

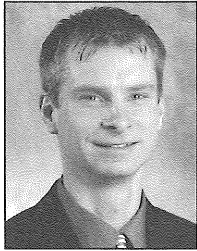
# Turning a new page

## Youngest lawmaker setting a path

By **PATTY JANOVEC**

At age 24, Rep. Andy Welti (DFL-Plainview) said he didn't expect to already be a legislator.

He says it's an advantage being the youngest lawmaker. "I have a lot of support," and with that comes increased attention and many legislators are offering to mentor him, he said.



**Rep. Andy Welti**

Welti was a participant in the page program in high school. "I remember being up here for that week long program and thinking how, someday, I wanted to be here in a legislative seat because I really enjoyed the debate." He just thought it would be more like at age 28 or 29.

Serving as a page and participating in his local 4-H program, Welti said he "developed a strong appreciation for community service, which I

think translated well to public service."

Participating in 4-H also helped with his speaking and leadership skills, both extremely important as a legislator. "Your ability to know how to compromise and ... communicate well with others so you can achieve an end result," and finding common ground is important, he added.

He's using those skills in the House committees on which he serves: Agriculture and Rural Development, Environment and Natural Resources and Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs.

He knows about the issues he faces on the agriculture committee because he grew up on dairy farm. "I can relate to the issues when we are discussing them."

What he enjoys most about the job so far is, "Being able to respond to the constituents and knowing that I have voted in a way that my constituents wanted me to vote. You're

## DISTRICT 30B

2002 population: 37,084

Largest city: Rochester

Counties: Olmsted, Wabasha

Top concerns: Affordability of health care and education

***Welti has invited two teachers from every school, and farmers from around the district to engage in discussions. He expects to sponsor legislation on key issues from the meetings.***

making a difference and making effective policy."

Welti says he has started something unique in his district to get his constituents more involved the process. "I have an education think tank, and an agriculture think tank," he said. He invited two teachers from every school, and farmers from around the district to engage in discussions. He said he expects to sponsor legislation on key issues from the meetings.