

# Heavy voter participation is projected for election

Registrations, absentee ballots are way up

by Peter Bodley  
Managing editor



ANOKA COUNTY UNION

ANOKA, MN  
WEEKLY 5,100  
OCT 29 2004



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## Vote

Continued from 1A

Poser.

These include being out of town election day, illness or disability preventing a person from getting to the polls, religious observance, or if the person is an election judge outside their own precinct, Poser said.

When the county held a new voter registration period Oct. 1 through 12, 5,200 people registered.

"That's 10 times the number we normally get," Poser said. "It has typically been around 500 people registering."

What is drawing people to the polls is a presidential race that pollsters have so far determined to be too close to call, both at the national level and in Minnesota.

In 2000, former Vice President Al Gore, the Democrats' nominee for president, narrowly outpolled Republican George W. Bush in Minnesota, but Bush won Anoka County.

As president, Bush is opposed in the Nov. 2 election by Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass.

But the general election ballot has a host of other candidates for president/vice president - David Cobb and Pat LaMarche, Green Party; Bill Van Auken and Jim Lawrence, Socialist Equity Party; Roger Calero and Arrin Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party; Thomas Harens and Jennifer Ryan, Christian Freedom Party; Ralph Nader and Peter Miguel Camejo, Better Life Party; Michael Peroutka and Chuck Baldwin, Constitutional Party; and Michael Badnarik and Richard Campagna, Libertarian Party.

Besides the presidential race, Anoka County voters will also be voting in three congressional races.

In District 3, longtime Republican Congressman Jim Ramstad is opposed by Democrat Deborah Watts. The district includes suburban Hennepin County and all of city of Coon Rapids except for one precinct.

More Anoka County voters are expected to go to the polls in Tuesday's general election than the previous presidential election in 2000.

In 2000, there was a 75.6 percent turnout of Anoka County voters.

But the number of absentee ballots cast to date and new voter registrations for the 2004 gener-

al election suggest a higher voter turnout.

"It certainly looks that way," said Gary Poser, Anoka County elections supervisor.

Through Oct. 22, there had been 8,555 absentee ballots cast for this year's election compared with 5,518 for the same period in 2000, according to

Poser.

The Anoka County Elections Office will be open tomorrow (Saturday, Oct. 29) from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Monday, Nov. 1 until 5 p.m. for absentee voters to cast their ballots.

People have to have a legitimate reason for voting absentee, according to

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Most of Anoka County lies in Congressional District 6, where incumbent Republican Mark Kennedy is opposed by Democrat Petty Wetterling.

Columbia Heights, Hilltop and Fridley are in Congressional District 5 where veteran DFL Congressman Martin Sabo has two challengers - Republican Daniel Mathias and Green Party candidate Jay Pond.

While there are no Minnesota Senate races this year all Minnesota House seats are on the 2004 general election ballot.

In House races affecting Anoka County communities, all incumbents are seeking re-election and all have opposition.

District 17A: Rob Eastlund, R, incumbent; Pat Sundberg, DFL. The district includes the city of St. Francis in Anoka County and portions of Isanti County.

District 47A: Denise Dittrich, DFL; Bill Haas, R, incumbent. District 47A includes the city of Champlin and five precincts in Coon Rapids (11, 12, 42, 43 and 45).

District 47B: Melissa Hortman, DFL; Stephanie Olsen, R, incumbent. The district covers a portion of Brooklyn Park and five precincts in Coon Rapids (31, 32, 34, 41 and 44).

District 48A: Tom Hackbarth, R, incumbent; Mike Starr, DFL. The district includes Bethel, East Bethel, Oak Grove and Burns Township.

District 48B: Jim Abeler, R, incumbent; Bob Trewartha, DFL. House District 48B encompasses the cities of Anoka and Ramsey.

District 49A: Chris DeLaForest, R, incumbent; Jim Pithan, DFL. The district includes Ham Lake and part of Andover.

District 49B: LeAnn Mortensen, DFL; Kathy Tingelstad, R, incumbent. The district includes the southwest corner of Andover and north and east Coon Rapids.

District 50A: Barb Goodwin, DFL, incumbent; Nathan Jones, R. The district includes Columbia Heights and Hilltop and a portion of Fridley.

District 50B: Geri Evans, DFL; Char Samuelson, R, incumbent. This district covers parts of Fridley and Ramsey County.

District 51A: Kendra Brodin, DFL; Andy Westerberg, R, incumbent. District 51A includes most of the city of Blaine, except for the southwest and southeast corners.

District 51B: Darrel Benedix, Independence; Connie Bernardy, DFL, incumbent; Pam Wolf, R. The district covers Spring Lake Park, southwest Blaine and parts of Fridley.

the southeast corner of Anoka County.

Three races are reruns from 2002 - Olsen and Hortman in 47B, DeLaForest and Pithan in 49A and Samuelson and Evans in 50B.

There are also statewide elections for judges on the Minnesota Supreme Court and Minnesota Court of Appeals.

One of the three Supreme Court justices on the ballot Tuesday has opposition - Justice Alan Page is opposed by Tim Tingelstad. Justices Helen Meyer and Sam Hanson are unopposed.

Of the five court of appeals judges on the ballot, two have challengers. R.A. (Jim) Randall is opposed by Daniel Griffith and David Minge by Paul Ross. The other appeals court judges are unopposed - Natalie Hudson, Wilhemina (Mimi) Wright and Randolph Peterson.

Peter Bodley is at:  
peter.bodley@ecm-inc.com

51A



# Still on track?

## Proponents believe Northstar Corridor rails boosted from general election.

by Peter Bodley  
Managing editor

The Northstar Corridor commuter rail project may well have got a boost from the Nov. 2 general election.

