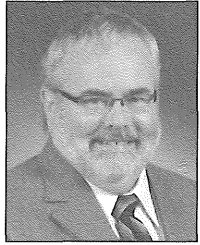


# 'Honesty, common sense'

## Murdock comes to St. Paul with an open mind, no agenda

By Nick Busse

Politics has always been in the back of Rep. Mark Murdock's mind. The Ottertail Republican has been wrapped in elections since childhood, when his mother, a DFL activist, campaigned for Democrats like former President Harry Truman.



Rep. Mark Murdock

"She still likes me even though I'm a Republican," Murdock said.

In fact, when Murdock was asked last year to run for the seat vacated by former Rep. Dean Simpson (R-Perham), his mother even donated to his campaign. Murdock said he hopes his fellow lawmakers will cross party lines in a similar way to deal with the state's budget deficit.

"We're all going to have to work together. There's going to be a lot of pain out there. There's going to be a lot of cuts," he said. "We just have to suck it up, watch our expenses and get through this thing."

Murdock, a hardware store owner for 25 years, said he comes to the Capitol with no political agenda other than "honesty and common sense and an open mind." He is guided by the philosophy that there is a difference between a real "representative" and a mere "politician:" a willingness to do what's right for his constituents, regardless of politics.

"Politician, I think, sometimes might be a job, a career. ... Representative, I think, is the proper term. It's what I want to be," Murdock said.

According to Murdock, the number one issue for his constituents is jobs and the

### DISTRICT 10B

Population: (2007 est.) 37,234  
Largest City: Wadena  
Counties: Becker, Otter Tail, Wadena  
Top Concerns: Jobs, economy

economy. As a business owner, he has been forced to reduce his employees' hours. He supports Gov. Tim Pawlenty's proposal to reduce taxes on businesses, arguing it will stimulate job growth — although he notes it would do more for larger employers than it will for small employers like him.

"Well, you can't fix a budget by raising taxes. Raising taxes creates job loss," Murdock said.

Murdock, an avid outdoorsman, lives on Round Lake near Perham with his wife of 34 years, Pat. They have two adult sons and are expecting their first grandchild in August.