

## New members . . .

# Knoblach brings an 'eclectic' background to House

Rep. Jim Knoblach (IR-St. Cloud) believes timing is everything.

He had thought in the past about running for public office, but as a business owner, he needed to devote himself first to the direct mail company he owned in St. Cloud, Minn. But in 1993, Knoblach received a phone call "out of the blue" from someone interested in buying his company, North Star Direct. He sold.

Soon after, Knoblach heard that his state representative, Dave Gruenes, would not seek re-election. Knoblach figured his opportunity had arrived. He announced his candidacy.

The campaign went without a hitch, he said. He faced no challenger for the Independent-Republican nomination, and had no primary opponent. And he and his DFL opponent, whom he describes as a "great guy," agreed not to engage in negative campaign.

In addition to knocking on doors, Knoblach used his business knowledge to campaign by direct mail. He also knew many people in his district because he grew up in St. Cloud. He called on high school, family, and business contacts for support.

Though Knoblach had never held public office, he's no stranger to the legislative process. He earned a master's degree in American government from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. While attending school there in 1986, he worked for one year with the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations.

Knoblach also holds an undergraduate degree in economics and business administration from St. John's University in

Collegetown, Minn., and a master's degree in business administration from Harvard University.

One of the best parts of his new job is the sheer number of issues that come before the Legislature, he said. Knoblach enjoys studying, debating, and forming an opinion about different issues, he said.

"There's no one burning issue that caused me to run for public office," Knoblach said. "Instead, it was a feeling of obligation to give something back to a state and community that have been very good to me."

Knoblach said he is very concerned about the size and growth of government and wants to improve the way services are delivered so the public is better served. He is also particularly concerned about children's issues.

Knoblach serves on the Capital Investment Committee, Governmental Operations Committee and its Gambling and State Government Finance divisions. He also serves on the Legislative Commission on Employee Relations and the Advisory Council on Gambling.

"I was happy with the committee assignments because I like working with numbers," he said. Besides being a certified public accountant, Knoblach has had a hand in a number of businesses. He calls his business background "eclectic."

Knoblach remains a part owner of a real estate business as well as a small publishing company in St. Cloud. In an earlier career, he was in management at MediSense, an international biotechnology company that manufactures and markets blood glucose meters for diabetics and also did hazardous waste cleanup research.

"It's hard, at times, answering people when they ask me what I do for a living," Knoblach said.

As a legislator, Knoblach finds that on

most days, he's busy all day long.

"I expected that," he said.

But he easily found time to take off in late February to be present for the birth of his daughter, Laura Ellen, who was born Feb. 23. He and wife, Janet, also have a two-year-old son, Daniel.

In their spare time, which he says is now "almost non-existent," the couple enjoys camping and hiking. Knoblach is also an avid runner and in past summers has done a "fair amount" of mountain climbing. He has a certificate in his office earned five years ago for climbing Mount Rainier in Washington state.

"But with two kids, my wife has encouraged me to put the days of serious mountain climbing behind me," he said. "It's too risky."

Instead, Knoblach looks forward to a busy legislative session. He praised the freshmen legislators.

"I'm impressed with the other legislators. And with the freshmen. We have a great class on both sides of the aisle," he said.

— Jean Thilmany



Rep. Jim Knoblach

### District 16B

**Population:** 33,231  
**Distribution:** 86.23 percent urban; 13.77 percent rural  
**County:** Stearns  
**Largest city:** St. Cloud  
**Location:** central Minnesota  
**Unemployment rate:** 4.87 percent  
**Residents living below poverty level:** 13.76 percent  
**1992 presidential election results:**  
Bush/Quayle ..... 36.58 percent  
Clinton/Gore ..... 38.28 percent  
Perot/Stockdale ..... 24.08 percent  
Other: ..... 1.06 percent

## Richard Stanek elected to House

The latest member of the Minnesota House is Rep. Richard Stanek, a 33-year-old Minneapolis police officer who won a special election bid March 7.

He fills the District 33B seat vacated by former Rep. Warren Limmer (IR-Maple

Grove) who won a special election to the Senate Feb. 2.

Stanek (IR-Maple Grove), who holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in public administration, is the chair of the Peace Of-

ficers Standards and Training Board, which handles ethical concerns and licensing standards for police officers.

He is expected to receive his House committee assignments soon after he is sworn in March 13.