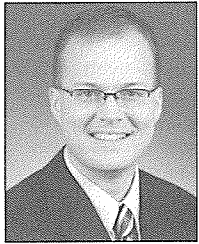


A political education

After years of teaching about politics, Kath leads by example

By Nick Busse

As a political science and economics teacher, Rep. Kory Kath (DFL-Owatonna) has spent the last nine years helping develop his students at Owatonna High School into the next generation of leaders. When the opportunity arose to represent his district as a member of the House, Kath decided it was time to lead by example.



Rep. Kory Kath

"I was very concerned about education policy. I was very concerned about the state of our state itself. And I said, 'You know what? This is the time. This is the time to get in there and provide that next generation of leadership that needs to step up,'" he said.

Although he's never held an elected office before, it would seem that Kath's entire career has been pointing him toward the Capitol. He studied political science at Gustavus Adolphus College, where he developed a passion for debating policy. Hoping to instill the same interest in young people, he opted for a career in education and moved back to his home district, where he became active in promoting student government and youth leadership programs.

Kath, who said he was "never really that active" in party politics prior to running for office, is the first DFLer to represent his district since 1982; however, he played down the partisan significance of his electoral upset.

"I'm not very partisan. I'm a good listener. I love to listen to people, on both sides of the aisle and everywhere in between, about

DISTRICT 26A
Population: (2007 est.) 39,558
Largest City: Owatonna
Counties: Steele, Waseca
Top Concerns: Education, health care, fixing the budget deficit

what are the issues we're facing and how can we come to some common solutions for problems," Kath said.

The husband and father of two said his hopes for the legislative session include reforms that will bolster the state's economic growth and help bring about solutions to the current budget deficit. He would like to see the state, federal and local governments form partnerships to address the problem, and hopes lawmakers can work together on a bipartisan basis to that end.

"Right now we are at a crossroads, and it's so important for us to reach across party lines," he said.