At least that's what commuter rail proponents like State Rep. Kathy Tingelstad, R-Andover, and Anoka County Board Chairman Dan Erhart hope and believe.

A DFL election resurgence Nov. 2 narrowed the Republican majority in the Minnesota House to two and knocked off two vocal opponents of Northstar - Rep. Bill Haas, R-Champlin, and Rep. William Kuisle, R-Rochester, chairman of the House Transportation Finance Committee.

Two Minnesota House seats affecting portions of Anoka County changed parties and elected DFLers whose campaigns made Northstar among their top priorities - Denise Dittrich, 47A, and Melissa Hortman, 47B. Both districts include parts of Coon Rapids.

Even with Gov. Tim Pawlenty's funding support, neither Northstar nor a bonding bill survived the House or 2004 Minnesota Legislature.

But Erhart believes the prospects are brighter in 2005. "I thought they were better than 50-50 before the election, but now the odds are even better," he said.

Dittrich and Hortman have been very open about their support for Northstar, according to

Erhart said.

But voters re-elected Republicans like Tingelstad and Rep. Jim Abeler, R-Anoka, who are strong supporters of commuter rail, Erhart said.

"Those results should send a message to the House leadership that voters recognize how important this issue is," he said.

"People are willing to spend money if they get something for it."

Tingelstad, who has carried Northstar bills in the House in recent sessions, said the election results continued the momentum for the project that began in early August when Pawlenty announced a local funding match to access federal dollars to keep the project moving forward, despite the inaction by the 2004 Legislature.

"The election just continued that momentum," Tingelstad said.

"Obviously, we are in much better shape than we were a year ago."

At the 2005 legislative session, Tingelstad expects Northstar to be part of a broader transit package that will also include dedicated busways, she said.

And there are plenty of Republican House legislators interested in Kuisle's Transportation Finance Committee chairmanship, herself included, Tingelstad said.

"I have put my name forward, but so have about a dozen others," she said.

And one Anoka County legislator who currently serves on that committee, Rep. Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, may well be in line for the chairmanship because of seniority, Tingelstad said.

Westerberg is a supporter of the commuter rail project.

"I am more optimistic about the chances of Northstar, very much so," Tingelstad said.

Federal funding to keep the commuter rail project on track was authorized in September when the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) a \$9,900,131 grant to start final design work on the project.

In August, Pawlenty announced a plan to provide the necessary local funding to secure the federal dollars that would have disappeared after Sept. 30.

To receive the federal grant, matching funds totaling \$10.9 million are coming from the Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA) and \$2.5 million from the Metropolitan Council.

The final design work includes work on stations, vehicles, track improvements and land acquisition, as well as continued negotiations with the Burlington-Northern Santa Fe Railroad, he said.

The timetable is to have the final design work completed in time to go to the 2006 Minnesota Legislature for construction funding, according to

Tim Yantos, deputy Anoka County administrator and executive director of the Northstar Corridor Development Authority.

But he said the NCDA would be back at the 2005 Minnesota Legislature seeking the \$37.5 million for the project that Pawlenty included in his 2004 bonding proposal.

The \$37.5 million is needed to complete the final design work, according to Yantos.

"We still hope to have commuter rail up and running in 2008," Yantos said.

Under the NCDA's cost-sharing formula, which is based on the miles the proposed commuter rail system will run through the three counties involved, the Anoka County Regional Rail Authority is paying \$7.4 million of the \$10.9 million local commitment to access the federal dollars, according to Yantos.

Some of that \$7.4 million is coming from the 2004 budgeted funds of the authority and some from reserves with the balance from the 2005 rail authority budget and tax levy, which has received pre-

liminary approval from the county regional rail authority. Final action on the budget will take place in December.

The federal grant and local match will allow the project to remain in the running for future federal New Starts transit funding. Northstar at this time has not been recommended by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) because the state has failed to approve its share of the project cost, Yantos said.

The first phase of Northstar is for service on the 40-mile segment along Highways 10 and 47 from Big Lake to Minneapolis. Stations are proposed for Big Lake, Elk River, Anoka, Coon Rapids, Fridley and Minneapolis.

The total construction cost

for the first phase is estimated at \$265 million with 50 percent of the money coming from the federal government to match a state/local commitment of \$132.5 million.

The original route which would have reached Rice, west of St. Cloud, was modified earlier this year to meet the FTA's new, more stringent cost-effective standards.

The NCDA is a joint powers board of 30 counties, cities, towns and regional rail authorities along the corridor.

Peter Bodley is at peter.bodley@ecm-inc.com

### BLAINE-SPRING LAKE PARK

#### LIFE

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# State, federal primary ballots set for Tuesday

by Peter Bodley  
Managing editor

Voters will find plenty of candidates on the federal and state partisan ballot when they go to the polls Tuesday, Sept. 14, but only a couple of contested races.

In fact, the only contested state and federal races that impact a portion of Anoka County are for U.S. Congress in the 3rd and 5th districts.

Fifth District DFL Congressman Martin Olav Sabo faces a primary challenge in the DFL primary from perennial candidate Dick Franson.

The 5th District encompasses the city of Minneapolis, plus Columbia Heights, Hilltop, Fridley and Spring Lake Park in Anoka County.

The DFL primary winner will face Republican Daniel Mathias and Green Party candidate Jay Pond in the Tuesday, Nov. 2 general election.

Incumbent Republican 3rd District Congressman Jim Ramstad also has primary opposition Sept. 14. His challenger is Burton Hanson.

The winner will be opposed by DFLer Deborah Watts in the Nov. 2 general election.

The 3rd District includes most of suburban Hennepin County plus all but one precinct in the city of Coon Rapids.

