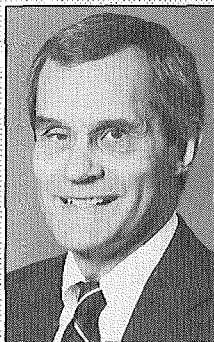


# Erhardt plans to focus on business issues



## Ron Erhardt

District 42B

Age: 61

Home: Edina

Occupation: Financial planner

District traits: 42B is contained within the city of Edina, which is known for its good schools and outstanding athletic teams.

Ron Erhardt always wanted to be a state legislator. So when friend and associate Mary Forsythe chose to retire after representing the Edina area in the House for 18 years, he jumped at the chance.

A longtime IR activist, party leader, and fundraiser on both local and state levels, Erhardt welcomes the challenges state government offers.

Although he ran unopposed in the strongly Republican district, Erhardt still

made the rounds, doorknocking at more than 11,000 homes.

He describes his district as a group of achievers, "a hard-working core of business and professional people," and bristles at the common perception of Edina as a very affluent suburb.

"I must have met at least 5,000 of my constituents," he says. "To meet with any degree of success at the Capitol, I need to know their concerns."

Their priorities, he found, were largely

about education. And that only makes sense considering that 92 percent of Edina High School graduates go on to some form of higher education.

"People want to know that our commitment to education will still be there despite a budget crunch," he says.

A lifetime Minnesotan, Erhardt has worked in the financial planning field since 1961. Like many legislators, he sees improvement of the business climate as a top priority.

"We need to improve the Edina business climate," he says. "Examining the current property tax system would be a step in the right direction."

He also sees the shift to an Independent-Republican governor as a positive one for the minority party. "I think we'll have opportunities this session we haven't had in the recent past," he says.

But as a first-year legislator, he recognizes there is much to be learned and much to be done.

"I think I'll be doing a lot of listening," he says.