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Baucus to walk 630 miles for office

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Candidate Max Baucus said Tuesday he plans to hoof it 630 miles from Gardiner to Yaak in pursuit of the Democratic nomination for Montana's western district congressional seat.

"I enjoy walking and I enjoy meeting people. It's a long way, but beautiful and I'm looking forward to it," the 32-year-old lawyer said.

A state representative from Missoula, Buacus said he plans to begin the walking tour Monday, assuming the legislative session ends by then.

He said the tour is expected to take about eight weeks and end before the June primary election.

Patrick Driscoll, a campaign aide, said Baucus has set ground rules which will allow him to go backward or sideways by motor vehicle or bicycle, but any progress forward will have to be on foot.

Driscoll said the side trips will allow Baucus to keep periodic speaking engagements.

Baucus, a lanky, long-legged fellow, said: "Walking and listening to Western Montanans is the best way to understand and know the district I intend to represent.

"Candidates too often feel they can understand the people and problems of their district by speaking at luncheons and political rallies. I'm convinced that meeting people on their home ground and listening as well as talking is the best way to fully understand the district's concerns," he said.

Driscoll said Baucus will be accompanied by one or two aides and a camper truck.

Baucus will be following a technique blazed by Reubin Askew in Florida, who in 1970 started a walking tour of that state and found the governorship at the end of the trail.