Only Precinct 22 in the northeast corner of Coon Rapids is not in the 3rd District. That precinct is in the 6th Congressional District, which includes the rest of Anoka County plus Sherburne County and portions of Washington and Wright counties.

There is no contested primary in the 6th Congressional District, although both Republican incumbent Mark Kennedy and DFL challenger Patty Wetterling appear on the primary ballot.

Neither are there any contested primaries Sept. 14 for the Minnesota House seats which affect Anoka County voters.

The candidates' names appear on the primary ballot, however. They are listed by race in alphabetical order:

- District 17A: Rob Eastlund, R., Pat Sundberg, DFL.
- District 47A: Denise Dittrich, DFL, Bill Haas, R.
- District 47B: Melissa

Hortman, DFL, Stephanie Olsen, R.

- District 48A: Tom Hackbarth, R, Mike Starr, DFL.

- District 48B: Jim Abeler, R, Bob Trewartha, DFL.

- District 49A: Chris DeLaForest, R, Jim Pithan, DFL.

- District 49B: Leeann Mortensen, DFL, Kathy Tingelstad, R.

- District 50A: Barbara Goodwin, DFL, Nathan Jones, R.

- District 50B: Geri Evans, DFL, Char Samuelson, R.

- District 51A: Kendra Brodin, DFL, Andy Westerberg, R.

- District 51B: Connie Bernardy, DFL, Pam Wolf, R.

- District 52A: Bob Rapheal, DFL, Ray Vandever, R.

- District 53A: Paul Gardner, DFL, Phil Krinkie, R.

There is also one third party candidate on the primary ballot for a House seat - Darrel Bendix of the Independence Party in District 51B.

Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 14.

Peter Bodley is at peter.bodley@ecm-inc.com



# There'll be a lot at stake this year in state's legislative district races county

by Peter Bodley  
Managing editor

Anoka County voters will have choices in all the Minnesota House districts affecting the county at the Tuesday, Nov. 2 general election.

But in the 13 House districts that encompass some parts of Anoka County, there will be no contested primary elections Tuesday, Sept. 14.

And in only one is a third party involved - an Independence Party candidate in District 51B.

Incumbents are seeking re-election in all the Minnesota House districts and there are three reruns from two years ago - in District 17A, where

incumbent Republican Rob Eastlund is again opposed by Pat Sundberg, DFL; in District 47B, where Republican incumbent Stephanie Olsen will again be opposed by DFLer Melissa Hortman; and in District 49A, where Republican incumbent Chris DeLaForest will again be challenged by DFLer Jim Pithan.

The top of the 2004 general election ballot will be headed by the presidency of the United States.

But there will be elections for all eight Minnesota members of Congress. Three of those Congressional districts

affect portions of Anoka County.

In the 3rd District, which includes suburban Hennepin County and all but one precinct in Coon Rapids, longtime Republican Congressman Jim Ramstad faces a Sept. 14 primary against Burton Hanson. Deborah Watts is the DFL candidate.

In the 5th District, which includes the city of Minneapolis as well as Columbia Heights, Fridley, Hilltop and Spring Lake Park in Anoka County, veteran DFL incumbent Martin Sabo has a Sept. 14 primary against perennial candi-

date Dick Franson.

The winner will face Republican Daniel Mathias and Green Party candidate Jay Pond in the Nov. 2 general election.

The rest of Anoka County is in the 6th District where incumbent Republican Mark Kennedy is opposed by Patty Wetterling, the DFL endorsed candidate.

The lineup for the Minnesota House races affecting Anoka County are:

▲ District 17A: Rob Eastlund, R, incumbent; Pat Sundberg, DFL. The district includes the city of St. Francis in Anoka County and portions of

House/page 14A

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## House

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▲ District 47A: Denise Dittrich, DFL; Bill Haas, R, incumbent. District 47A includes the city of Champlin and five precincts in Coon Rapids (11, 12, 42, 43 and 45).

▲ District 47B: Melissa Hortman, DFL; Stephanie Olsen, R, incumbent. The district covers a portion of Brooklyn Park and five precincts in Coon Rapids (31, 32, 34, 41 and 44).

▲ District 48A: Tom Hackbarth, R, incumbent; Mike Starr, DFL. The district includes Bethel, East Bethel, Oak Grove and Burns Township.

▲ District 48B: Jim Abeler, R, incumbent; Bob Trewartha, DFL. House District 48B encompasses the cities of Anoka and Ramsey.

▲ District 49A: Chris DeLaForest, R, incumbent; Jim Pithan, DFL. The district includes Ham Lake and part of Andover.

▲ District 49B: LeAnn Mortensen, DFL; Kathy Tingelstad, R, incumbent. The district includes the southwest corner of Andover and north and east Coon Rapids.

▲ District 50A: Barb Goodwin, DFL, incumbent; Nathan Jones, R. The district includes Columbia Heights and Hilltop and parts of Ramsey County.

▲ District 50B: Geri Evans, DFL; Char Samuelson, R, incumbent. This district covers parts of Fridley and Ramsey County.

▲ District 51A: Kendra Brodin, DFL; Andy Westerberg, R, incumbent. District 51A includes most of the city of Blaine, except for the southwest and southeast corners.

▲ District 51B: Darrel Benedix, Independence; Connie Bernardy, DFL, incumbent; Pam Wolf, R. The district covers Spring Lake Park, southwest Blaine and parts of Fridley

▲ District 52A: Rob Rapheal, DFL; Ray Vandever, R, incumbent. The district includes portions of Washington County and eastern communities in Anoka County - Linwood and Columbus townships and the northern half of Lino Lakes.

▲ District 53A: Paul Gardner, DFL; Phil Krinkie, R, incumbent. The district includes parts of Ramsey County and the southeast corner of Anoka County.

