

Focus on the future

Knuth looks to help shape the state's 'next 50 to 100 years'

By Nick Busse

Last October, a Twin Cities Public Television reporter billed House District 50B as a “classic swing seat,” and argued it was one of the key



Rep. Kate Knuth

races that would help determine control of the Legislature.

Rep. Kate Knuth (DFL-New Brighton), who won that race, has a simpler view. “I decided that I could step up and be part of a positive vision for the future of the state,” Knuth said. Knuth, one of the Legislature’s youngest members, said she was motivated less by partisan politics than a desire to see government focus on issues critical to the state’s future, like education, health care, transportation and the environment.

She said the state has been “distracted” in recent years by issues that don’t necessarily affect people’s everyday lives.

“I’m a relatively young elected official, but really I think we are in a crucial time for a lot of important issues, and shaping how we want the next 50 to 100 years of Minnesota to be,” she said.

Youth aside, Knuth comes to the Capitol with a fairly impressive resume, including degrees from Oxford University and the University of Chicago, where she was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to study the oil industry in Norway.

She currently works at Hamline University as a fellow in the Center for Global Environmental Education — a job that perhaps leaves her well-prepared for her House committee assignments, three out of four of which are environment-related.

Although she’s been around the world,

DISTRICT 50B

2002 population: 36,953

Largest city: Fridley

Counties: Anoka and Ramsey

Top concerns: Education, health care, transportation and environment

Knuth said her heart belongs in Minnesota and in her home city of New Brighton, where her father, Daniel, served as a state representative from 1983-1988.

“I think Minnesota is a really special place in the way that people are involved in government, and the way people make government work by being a part of it. So, I really value that, and a lot of the things that lead to that, like a good education system and the ability to move around the state — a lot of the infrastructure we have,” Knuth said, adding, “I saw a lot of those things being jeopardized in some ways.”