

Nelson political genes span four generations

Many people around the Capitol say they have politics in their blood. But when Rep. Syd Nelson (DFL-Sebekä) makes that claim, it really rings true.

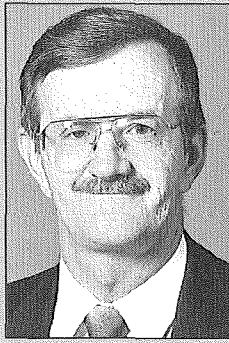
His great grandfather represented the same region in the House back in 1898. That marked the beginning of public service for the Nelson clan, which has continued ever since for four generations.

Before Nelson edged former Rep. Don Richter in the November election, he had served as a Wadena County commissioner.

But after serving 14 years on the board, Nelson, who first considered running for the House eight years ago, decided it was time for a change.

"New blood is always good," says Nelson. "I have always felt that time limits should be placed on elected offices."

Nelson says he hopes his years of service as a county commissioner will serve as a guide for his role as a legislator. Like many county commissioners, Nelson says he believes state government imposes too many mandates — without



Syd Nelson

District 12A

Age: 59

Home: Sebekä

Occupation: Farmer

District traits: 12A is dominated by the lumber and dairy industries. The political "swing district" had been represented by an IR. The Bush-Quayle ticket defeated Dukakis-Bentsen by a 57.3-to-42.7 percent margin in 1988.

providing funding — on local units of government.

"We thought it was unfair that the Legislature would tell local units of government how to tax their people," he says. One of his primary goals is to eliminate the levy limits the Legislature recently has placed on county governments, he adds.

Other issues of importance include health care and economic development. Health care for the uninsured is particularly important in his district because

some wages are very low and many businesses don't offer health insurance, he says.

Nelson is also concerned that the economy in his region, based heavily on the lumber and dairy industries, is "stagnant," and he feels steps need to be taken to increase economic development.

Although Nelson is anticipating an arduous session, he hopes maintaining a sense of humor will help pull him through.

It's a fact!

How much would you pay for the state Capitol?

Today, the Capitol, including the land it sits on, has an estimated market value of \$23,955,000, according to Ramsey County property tax records.

That's not much when you consider that estimate is only five times the original cost to acquire the land and construct the Capitol.

Opened in 1905, the Capitol cost \$4.5 million to build, according to the Minnesota Historical Society. The land, which the state bought during the 1893 depression, cost \$285,225.

But should state officials ever put a "for sale" sign on the Capitol lawn, don't expect it to go for a measly \$24 million.

Steven J. Mackenthun, an analyst in the real estate management division of the Department of Administration, says the county's value probably isn't accurate because of the "specialized use" of the Capitol, and how much it would cost to replace the structure.



How much would you pay for the Capitol? It's not for sale, but tax records say it's worth about \$24 million.