There are also statewide elections for positions on the Minnesota Supreme Court and Minnesota Court of Appeals.

Two of the three Supreme Court justices face opposition - Patricia Ursula Jambois has challenged Justice Helen

Meyer, while Justice Alan Page has been opposed by Tim Tingelstad. Justice Sam Hanson is unopposed.

Of the five court of appeals judges on the ballot, two have opposition. R.A. (Jim) Randall has been challenged by Daniel Griffith and David Minge is opposed by Paul Ross. The other appeals court judges are unopposed - Natalie Hudson, Wilhemina (Mimi) Wright and Randolph Peterson.

Anoka County is part of the 10th Judicial District, which has 10 judges up for election this year. All but one are unopposed - Thomas Armstrong, Stephen Askew, Steve Halsey, Joseph Quinn, Michael Roith, Gary Schurrer, Krista Martin, Jenny Walker Jasper and John Hoffman.

Judge John McBride has been challenged by Paul Lacy.

Peter Bodley is at:  
eter.bodley@ecm-inc.com





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# Politicians racing for election throw hats in the ring next week

by Peter Bodley  
Managing editor

The 2004 election season officially kicks off in Anoka County and the state of Minnesota Tuesday.

Filings for federal, state, county and city offices open at 8 a.m. Tuesday, July 6 and close at 5 p.m. Tuesday, July 20.

Candidates will file at either the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office at the State Office Building in St. Paul or the Anoka County Office of Elections and Voter Registration at the Anoka County Government Center.

People filing for city council seats will do so at their local city hall.

The 2004 general election is Tuesday, Nov. 2. Where neces-

sary, primary elections will take place Tuesday, Sept. 14.

At the top of the ballot will be the president of the United States.

But there will also be all eight Minnesota U.S. Congressional seats on the ballot this year, although neither U.S. Senate seat is up for election in 2004.

Three of the U.S. House seats, all two-year terms, impact Anoka County.

**The 5th District, where Democrat Martin Sabo is the longtime incumbent, covers southern Anoka County, including the communities of Columbia Heights, Hilltop, Fridley and Spring Lake Park.**

The predominantly suburban Hennepin County 3rd

Congressional District does include all but one precinct of the city of Coon Rapids. Rep. Jim Ramstad, R, has held that seat for many years.

**The rest of Anoka County falls within the 6th District where Rep. Mark Kennedy, R, is the incumbent.**

At the state level, there are no state constitutional offices or Minnesota Senate seats on the ballot this year, but all Minnesota House seats will be up for election.

Thirteen Minnesota House seats affect parts of Anoka County.

Candidates for Minnesota House seats can file at the Anoka County Government Center if their district is totally within the borders of Anoka County.

If the district straddles more than one county, and most of them do, then candidates have to file at the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office.

The House seats impacting Anoka County are 17A, 47A, 47B, 48A, 48B, 49A, 49B, 50A, 50B, 51A, 51B, 52A and 53A. All are two-year terms.

Incumbents are Rob Eastlund, R-17A, Bill Haas, R-47A, Stephanie Olsen, R-47B, Tom Hackbarth, R-48A, Jim Abeler, R-48B, Chris DeLaForest, R-49A, Kathy Tingelstad, R-49B, Barbara Goodwin, DFL-50A, Char Samuelson, R-50B, Andy Westerberg, R-51A, Connie Bernardy, DFL-51B, Ray Vandever, R-52A, and Phil Krinkie, R-53A.

Statewide there will also be

elections for two Minnesota Supreme Court justices and five judges on the Minnesota Court of Appeals.

In addition, 12 judges in the 10th Judicial District, which includes Anoka County, are on the election ballot this year.

At the county level, three of the seven Anoka County Board seats will be contested this fall.

• District 5 includes the eastern half of Coon Rapids and the southern part of Andover. Dave McCauley is the incumbent commissioner.

• District 6 covers the eastern communities in Anoka County, including Linwood and Columbus townships, Lino Lakes, Lexington, Centerville and part of Blaine. Rhonda Sivarajah was elected to a two-year term in

2002.

• District 7 includes the western part of Coon Rapids and most of the city of Anoka. County Board Chairman Dan Erhart is the incumbent.

Terms for the three county board seats on the ballot are four years.

The Nov. 2 election will also include three supervisor positions on the Anoka County Soil and Water Conservation District.

The Minnesota Secretary of State's Office is located in Room 180 of the State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, while the Anoka County Government Center is located at 325 E. Main St., Anoka.

Peter Bodley is at peter.bodley@ecm-inc.com

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# Lawmakers Tingelstad, Abeler, Westerberg gain important committee chair assignments at the capitol

'Almost a domino effect, says Andover state rep

by T.W. Budig  
Capitol reporter

Local Republican lawmakers number among the lucky score who will chair House committees.

Rep. Kathy Tingelstad, R-Andover, is the new chairwoman of the Government Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee.

"There were so many changes in the chairmanships between

members retiring and members defeated in the election," said Tingelstad, entering her fifth-term.

"It was almost a domino effect."

Two other Anoka County Republicans were appointed to chair joint House/Senate committees.

• Rep. Jim Abeler, R-Anoka, will lead a health reform committee while Rep. Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, will chair a stadium committee.

In jest, Westerberg said he wasn't sure whether he should be congratulated or have condolences extended.

The stadium debate has lingered for years at the Capitol.

On a more serious note, Westerberg wondered whether the projected \$700 million budget deficit next biennium — \$1.4 billion inflation added — might hamstring the committee.

"There might not be anything we can do," said Westerberg, entering his fourth-term.

Abeler is entering his fourth-term.

Other north metro lawmakers kept their old committee chairmanships.

