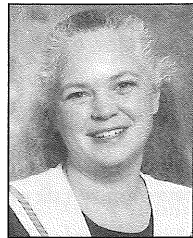


Holberg seizes opportunity to be part of the solution

By Grant Martin

Rep. Mary Liz Holberg, who operates a tree-trimming business with her husband, knew she was in for a tough summer when the second major thunderstorm hit in late May 1998 — three days after she was endorsed by Republicans for the House race.



Rep. Mary Liz Holberg

“We received about 500 calls the first two days after that storm, and, of course, we had more wind and hail storms in June,” said Holberg (R-Lakeville). “It was just wickedly wild trying to keep the business up and running, get a campaign going, and attend to the needs of my family.”

Holberg said the breaking point came in June when she got some bad news.

“I got a message on our machine saying that my husband was in the emergency room and that he had sliced the top of his arm with a chain saw,” she said. “An hour and a half later, he was back on the job. And this is after a couple of weeks of 14- and 16-hour days.”

Holberg said that they couldn’t keep pushing themselves at that rate.

“It was at that point that I said, ‘I’m out. No more of this. We have to go back to a more normal schedule. Everybody’s tired. It’s not worth it,’” she said.

From then on, Holberg made sure that her business only took jobs that could be reasonably handled.

Likewise, with her run for the House seat, Holberg said that she wanted to make sure that the campaign and the job of state representative wouldn’t interfere with her family.

“Certainly, for me, my family always comes first,” she said.

Holberg lives in Lakeville with her husband and two children. She also has a large extended family that lives in the district.

“We love to have family dinners at Grandma’s on Sunday,” she said.

Holberg’s first experience in local government came when she challenged a development project near her home. She later served seven years on the Lakeville Planning Commission, and in 1995 she was elected to the Lakeville City Council.

Holberg said that her parents, who served as foster parents for 175 children over the years, taught her the importance of being active in the community.

“My parents always told us if you weren’t a part of the solution, you were a part of the problem,” she said. “You can’t complain unless you’re willing to do something about it. I have always been willing to complain, but I have, in turn, been willing to work to make things better.”

In the 1998 campaign, Holberg ran against fellow Lakeville City Councilor Betty Sindt, an 18-year veteran of the council.

Holberg said that she and Sindt had worked closely together while serving on the council and on other local issues.

“She and I had what we called a ladies’ agreement that we would stick to the issues in the campaign and not make it personal,” she said. “We did that. Both of us received numerous positive comments from people in the community really respecting the fact that we did that.”

Holberg said that she will focus on the issues that are important to her district.

“We have an area that is exploding in growth,” she said. “And that affects every element of a person’s life, from the constant road construction every summer to the overcrowding in the schools to bond referendums. It just goes on and on.”

Particularly, she said that transportation funding is very important. It’s an issue that she will watch closely, she said, even though she didn’t get assigned to the Transportation Finance Committee.

“That’s OK,” she said. “You know how it is when you’re the low person on the totem pole up here.”

Holberg said that while she has been amazed at the variety of issues she’s already encountered at the Legislature, she finds it somewhat frustrating because it’s impossible to “dig into” every topic.

Holberg also said that she is excited about being a part of the new tripartisan government. She said that being a new member has been an advantage as far as that goes.

“I’m coming in with a chance to do things a little differently,” she said. “I’m watching some of the more senior members struggle with that. I’m not saying that as a criticism, but there has to be a new way of doing business up here.”

District 37B

1995 population: 43,097

Largest city: Lakeville

Counties: Dakota, Scott

Location: south metro

Top concern: “The major concern of my district is ensuring well-managed growth so that its effect on the community’s quality of life is not detrimental. That encompasses transportation, building schools, and land-use issues.”

— Rep. Mary Liz Holberg

House sets deadlines

The House passed a resolution Feb. 15 to formally adopt committee deadlines for the 1999 Legislative Session.

Each year the House and Senate set deadlines by which most bills must be heard in a committee and forwarded through the process. The deadlines weed out some of the thousands of bills introduced each year.

The first 1999 committee deadline will be **Friday, March 19**. That means to be considered further, a bill must pass out of

all necessary policy committees in its house of origin.

The second committee deadline will be **Wednesday, March 31**. By that date, all bills other than those containing appropriations will have to be passed out of all policy committees in the both the House and Senate. To meet the second deadline, bills will have to be acted upon before 4 p.m. March 31.

The third deadline will be **Friday,**

April 16. All omnibus appropriations bills will have to pass out of a finance committee by that date.

Of course, there are exceptions to the deadlines. The House Ways and Means, Taxes, and Rules and Legislative Administration committees are exempt, as are the Senate Finance, Taxes, and Rules and Administration committees. Also, a bill can be heard after the deadlines if the rules committee in either body allows it.