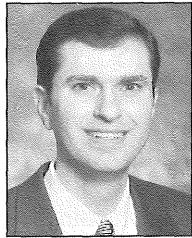


Wilkin working to deliver on tax-cutting initiatives

By Sarah Hallonquist

One election night thrill for the Wilkin family didn't have anything to do with politics.

While Rep. Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan), 33, was closing in on winning the District 38A House seat, his wife, Eileen, gave birth to Rebecca, the couple's second child. Their son, John, is 21 months old.



Rep. Tim Wilkin

"We didn't even get to go to our own election night party," Wilkin said. Wilkin and his wife are used to mixing life's celebrations with politics, however. The couple started out by getting married during his unsuccessful 1996 bid for the state Senate against incumbent Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan). In fact, the Wilkins had begun their courtship during his extensive early preparation for that race, which he lost by only 1,247 votes.

"If that had worked out, all three legislators [from District 38] would have been named Tim," he said.

At that time, Reps. Tim Commers and Tim Pawlenty, also Republicans from Eagan, held the district's seats in the House.

Although he lost that race, Wilkin said his door-knocking for the Senate campaign paid off two years later.

"That really laid a lot of groundwork that helped out this campaign," he said.

The lifelong Republican is no stranger to political campaigns, having stumped for George Bush and Dan Quayle in 1992 as state-wide chair of the Minnesota Young Republicans. In a 1993 special election, he passed out campaign fliers for Rep. Jim Rhodes

(R-St. Louis Park), who began his fourth term this year.

He also chaired the House campaign for his predecessor, Commers, in 1994. Commers stepped down in 1998 after serving three terms.

In addition, Wilkin served four years on the Dakota County Planning Commission and was vice chair of that group in 1997. That experience gave him a good flavor for how suburban and rural communities work with each other on property and development issues. He said he favors local planning that is supported by the residents and not dictated by the Metropolitan Council.

"I don't think the Legislature should be ceding authority to the Metropolitan Council," he said.

Wilkin was a member of the Burnsville Eagan Cable Commission, but stepped down because he said he thinks cable now has a number of effective competitors, compared to its previous monopoly position.

"I don't believe in extending bureaucracies beyond their useful life," he said.

That philosophy has followed him into the House, where his goals include paring down what he sees as a state government that's too big. He said he would like to see the government's ability to regulate be limited.

To fulfill his campaign promises, Wilkin is sponsoring a bill (HF5) that seeks a constitutional amendment to require a three-fifths majority in the Legislature to raise taxes. If the bill passes, voters would have to approve the proposed amendment in order to put the measure into practice.

"It doesn't prevent taxes from going up," Wilkin said. "It supports consensus."

He is also a co-sponsor of a bill that would

eliminate the motor-vehicle emissions inspection program. Emissions tests, he said, cause cynicism and tend to undermine other environmental regulations.

Another cause for Wilkin is repealing the health care provider tax used to fund the MinnesotaCare subsidized health insurance program. Wilkin said the tax only adds to the high cost of health care.

"I don't think we should be taxing sick people," he said.

Wilkin came to Minnesota straight out of college in the summer of 1988 to be an auditor for Norwest Banks. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Iowa State University, where he majored in finance. He met Eileen, a former piano teacher, in 1995.

The Freeport, Ill., native now works as an insurance underwriter for Northland Insurance Company in Mendota Heights. Outside of work and politics, he spends the majority of his time with his family. He said he's not planning an extended career in the House. He'd like to serve no more than four or five terms, and then return to the private sector.

But for right now, the soft-spoken Wilkin said he's "lovin' it" in the Legislature.

District 38A

1995 population: 37,400
Largest city: Eagan
County: Dakota
Location: Southeast metro
Top concern: "Reducing taxes and spending, while improving educational performance, are the issues of greatest concern to my district."
— Rep. Tim Wilkin

Minnesota State Agencies

(Area code 651)

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Agriculture | 297-2200 | Human Rights | 296-5663 | Pollution Control Agency | 296-6300 |
| Commerce | 296-4026 | Toll Free | 1-800-657-3704 | Public Service | 296-5120 |
| Corrections | 642-0200 | Human Services | 296-6117 | Revenue | |
| Children, Families | | Labor and Industry | 296-6107 | Taxpayer Assistance | 296-3781 |
| and Learning | 582-8200 | Military Affairs | 282-4662 | Toll Free | 1-800-652-9094 |
| Economic Security | 296-3644 | Natural Resources | 296-6157 | Trade and | |
| Employee Relations | 297-1184 | Public Safety | 296-6642 | Economic Development | 297-1291 |
| Job Information | 296-2616 | Driver and Vehicle Services | 296-6911 | Office of Tourism | 296-5029 |
| Finance | 296-5900 | Fire Marshal | 215-0500 | Transportation | 296-3000 |
| Health | 215-5803 | Alcohol and Gambling | | Veterans Affairs | 296-2562 |
| | | Enforcement Division | 296-6159 | State Information | 296-6013 |
| | | State Patrol | 297-3935 | | |