• Rep. Tom

Hackbarth, R-Cedar, remains chairman of Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

Hackbarth, noting the loss of 13 Republican seats, said that committee votes would be tight.

"We can't have them (Republican committee members) roaming around when there's a vote," he said.

• Rep. Phil Krinkie, R-Shoreview, leaves Capital Investment to become chairman of the Tax Committee.

T.W. Budig is at:  
tim.budig@ecm-inc.com



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## COON RAPIDS HERALD

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## BLAINE-SPRING LAKE PARK LIFE

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# Proposed joint legislative committees out of joint

## ■ Senate not biting on House Speaker's appointments

by T.W. Budig  
ECM capitol reporter

Two proposed joint legislative committees are out of joint.

Although House Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, appointed two Anoka County Republican legislators to co-chair the proposed House/Senate Stadium and Health Reform committees — Rep. Andy Westerberg and Rep. Jim Abeler, respectively — the Senate didn't bite on one committee and is mulling over the other.

Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson, DFL-Willmar, said the Senate is not interested in pursuing the joint stadium committee idea.

There's been so many stadium commissions and task forces already, said Johnson.

"The dust has collected on all the previous ones," he said.

Still, the Senate remains open to the idea of a joint health reform committee, Johnson said.

A decision may be made by the holidays, he said.

Johnson expressed puzzlement over Sviggum appointing co-chairpersons to the proposed joint committees.

In a meeting with the Speaker in November, the idea of having joint committees was raised, according to Johnson.

"To which I said, 'It is inter-

esting. It's something I have to talk about. It is something that perhaps could work,'" said Johnson.

But no decision had been made, he said.

Sen. Becky Lourey, DFL-Kerrick, Senate Health and Family Security Committee chairwoman, said a number of senators are interested in a group of people exploring healthcare reform.

But one worry for senators, Lourey said, is that a joint healthcare reform committee would be assembled, meet, but ultimately have its work ignored by House Republican leadership.

Lourey lauded Abeler for having a wide breadth of knowledge of health issues and personal gumption — he's been the real workhorse of the House health and human services committees, she said — and expressed surprise that this "expert" wasn't named to chair the House Health Policy and Finance Committee.

House Republican leadership must grant Abeler authority, said Lourey, in order for the proposed joint health reform committee to be worthwhile.

"If the committee has real authority, it could do good things," she said.

Abeler's assessment of the proposed joint committee matches Lourey's.

For a joint committee to be

worthwhile, respected, it needs at least a part-time staff worker and work in the knowledge its recommendations will be crafted into legislation, Abeler said.

None of that has been settled, he said.

Abeler imagines the joint-committee turning out middle-of-the-road solutions — more extreme ideas discarded.

He's not optimistic a committee along the lines he envisions will be fashioned, Abeler said.

"I don't want to have the funeral for it (the joint-committee) yet," he said.

"But I think it's pretty ill."

House Majority Leader Erik Paulsen, R-Eden Prairie, was disappointed the Senate balked at one proposed committee and is still weighing the other.

He thought one message of the election was a call for bipartisanship, Paulsen said.

As for Lourey's concern that House Republicans wouldn't take the findings of the proposed joint health reform committee seriously, some House Republicans have expressed the same concern about Senate DFLers, he said.

Paulsen suggested common ground exists.

"I think there would be a lot of agreement," Paulsen said.



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# Minnesota's newborn laws activated August 1

by T.W. Budig  
ECM capitol reporter

New state laws dealing with everything from what's kosher to the effects of mourning dove hunting became effective Aug. 1.

The laws represent the efforts of a number of local lawmakers.

In the area of agriculture, one new law increases trespassing penalties for wandering on to land posted a "bio-secure area."

The law reflects concerns that diseases may be accidentally introduced to livestock via germ-laden trespassers.

One new Minnesota food law on kosher foods requires items to state the institutional or denominational affiliation, if any, of the rabbinic authority identified on the product.

According to the House public information services, law proponents argued that current law treated all factions within Judaism alike.

Another new law, carried by Rep. Andy Westberg, R-Blaine, in the House tightens the foreclosure law to better protect people threatened with home foreclosure from being scammed.

Under the law, foreclosurers can no longer charge more than 8 percent annually on any loan to a homeowner, collect wages as a form of compensation or acquire interest in the property being foreclosed, among other restrictions.

Predatory foreclosing practices recently became the subject of debate with actions taken the Attorney General's Office and others.

If it's art, put it in a museum but keep it off walls, fences, and

train cars, a new law states.

Under the new anti-graffiti law, property owners can sue for up to three times the amount of the damage inflicted on their property by the spraypaint wielding vandals.

The new law holds parents liable for up \$1,000 of graffiti clean-up costs if the vandalism is committed by their child, a minor.

The law also allows the court to order vandals to scrub-off graffiti as substitution for paying.

In another crime and punishment initiative, imprisoned sex offenders will be required to pay for part of their treatment and no longer have access to pornography.

The amount they'll need to pay for treatment will be calculated on ability to pay.

Still another crime and pun-

ishment matter — one championed by Sen. Leo Foley, DFL-Coon Rapids — makes it easier for the state to confiscate the vehicles of repeat drunken drivers even though the driver doesn't own the car or truck.

Bill advocates insist the law will help prevent drunken drivers from dodging the law by using somebody's else vehicle for driving.

Oct. 16, under a new law, marks a state observance of Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Food Prize Day. Borlaug is credited with saving millions of lives through his invention of high-yield, disease resistant wheat.

A Nobel Prize winner, Borlaug is a graduate of the University of Minnesota.

In another public observance act, a new law requires flags at the Capitol to be flown at half-staff upon the death of a police officer or Minnesota military

personnel killed in the line of duty.

