

New members . . .

# Lake City talk show host airs agenda in House

This is Rep. Mike Osskopp's (IR-Lake City) first term as a legislator, but he's been here before.



Rep. Mike Osskopp

"I'm not a complete rookie to the House because I've hung around here as a journalist," Osskopp said.

Since 1991, Osskopp, using his radio name, Mike Ryan, has been a mainstay on KDWA in Hastings, Minn. In that role, Osskopp trod the Capitol beat for his radio station and for the Minnesota News Network, which shares news for an affiliation of radio stations. For the past three years, he also has hosted a conservative radio talk show which, he boasts, received higher ratings than the Rush Limbaugh show for their relative radio listening markets.

Guests on his show included Rep. Jerry Dempsey (IR-Hastings), House Minority Leader Steve Sviggum (IR-Kenyon) and Rep. Kevin Knight (IR-Bloomington). When then-Rep. Bob Waltman (IR-Elgin) announced his retirement, Osskopp's radio guests thought he had a shot at winning the open legislative seat.

"So I talked about it with my wife and here I am," Osskopp said. He announced his candidacy in December 1993 and couldn't work during his campaign. He's now on leave. His radio show may be resumed after session, depending on how busy he is with legislative duties.

"I've worked six weeks in the past year, the six weeks after I was elected," he said.

Osskopp faced a strange problem after his

decision to run: because KDWA's radio waves didn't permeate his home district, no one knew his name there. And, while his talk show brought him popularity in Dempsey's district, residents there recognized only his radio name, Mike Ryan.

But Osskopp has always been involved in local community affairs. Eight years ago he started a Lake City branch of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). The national organization, founded in the 1950s, uses professional athletes to talk to high school athletes about Christian values. The program also serves as a youth ministry program in a town that doesn't have youth pastors in any churches, Osskopp said.

The FCA is now thriving in Lake City. Many people who know him from his work with that organization acted as delegates to the IR nominating convention, said Osskopp, who faced five other contenders for the IR endorsement as well as a primary challenger.

Osskopp holds the FCA in such high esteem because he worked with the organization during his stint as a professional golfer. He turned pro between his junior and senior years of high school in Milwaukee. To earn Professional Golf Association status he apprenticed for three years at a Denver country club. That's where he met his wife, Monica, who is a Lake City native. He then toured from 1976 through 1980, but didn't make a lot of money.

"I starved," Osskopp said of the time.

He later landed a job at a Milwaukee banking firm and eventually transferred to a job in St. Paul and settled in Lake City. They have two children, Jeniffer, 14, and Tom, 11.

Osskopp's conservative political views were well known to his listeners. So it was no surprise that he emphasized government accountability and property tax reform during his campaign.

"It appears those things will be like moving mountains," Osskopp said. "But my district has one of the largest senior populations in the state. These people are really being hurt. Some are being forced from their homes due to rising property taxes."

He also thinks politicians need to become more accountable to the constituents they serve.

"I want to put the trust back into mainstream government. When I was in high school, politicians and pastors were the people you trusted the most. Now they're not. Neither is the media. I work as a journalist, too, so I get a triple whammy," he said.

Now, he said, he wants to do everything he can to earn his constituents' respect.

— Jean Thilmany

## District 29B

**Population:** 32,761  
**Distribution:** 21.94 percent urban; 78.06 percent rural  
**Counties:** Goodhue, Wabasha  
**Largest city:** Lake City  
**Location:** southeastern Minnesota  
**Unemployment rate:** 4.47 percent  
**Residents living below poverty level:** 8.28 percent  
**1992 presidential election results:**  
 Bush/Quayle ..... 33.05 percent  
 Clinton/Gore ..... 35.65 percent  
 Perot/Stockdale ..... 28.80 percent  
 Other: ..... 2.50 percent

Agriculture .....	297-2200
Commerce .....	296-4026
Corrections .....	642-0200
Education .....	296-6104
Employee Relations .....	297-1184
Job Information .....	296-2616
Finance .....	296-5900
Gaming	
Gambling Control Division ..	639-4000
MN State Lottery Division ....	635-8100
Toll Free .....	1-800-475-4000
MN Racing Commission .....	341-7555
Health .....	623-5000
Human Rights .....	296-5663
Toll Free .....	1-800-657-3704

## Minnesota State Agencies

Human Services .....	296-6117
Economic Security .....	296-3711
Labor and Industry .....	296-6107
Military Affairs .....	282-4662
Natural Resources .....	296-6157
Public Safety .....	296-6642
Driver and Vehicle Services ..	296-6911
Fire Marshal .....	643-3080
Liquor Control .....	296-6159
State Patrol .....	297-3935
Pollution Control .....	296-6300
Public Service .....	296-7107

Revenue	
Taxpayer Assistance .....	296-3781
Toll Free .....	1-800-652-9094
Trade and Econ. Development	297-1291
Office of Tourism .....	296-5029
Transportation .....	296-3000
Veterans Affairs .....	296-2562
<b>State Information .....</b>	<b>296-6013</b>
House Information .....	296-2146
Senate Information .....	296-0504