriculture background and his business experience managing several family farm enterprises in Bowman have prepared him for the state's top agriculture job and his focus will be continuing his early efforts to make the state's Agriculture Department more efficient and effective. Weathers will run as a Republican.

"Since my grandfather milked his first cow back in 1927, I guess you could say farming just kind of stuck with our family. Three generations later, my brother and I have a few more Holsteins than our grandfather did, but other than that and some technological changes, farming in our family has remained relatively the same. It is a great way of life. It's in my blood and it's a part of who I am," said Weathers.

Weathers outlined four priorities for the future of agriculture in South Carolina. One is to manage the Agriculture Dept. to give good value to taxpayers and building coalitions with other organizations to be more effective. The other three are to increase value from South Carolina's crops, to preserve farmlands into the future, and to encourage the next generation of farmers in our state.

"Our plan to keep agriculture viable in South Carolina can only succeed if the appropriate leadership is provided to implement it. I am confident I can provide that leadership as Commissioner of Agriculture," Weathers said.

In addition to the Columbia stop, Weathers' announcement tour took him to Florence, Charleston and Greenville. Weathers is widely credited with ascertaining a permanent home for the new State Farmers Market and increasing efficiency and productivity at the Department of Agriculture since Sanford appointed him last September.

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