

Keepin' it together

Wollschlager brings work ethic to State Capitol

By **PATTY OSTBERG**

The office of Rep. Sandy Wollschlager (DFL-Cannon Falls) feels like a nature hike through her district. Local artists' works line the walls with framed sketches, watercolors, and mixed media of local creeks and dams.



Rep. Sandy Wollschlager

The colorful landscapes will “remind me of the people, the things I love,” and the land her constituents want her to protect, she said. They will also

remind her of why she ran for office during late night meetings, she added with a laugh.

Wollschlager said she hopes to have the opportunity to use her House committee assignments to foster outdoor funding for habitats, but other issues in her district will be her focus as well.

Property tax increases are a frequent concern voiced by her constituents. As vice chairwoman of the House Taxes Committee, she will have firsthand knowledge of ways to reduce these rates, which she said is her top priority on the committee. When “property taxes go up \$100, it hurts,” particularly for the working class, she said.

Observing and collecting those constituent concerns are her responsibility as a legislator, Wollschlager said. “If you’re in the working class ... you don’t have time for politics.”

After graduating from high school, Wollschlager worked as a boxer at a turkey factory. Adding up the turkey-weight per box was not something she saw as a lifelong career.

Instead, Wollschlager, a senior regulatory affairs specialist at 3M, earned a chemistry degree from Augsburg College and a master’s degree in public administration from Harvard University, both while raising two children with her husband.

DISTRICT 28A

2002 population: 36,636

Largest city: Red Wing

Counties: Wabasha, Goodhue

Top concern: Property tax reform

At Harvard, she met several former Minnesota legislators who told her, “business is easy for you, we need people to do public service,” she said. A run for the local school board upon her return set her on course to the Legislature.

She is proud of being able to keep her family intact while driving forward in her career. “Sometimes it’s not about outright brilliance, it’s about keeping it all together,” she said.

Wollschlager also serves on the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee, and the Veterans Affairs Division of the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee.