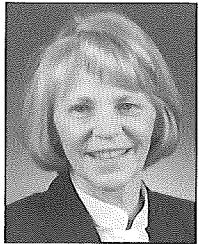


A heritage of involvement

Kiffmeyer brings lifelong work ethic to her seat

By KRIS BERGGREN

As the oldest of 14 children, Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer (R-Big Lake) is no stranger to responsibility. She grew up caring for her siblings in their tiny hometown of Peters, near Brainerd, even buying them pajamas when her parents couldn't afford Christmas gifts.



Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer

"It was always my job to be in charge and get things done," said Kiffmeyer, already well-known at the Capitol as secretary of state from 1999-2006. Now, as the representative for District 16B, she's turned her can-do attitude to the needs of her Sherburne County constituents.

Repealing last year's changes to the so-called "Green Acres" law is easily "the hottest,

biggest issue on my radar screen," Kiffmeyer said. In her district, where farmland meets exurban bedroom communities and strip malls, the lines between agricultural and commercial development tracts can blur, and nailing down tax classification is critical to generating property tax revenue.

Other key issues include stemming home foreclosures, which hit many counties outlying the Twin Cities metropolitan area in a big way; transportation, including completing the Northstar commuter rail; and education equity.

Cooking for her large family instilled a lifelong passion for baking. Kiffmeyer is famous for the homemade bread with honey cinnamon butter she served to legislators on special occasions in the House Retiring Room when her husband, Ralph Kiffmeyer, was in office in 1985-86.

Colleagues should note Kiffmeyer put fiscal

DISTRICT 16B
Population: (2007 est.) 49,745
Largest City: Big Lake Township
County: Sherburne
Top Concern: Repealing 2008 Green Acres legislation

conservatism into practice through supply-side scaling: She buys her wheat by the ton and grinds it herself. She used to purchase through a grassroots cooperative — then switched to a Red River Valley source no longer in business. Now she buys nitrogen-packed wheat from Montana farmers through a Minnesota buying club and stores it in a pole barn at her Big Lake home.

Kiffmeyer is proud of the heritage of community involvement she and her husband have passed on to their four children and 14 grandchildren who are active in Boy Scouts, their churches and nonprofit organizations. Formerly a registered nurse, Kiffmeyer owns an organizational consulting business.