

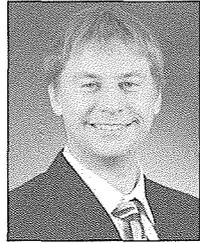
A young, rural voice

Falk to keep push for renewable energy policies

By SONJA HEGMAN

Age was and is not a factor for Rep. Andrew Falk (DFL-Murdock).

"I've got two of the three oldest population districts in the state and being the youngest member of our majority caucus and the second-youngest member of the body, it shows we can still be progressive out there," he said.



Rep. Andrew Falk

A lifelong resident of Murdock, population 303, Falk is the fifth generation on his family's 100-year-old farm. He raises soybeans and does processing for seed companies and domestic exports. He also works as a renewable energy developer, which helps

him in his role as vice chairman of the House Energy Finance and Policy Division.

"We need a voice to represent young people and what we can do to revitalize rural America," he said. "I think renewable energy is one of the best ways of doing that."

Professionally, Falk has completed commercial scale wind projects since 2005 and worked with Aaron Peterson, his House predecessor, on a lot of his renewable energy policies and renewable energy standards. When Peterson said he wasn't going to seek re-election, Falk decided to run for his seat, "And here I am." Falk was Peterson's campaign manager at one point.

Like many small-town legislators, Falk said he is concerned about what the loss of Local Government Aid could do to the towns and cities in his district.

DISTRICT 20A

Population: (2007 est.) 34,045
Largest City: Benson
Counties: Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Swift and Yellow Medicine
Top Concerns: Energy, LGA, education

"These towns provide the fabric to hold together a rural economy, and LGA helps support an ag-based economy which benefits the entire state," he said. "We need to make sure we support the rural parts of the state."

Above all, Falk said he and his colleagues need to be honest about what cuts will do to the quality of life for state residents.

"It's a challenging time, but we have a tremendous opportunity to do some real good for the citizens of the state," he said. "Our constituents are the best source of new ideas that help us do our job."