

A motivated Daggett speaks out, uses 'common sense' on issues

These days, Rep. Roxann Daggett (IR-Frazee) often recalls an earlier time in her life: her freshman year in college.



Rep. Roxann Daggett

"I tell everyone I feel like I'm back in college. I've got a roommate, I'm away from home, I learn something at every meeting, I don't know where the rooms are, and I want to get an A-plus in good common sense," she said.

Daggett, who became interested in politics after joining a teen Republicans league in eighth grade, came to the Capitol this session as a first-term legislator from Frazee, Minn., her hometown.

Her experiences as a politically involved teenager never left her. She's stayed active all her life, serving as campaign chair for two of former representative Jim Evans' campaigns. He represented the area from 1976 to 1984.

"I'm a legislator because a lot of people encouraged me through the years to run, but my kids were in school. Now they're working and there was no reason not to run, so this time I said I would," Daggett said.

She attributes part of her election success to listening to constituent concerns.

"By knocking on 10,000 doors and talking to constituents, I know they're concerned about welfare reform, the high cost of workers' compensation, and the money they spend in taxes. They're tired of mandates. I'll be on the watch for those things as I serve as their representative," Daggett said.

Minnesota small business people pay more for workers' compensation insurance than those in other states, and that drives business from the state, she said. She knows about workers' compensation law firsthand. Her father-in-law founded a trucking line in Frazee 65 years ago. Her husband, Dave, along with other family members, now manages the family business.

"Even though workers' compensation costs have adversely affected us for years, we have a loyalty to our area and we would like to see an improvement in the regulations," she said.

As a member of the Labor-Management Relations Committee, she's now in a position to help push through such reforms.

And speak up she will. Daggett doesn't suffer from the frequent first-year fear of

speaking up in class or in committee. She's put her undergraduate degree in communications from the University of North Dakota to good use the past 14 years.

In 1979, after winding up a stint as state president of the Minnesota Jaycee Women, she received a number of requests from community organizations for speaking engagements. She spoke frequently to fellow Jaycee Women on time management, by far her most requested topic.

She soon found herself talking several times a week at community education classes, churches, and other local gatherings. Her primary talk is called "If You Don't Plan Your Time, Someone Else Will." She also speaks on getting rid of clutter and setting goals.

Before long, people started asking her where they could get the "little red books" she jotted notes in to plan her day. This was before the age of time planning books, when such things were hard to find, Daggett said.

She decided to market them herself.

People who come to her seminars and speeches can still get one by filling out a request form, but she doesn't market them as heavily as she has in the past. If it's one thing Daggett understands it's time management. And now she needs as much time as possible for her legislative work.

When she's not wearing her legislator or motivational speaker's hat, Daggett enjoys golfing, cross country and downhill skiing, and spending time at the family cabin on Lake Wimer.

Time for those activities will be in short supply for awhile, but she's sure to ink some time for herself now and again into her little red book.

— Jean Thilmany

District 11A

Population: 33,145

Distribution: 32.52 percent urban;
67.48 percent rural

Counties: Becker, Ottertail, Wadena

Largest city: Detroit Lakes

Location: northwestern Minnesota

Unemployment rate: 6.49 percent

Residents living below poverty level:
15.93 percent

1992 presidential election results:

Bush/Quayle 40.99 percent

Clinton/Gore 33.57 percent

Perot/Stockdale 23.75 percent

Other: 1.69 percent