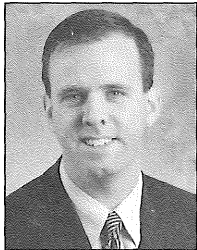


# From behind the scenes

## Garofalo looks to move out of legislative gridlock

By **MIKE COOK**

Rep. Pat Garofalo (R-Farmington) has come from behind the political scenes to a seat in the House chamber.



**Rep. Pat Garofalo**

Garofalo replaces Steve Strachan who left the House after being named Lakeville's police chief last spring.

"Two years ago I was his campaign manager," he said. "Steve has just been a fantastic mentor. One of the things he said to me was that there is a lot of pressure to be partisan and not work with others across the aisle, but by working with them you'll be much more effective and get more things done."

"I'm super-excited to get started," he said before session began. "I think we're going to surprise some people this year with how much work we are going to get done."

Garofalo replaces Steve Strachan who left

Garofalo represents a district that is an almost even mix of rural and suburban. "It's a great district to represent because of that. During the campaign I had the chance to go out and visit some farms in action, and a couple of times I brought my wife and kids with and that was a great experience. To have one of the few districts that is split down the middle gives me a very balanced view of how both sides see an issue."

That is especially true in education and transportation – two areas of concern for district residents, he said.

"In the rural areas, it's not as focused on traffic congestion as it is road safety where you have large traffic volumes on single-lane roads.

"As for education, in the metro it's more of a focus on education funding and education accountability; where in the rural areas, such as the Randolph School District, the issue is more local control. They are very concerned about federal and state politicians coming in

### DISTRICT 36B

2002 population: 36,713

Largest city: Lakeville

Counties: Dakota, Goodhue

Top concerns: Education funding, traffic congestion

***"Traffic is such a huge problem in the south metro, and the busway is a transportation solution that can last for generations. It's a significant investment but it will reap rewards long term."***

— Rep. Pat Garofalo

and telling them what to do when they know their community best."

If he could have offered the first bill of 2005, Garofalo said it would have been funding for the Cedar Avenue busway to help alleviate congestion on a freeway that many of his constituents take on a daily basis.

"Traffic is such a huge problem in the south metro, and the busway is a transportation solution that can last for generations," he said. "It's a significant investment but it will reap rewards long term."