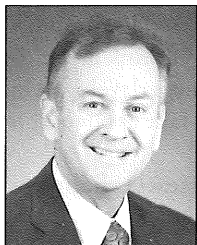


# Cutting through the red tape

## Benson hopes to reduce bureaucracy, empower people

By Nick Busse

When Rep. Mike Benson (R-Rochester) says too many rules and regulations can get in the way of efficiency, he speaks from experience. He spent 31 years in the U.S. Postal Service, working his way up from a clerk to a district manager in Pennsylvania.



Rep. Mike Benson

“In the postal service, we had a manual for everything, and it tied both managers and employees down to not being creative in terms of getting the job done,” he said.

Benson believes his experience gives him some unique insights into the inner workings of government. As a legislator, he hopes to apply that experience to help Minnesotans to innovate and be more productive.

“We need to empower folks, and the more government you have, the more restrictions you pile on them, the less empowered they are to get the job done,” he said.

Benson, who now teaches business courses at Crossroads College in Rochester, has been a Republican since his first vote, which was for Gerald Ford in 1976. He finds inspiration in famous Republicans from Abraham Lincoln to Ronald Reagan. He ran for office because he believes the current crop of political leaders, both nationally and in the state, have been moving things in the wrong direction. He worries what life will look like for future generations.

“I have four grandchildren, and I want to pass on to them a quality of life that I think is better than mine, and I felt that was in jeopardy,” he said.

Benson’s district includes part of Rochester, but also many rural areas. He said many of his

### DISTRICT 30B

Population (2009 est.): 38,014

Largest City: Rochester

Counties: Olmsted, Wabasha

Top Concerns: Fixing the budget deficit, easing regulatory burdens, increasing jobs

constituents are anxious about the economy, and he hopes the Legislature will encourage business growth that will bring more jobs to the state. He also hopes getting spending under control will lead to a more vibrant private sector.

“We are a great country still, and we’ll become greater as long as we allow people to be as creative and productive as they can,” he said.