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Just Russia Deputy Appointed Governor of Zabaikalsk

By The Moscow Times

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President Vladimir Putin on Thursday appointed Konstantin Ilkovsky acting governor of the Zabaikalsk region until the next gubernatorial elections, a statement on the Kremlin's official website said.

Ilkovsky, a Just Russia deputy and a member of the State Duma's Energy Committee, told RIA-Novosti that he intends to run in the election, which is scheduled for September.

As for his top gubernatorial priorities, Ilkovsky said he will focus on supporting small and medium-sized business, aiding community development and agriculture and developing the region's gas distribution network.

A fellow Just Russia deputy, Nikolai Levichev, expressed delight with the appointment and said it was a wise decision, since Ilkovsky was elected to the Duma from the Zabaikalsk region and is familiar with the issues facing the area.

Levichev also said the changes in Russia require "constructive opposition to be presented not only in the legislative branch but also in the executive branch."

In comments to Izvestia on Thursday, Ilkovsky seemed to shrug off any political implications of his appointment, saying: "There are other governors from other parties. The most important thing in heading a region is not what party you belong to. Gubernatorial work is not political work."

Ilkovsky will replace Ravil Geniatulin, who has served since 2008. His gubernatorial mandate expires March 1.

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