

Priorities based on data

Gruenhagen doesn't favor across-the-board cuts

By **LEE ANN SCHUTZ**

Whether in the House or in his home district, Rep. Glenn Gruenhagen (R-Glencoe) loves a good debate on the issues — especially about government spending and what he calls its intrusiveness into the private sector.



Rep. **Glenn Gruenhagen**

“Government tends to have a corruptive influence; wherever government money shows up, in general, the price of everything goes up,” said Gruenhagen, who has his own insurance agency.

He acknowledged that human nature plays a part with companies taking advantage of the funds. “When you show up with the money ... everyone is sitting around trying to figure out how to increase their prices,

the costs go up,” he said. “I don't care if it is a farmer, contractor or stadium builder.”

Gruenhagen said his approach to the state's deficit is not indiscriminate cutting. He said there is a need for comparative data — “how we compare with other states” — to help with setting priorities — otherwise, it's like walking through a china shop while wildly swinging a baseball bat. “You don't know that once you start swinging what you'll wreck,” and it may be something you would prefer left untouched.

“Comparative data gives you the tools to make the changes and bring the budget into compliance with the ability of the private sector and the taxpayers to support it,” he said.

While passionate in his talk about state spending, Gruenhagen is even more passionate, albeit in a quieter tone, about his family and his values. Married for 32 years, with three children and four grandchildren, his mission is “to build a better future economically and culturally for our children

DISTRICT 25A

Population (2009 est.): 40,775

Largest City: New Prague

Counties: Le Sueur, Scott, Sibley

Top Concerns: Improve business climate, streamlining regulations, education

and grandchildren; have communities where they feel safe; (provide) good educational options and institutions; and a good strong religious fabric. Some of this stuff does better without government interference.”

Gruenhagen is active in his church and enjoys ballroom dancing with his wife, Emily. “I'm good enough to get by on the floor,” he said.

After 16 years on the Glencoe-Silver Lake School Board, Gruenhagen resigned his seat before taking his oath in the House. He now serves on the Civil Law, Health and Human Services Reform, Judiciary Policy and Finance, and the Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Finance committees.