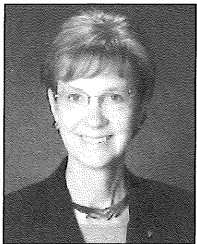


# Focused and determined

## McElfatrick hopes to strengthen Iron Range economy

By SUE HEGARTY

Rep. Carolyn McElfatrick (R-Deer River) had a formidable job in front of her to get to St. Paul.



Rep.  
Carolyn McElfatrick

She upset 28-year House DFL veteran Rep. Loren Solberg, two years after first attempting to win the seat. To emerge victorious, McElfatrick said she “focused on the job at hand” and campaigned hard. “He is very well-liked up there by many, many people.”

But it was her Republican views that resonated with the majority of voters, she said.

“I heard hundreds of times, ‘I have to live

within my budget. If I don’t have the money for something, I have to cut back. ... I have to take the wants out and focus on the needs.’ I think that’s what the people of the district were saying,” she said.

As she unpacks in St. Paul, McElfatrick wants to focus on creating and maintaining jobs to strengthen the economy. She hopes there can be bipartisan support for streamlining the permitting process in state agencies, especially in the mining industry, which provides good-paying jobs in her district.

“We have the capability of protecting our environment and creating jobs. We can do both,” she said.

McElfatrick grew up on a farm in Mower County near Austin, so she’s eager to serve on the House Agriculture and Rural Development Policy and Finance

### DISTRICT 3B

Population (2009 est.): 36,641

Largest City: Grand Rapids

Counties: Aitkin, Itasca

Top Concerns: Economic vitality of mining, logging and tourism industries

Committee. “We need to protect (farmers) and make sure we provide a healthy climate for them to do what they do best,” she said.

Health care is another passion of hers. A retired nurse who is married to a retired doctor, McElfatrick serves on both the House Health and Human Services Finance and Reform committees. She opposes the recent federal overhaul of health care signed into law. “I don’t see how this will not result in rationing. I think the people who will feel the Obama health care the most will be the disabled and the elderly and I get very protective of people like that.” In addition, “We can’t afford it.”