The governor can set the length of time the flag must be flown half-staff.

Rep. Ray Vandever, R-Forest Lake, and Sen. Mady Reiter, R-Shoreview, sponsored the bill.

Political candidates, under a new law, may put up any number of campaign signs after Aug. 1 until 10 days after the general election.

Current law allows cities to control the size of campaign signs but is silent on the topic of numbers.

While on the topic of public officials, a new law sponsored by Sen. Michele Bachmann, R-Stillwater, and Vandever allows voters to decide whether members of a city council can also serve on the charter commission.

Currently, only a judge can be prevented from serving on a charter commission.

In transportation, a new law specifies that men under the age of 26 in applying for a driver's license, renewal, learner's permit or state ID card consent to having pertinent information automatically sent to Selective Service by the Department of Public Safety.

In another new law, snowmobilers, along major state highways, may be allowed to drive in two directions on the same side of the highway.

Currently, snowmobilers along the roadside must ride in the direction of traffic.

Other new laws can be found at [www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinf/0/0804nrelease.pdf](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinf/0/0804nrelease.pdf).

T.W. Budig is at [tim.budig@ecm-inc.com](mailto:tim.budig@ecm-inc.com)

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BLAINE-SPRING LAKE PARK  
LIFE

ANOKA, MN  
WEEKLY 1,350  
JUN 4 2004



ANOKA COUNTY UNION

ANOKA, MN  
WEEKLY 5,100  
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# Lawmakers set special session in their sights

by T.W. Budig  
ECM capitol reporter

Local lawmakers are receptive to Gov. Tim Pawlenty calling a special session.

• Rep. Jim Abeler, R-Anoka, said the governor "very definitely" should call the Legislature back.

"Our work isn't done yet," he said. The governor and legislative leaders shouldn't dawdle, Abeler said.

"They should very much get it (a special session) going if they want one," he said.

The momentum is still there, Abeler said.

Waiting will only drive the cost of projects up, said Abeler. And bond interest rates could

also rise, he said.

Besides, special sessions have become almost routine, Abeler said. "They're not so special anymore," he said of calling lawmakers back to St. Paul.

• Rep. Chris Gerlach, R-Apple Valley, would advise Pawlenty to be open to the idea of a special session, but insist agreements between House, Senate and Governor's Office on the parameters first be worked out.

There's no reason to call lawmakers back simply to rekindle the stalemate of the regular session, he said.

• Rep. Connie Bernardy, DFL-Fridley, agrees.

"I think it's really important that we have a bonding bill," said Bernardy, referring to it a

“  
Our work isn't done yet.  
— Rep. Jim Abeler,  
R-Anoka  
”



job creator.

And Northstar commuter rail bonding should be included, Bernardy said.

But an agreement among legislative leaders must first be reached, she said.

Besides a bonding bill, Bernardy said it's important lawmakers also address sex offender legislation and rework the budget.

Instead of tapping the health-care access fund for even more money as did Pawlenty in his

budget fix, Bernardy wants to see lawmakers take the DFL Senate's approach to deficit solving by closing corporate loopholes.

Frustrated by the inability of caucus leaders to reach agreement, Bernardy is pursuing a resolution stipulating that key procedural details such as setting budget targets must be done in advance.

• Rep. Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, also expressed interest in returning in special session to pass a bonding bill.

"If we could come back for a one- or two-day special session, I think that would be a good thing," said Westerberg.

Does the fact many lawmakers seem open to the idea of a special session mean nothing

was accomplished during the regular 16-week session?

Not according to them. "We actually accomplished a great deal of policy work," said Abeler.

But this type of legislation doesn't receive the attention marquee items like the bonding and budget bills draw, so people tend not to notice, he said.

Westerberg echoed the same theme.

"I don't think taxpayers haven't gotten their dollar's value," said Westerberg.

Many issues received thorough and necessary debate, he said.

T.W. Budig is at  
tim.budig@ecm-inc.com

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# Legislators want a referendum on stadium at the capitol

Anoka County Board chairman argues against voter decision

by T.W. Budig  
Capitol reporter

Virtually no support exists among north metro lawmakers for the imposition of countywide taxes for stadiums without a referendum.

Even Rep. Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, an Anoka County lawmaker in whose city a Minnesota Vikings stadium is proposed, wants voters to vote on a proposed countywide sales tax — at least if current stadium legislation continues.

House Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, drew a clear line on the issue.

"If it's a general sales tax, it would have to have a referendum," he said about stadium legislation passing the House.

The House stadium bill currently calls for a local referendum for a proposed countywide sales tax.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty in his stadium proposal makes it optional for local government to conduct a referendum before imposing taxes.

And the governor's sticking to his proposal, said Leslie Kupchella, Pawlenty spokeswoman.

"The governor remains very committed to the flexibility of his original proposal," Kupchella said in

an e-mail.

The Anoka County Board has passed a resolution committing up to \$240 million to a Vikings stadium — a proposal that included legislative authority to impose a 0.75 county-wide sales tax — in a stadium funding package envisioned as evenly divided between local government, state and team.

A Vikings stadium would bring "immeasurable" benefit to the county, said Dan Erhart, county board chairman.

It could mean more business, good jobs, he said.

"It will be enhanced immeasurably to have a stadium located here," Erhart said.

"I think the public has charged us with the responsibility to run this county in the most efficient and responsible manner possible."

The effort to gain a Vikings stadium is a wise decision, said Erhart. "And I believe we ought to be able to proceed without a referendum," he said.

Local lawmakers don't share that point of view.

Out of 24 local north metro lawmakers contacted, only one, Sen. Don Betzold, DFL-Fridley, supports a countywide sales tax without a referen-

## At A Glance

Out of 24 local north metro lawmakers contacted, only one, Sen. Don Betzold, DFL-Fridley, supports a countywide sales tax without a referendum.



