

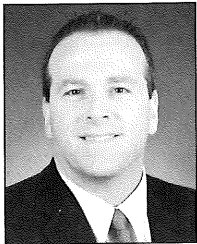
Numbers guy

Barrett hopes to help bring fiscal management to Capitol

BY SUE HEGARTY

Rep. Bob Barrett (R-Shafer) has always been a numbers guy. It's just the way his mind works.

He's the one balancing the books at home, as treasurer at church and on the job as executive director of the Hazelden Foundation.



Rep. Bob Barrett

"I want to find truth. And that's not fun, but that's what really gets me excited," Barrett said.

"I'm cheap," he added.

His penchant for saving money led to meeting his wife, Judi. While attending Minnesota State University, Mankato, she was trying to decide what to order at a local

restaurant. She caught his eye and he said, "You should buy this beer because you get to keep the cup, and the next time you order, the beer is cheaper. It's more economical."

That kind of fiscal management is what's needed at the Legislature because the state has built an unsustainable system of entitlement, he said. "There are too many workers in the cart and too few pulling."

Reform must be part of the solution, he said. Serving on the House Health and Human Services Reform Committee and the House Education Reform Committee, he'd like to help make that happen. He also sits on the House Property and Local Tax Division.

He hopes to help strengthen out the economy in his district. "The businesses are dropping like flies because of high taxes and

DISTRICT 17B

Population (2009 est.): 45,460

Largest City: North Branch

County: Chisago

Top Concerns: A strong business climate and financial responsibility

other priorities the state is making right now," he said.

Balancing the state budget, another goal, is an additional way Barrett feels he can contribute his talents.

"We've created a system we can't afford," he said. A self-proclaimed conservative, Barrett said he shared Tea Party values even before there was a Tea Party.

When he's not crunching numbers at home, church, on the job or in committee, Barrett enjoys going for walks with his wife, two daughters and their 140-pound Newfoundland dog, Tigger.