

# Serving in a new role

## Former coach wants to continue helping community

By CRAIG GREEN

For as long as he can remember, service has always been important to Rep. Bob Dettmer (R-Forest Lake).



Rep. Bob Dettmer

After graduating from Bemidji State University in 1973, Dettmer took his first teaching job at Forest Lake Area High School, and it's where he has taught for the last 34 years. In addition to teaching outdoor education and weight training, Dettmer has coached track and soccer. He also became a state-ranked wrestling coach, leading his teams to more than 350 wins.

As a chief warrant officer in the U.S. Army Reserves, Dettmer was called to active duty shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks, first serving at Fort Gordon in Georgia, and later Kuwait and Iraq.

This was Dettmer's first run for public office, and he won his district with 55 percent of the vote. He replaces former Rep. Ray Vandever, who won a seat in the Minnesota Senate.

Representing a district that supports conservative values, Dettmer is pro-life and wants to work on "keeping a lid on taxes." He knows that his opinions may meet resistance. "As a conservative, I know there are issues that I will have to deal with which I may not agree," said Dettmer. "But my values, my foundation, will help me deal with these issues."

Dettmer and his wife, Colleen, have three children. Their sons, Travis and Robb, are both West Point graduates and officers in the armed forces. On his second tour in Iraq, Travis leads a company of 250 soldiers in Baghdad, while Robb is a captain with the Texas National Guard. Dettmer's daughter, Krystle, attends Bethel University and is

### DISTRICT 52A

2002 population: 36,767  
 Largest city: Forest Lake  
 Counties: Anoka, Washington  
 Top concerns: Education funding, property taxes

hoping to go into education.

During this year's session, Dettmer wants to focus on education funding, property taxes and affordable health care. He serves on the Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance and K-12 Finance divisions of the House Finance Committee, the House E-12 Education Committee and Veterans Affairs Division of the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee.

"I was a servant as a teacher at school, and a servant in the military," said Dettmer. "The call to come to St. Paul is also a tremendous service I look forward to."