Sen. Don Betzold

dum.

"They (the county board) feel the economic benefits to be derived are substantially greater than the short-term tax. Whether the Vikings stay or go is an issue which affects the whole state," said Betzold in an e-mail response.

"One county should not decide that."

But 21 of the 24 local lawmakers reject the idea of a countywide sales tax without a referendum.

Sen. Satveer Chaudhary, DFL-Fridley, is "skeptical" of a countywide sales tax increase without voter approval.

Sen. Debbie Johnson, R-Ham Lake, did not respond to a phone call and e-mail inquiries.

Rep. Tom Hackbarth, R-Cedar, said his district voters are upset about the chance of a possible countywide sales tax.

There could be a voter backlash against local government officials if such a proposal goes forward, according to Hackbarth.

"And I hope that would happen," Hackbarth said in an interview.

"They're going about this (stadium) proposal all wrong."

Hackbarth has proposed using gaming revenues to build stadiums.

Rep. Jim Abeler, R-Anoka, though saying he would probably support a referendum, said a stadium in Anoka County would bring huge benefits.

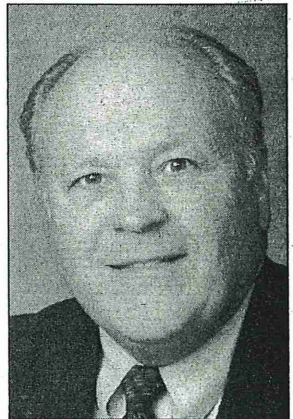
"There's nothing else like it. It's not really a 'Yes' or 'No' question," he said of having a referendum.

Yet, Abeler doubts a stadium tax referendum would pass Anoka County voters.

Rep. Kathy Tingelstad, R-Andover, agrees. "My

I think the public has charged us with the responsibility to run this county in the most efficient and responsible manner possible. And I believe we ought to be able to proceed without a referendum.

— Dan Erhart  
Anoka County Board chairman



guess is without a huge grassroots effort it would fail," she said.

While a few lawmakers were tentative in their answers — Rep. Pete Nelson, R-Lindstrom, supports a referendum but also wants to see the final stadium package — others were more definite.

"Any increase in the county tax to support a stadium would have to be placed before the voters to decide," said Rep. Bill Haas, R-Champlin, in an e-mail.

"I do believe there should be a referendum for a tax increase," said Sen. Betsy Wergin, R-Princeton.

Rep. Barb Goodwin, DFL-Columbia Heights,

said in an e-mail her district residents don't want Anoka County imposing taxes for stadiums.

"My survey of the district I represent showed that only 2 percent of the respondents would favor any tax increase at all to fund a Vikings stadium in Anoka County," said Goodwin.

Nearly 65 percent of respondents want no public funding of any kind for stadiums, said Goodwin.

Because her residents are opposed to county taxes, she's opposed, said Goodwin.

"My position is based on the views of the people I represent, though it's not very popular with Anoka County officials," she said.

Local lawmakers favoring a referendum before any county-wide sales tax for stadiums are Abeler, Bernardy, DeLaForest, Eastlund, Erickson, Foley, Goodwin, Haas, Hackbarth, Jungbauer, Krinkie, Lindner, Nelson, Olsen S., Olson M., Otto, Reiter, Tingelstad, Wergin, Westerberg, and Vandaveer.

Westerberg could change his mind on a referendum if a stadium bill emerges that's more to his liking, he said.

The Senate has not taken up the stadium issue yet.

T.W. Budig is at:  
tim.budig@ecm-inc.com

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ANOKA COUNTY UNION

ANOKA, MN  
WEEKLY 5,100  
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# Attempts to amend House transportation bill falter at the capitol

by T.W. Budig  
Capitol reporter

A hotly contested transportation bill was finally passed by the Minnesota House April 7 after prolonged debate forced Republican leaders to temporarily set it aside.

Debate centered on an amendment offered by Rep. Marty Seifert, R-Marshall, that would have had state driving examinations offered only in English.

House members debated the proposed amendment for three hours — a two-hour debate April 5 forced House Republicans to table the bill.

"My intentions are pure on this," said Seifert April 7, explaining the amendment as a traffic safety measure.

Seifert's sentiments were echoed by Rep. Bill Kuisle, R-Rochester, transportation finance committee chairman. Highway message boards are of no value if a driver can't read them, Kuisle said.

But the provision was attacked by House DFLers as anti-immigrant, unwelcoming, a measure that could cost non-English speakers jobs by limiting their mobility.

"If we want people to work and stay off welfare, you're amendment is a bad amendment," said Rep. Rebecca Otto, DFL-Marine on St. Croix.

Several House members, persons of color, also spoke against the proposed amendment.

"We're not trying to address whether they know the grammar, syntax of English," said Rep. Keith Ellison, DFL-Minneapolis.

They just want to know whether the person can drive, he said.

House Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, supported the amendment. It addressed a

traffic safety issue, Sviggum said.

Ultimately the amendment failed on a 49-83 vote.

Local House lawmakers voting for the Seifert amendment were DeLaForest, Haas, Hackbarth, Krinkie, Olsen and Vandever.

Voting against were Abeler, Bernardy, Goodwin, Tingelstad and Westerberg.

Another of the almost 30 amendments offered was one by Rep. Ray Vandever, R-Forest Lake, that would have almost completely outlawed toll roads in Minnesota.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty has two toll road initiatives and recently toll road legislation in the U.S. House, authored by Sixth District Congressman Mark Kennedy, was passed.

But Vandever said the country is full of 50-year-old, tem-

porary toll roads.

