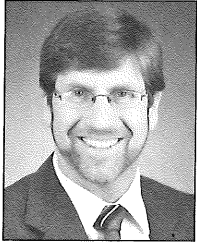


A reformer in the House

Vogel brings focus on agriculture; hopes to streamline state government

By Nick Busse

Rep. Bruce Vogel (R-Willmar) has high hopes for the 2011 session. He came to St. Paul on a mission to reform government, and he's eager to get to work.



Rep. Bruce Vogel

As a member of the House's new Republican majority, he said, "I'm looking forward to seeing what we can do. I'm hoping we'll be able to streamline the government, the spending, and get things back under control. We've lost control of some of that," he said.

A conservative through and through, Vogel says he draws inspiration from Ronald Reagan and from his Christian faith. The businessman and former youth pastor says

he had long considered running for office, and when the opportunity presented itself last year, he was ready.

Vogel and his wife of 28 years, Jeanne, have four adult children and six grandchildren. He grew up on a farm near Currie in southwestern Minnesota, where his parents still live. He says that lifestyle informed a lot of his present-day values.

"I grew up on a farm, so I have a farm background — common sense, hard work, a good work ethic," he said.

Beyond agriculture, Vogel has a business background. He has worked in construction and most recently in real estate. He served as president and board member of a local real estate association, and has also been active in the local Republican Party.

His early experience with agriculture also turned out to be a good primer for the issues in his district, which is heavily agricultural.

DISTRICT 13B

Population (2009 est.): 36,988

Largest City: Willmar

County: Kandiyohi

Top Concerns: Agricultural issues, reducing spending, streamlining regulations

As a lawmaker, he hopes to pass legislation that will streamline regulations for farmers and agricultural businesses. Beyond that, his priority is to make Minnesota more business-friendly and reduce state spending.

"If we can bring our spending back under control and not have our budget looking to grow by 20 or 28 percent every biennium, I think that we can consider it a success," he said.