"I don't think we've ever had a straight 'yes' or 'no' vote on toll roads in the House," said Vandever.

The Vandever amendment failed 55-70.

One amendment offered by Rep. Ann Lenczewski, DFL-Bloomington, attempted to delete a provision in the transportation bill that directs the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to explore the feasibility of a comprehensive study of a second beltway around the metro.

The provision was styled a "grandiose plan without funding," by Ellison.

Rep. Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, whose legislation called for the study, defended the pro-

vision, saying he was trying to get the Metropolitan Council and other planning agencies to work together.

Lt. Gov./MnDOT Commissioner Carol Molnau said April 6 the second beltway concept deserved study.

The attempt to delete it from the bill failed.

MnDOT must report to the Legislature next year on its second beltway study findings.

The House omnibus transportation bill eventually passed on a 83-50 vote.

Provisions in the House transportation bill include:

▲ MnDOT is to study whether 55 mph speed limits on U.S. highways could be safely increased to 60 mph and

whether speed limits on interstates could be safely raised from 70 mph to 75 mph.

▲ A provision to keep speeding tickets off a person's driving record if the excess speed falls within certain limits: violations of 55 mph speed limits by 10 mph, 5 mph for 60 mph and 10 mph for 65 mph and 70 mph speed limits. The speeding ticket is still issued.

▲ Restrictions currently in effect for the State Patrol regarding traffic ticket quotas are expanded to all law enforcement agencies, vehicle inspectors, and law compliance officials.

T.W. Budig is at:  
tim.budig@ecm-inc.com

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# Sviggum names leaders of House committees

By Conrad deFiebre  
Star Tribune Staff Writer  
STAR TRIBUNE DEC 2 2004

House Speaker Steve Sviggum named 28 fellow Republicans on Wednesday to head standing committees during the 2005 session, with the biggest shakeups coming in the key panels that oversee taxes and capital investment bonding.

Rep. Phil Krinkie, R-Shoreview, a leading fiscal conservative in the Legislature, will move from chairman of the Capital Investment Committee to chairman of Taxes, a strong signal that House Republicans are as opposed as ever to increasing state taxes to balance the state budget.

Four-term Rep. Dan Dorman, R-Albert Lea, a dissident outsider in the GOP caucus in previous sessions, will assume his first chairmanship with the Capital Investment Committee. The panel is expected to produce bond-financed construction projects totaling more than \$600 million next year to make up for the Legislature's failure to approve any bonding this year.

Meanwhile, Rep. Ron Abrams, R-Minnetonka, the House Taxes chairman since 1999, was relegated to a relatively minor post heading the Public Finance subcommittee of Ways and Means, the chief appropriations panel. Abrams was forced from the Taxes job by House term-limit rules. Entering his ninth term

in the House, he has long been rumored as a candidate for a judicial appointment.

Rep. Jim Knoblach, R-St. Cloud, will remain chairman of Ways and Means, which under a new structure announced by Sviggum, R-Kenyon, will have nine finance subcommittees.

In a news release, Knoblach said the new setup will provide "more emphasis on working toward solutions for the whole budget, rather than individual budgets for specific areas."

In another departure from recent practice, Sviggum said joint House-Senate committees will work on health reform and sports stadiums. He appointed Rep. Jim Abeler, R-Anoka, a chiropractor, to be cochairman of the health panel and Rep. Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, to the stadium committee. Senate cochairpersons have not yet been named.

During the 2003-04 session, 25 of the Republican caucus' 81 members got chairmanships. Now, with the GOP majority reduced in the November election to 68 members, compared with 66 DFLers, and nine committee heads not returning, Sviggum named three more chairpersons. But even that left some of his members unhappy, he said, and it forced some undisclosed changes on Wednesday after the caucus got the initial list on Tuesday.

Conrad deFiebre is at cdefiebre@startribune.com.

## HOUSE COMMITTEE CHAIRPEOPLE

- Agriculture and Rural Development:** Greg Davids, Preston.
- Capital Investment:** Dan Dorman, Albert Lea.
- Civil Law and Elections:** Jeff Johnson, Plymouth.
- Claims:** Bruce Anderson, Buffalo Township.
- Commerce and Financial Institutions:** Tim Wilkin, Eagan.
- Technology, Bioscience and Medical Products Division:** Paul Kohls, Victoria.
- Tourism Division:** Larry Howes, Walker.
- Education Reform and Accountability:** Mark Buesgens, Jordan.
- Environment and Natural Resources:** Tom Hackbarth, Cedar.
- Ethics:** Sondra Erickson, Princeton.
- Government Operations and Veterans Affairs:** Kathy Tingelstad, Andover.
- Local Government:** Mark Olson, Big Lake.
- Regulated Industries:** Torrey Westrom, Elbow Lake.
- Rules:** Erik Paulsen, Eden Prairie.
- Taxes:** Phil Krinkie, Shoreview.
- Transportation:** Ron Erhardt, Edina.
- Ways and Means:** Jim Knoblach, St. Cloud.
- Agriculture and Natural Resources Finance:** Dennis Ozment, Rosemount.
- Education Finance:** Barb Sykora, Excelsior.
- Health Policy and Finance:** Fran Bradley, Rochester.
- Higher Education Finance:** Bud Nornes, Fergus Falls.
- Jobs and Economic Opportunity Policy and Finance:** Bob Gunther, Fairmont.
- Public Finance:** Ron Abrams, Minnetonka.
- Public Safety Policy and Finance:** Steve Smith, Mound.
- State Government Finance:** Marty Seifert, Marshall.
- Transportation Finance:** Mary Liz Holberg, Lakeville.
- Health Reform Joint Committee:** Jim Abeler, Anoka.
- Stadium Joint Committee:** Andy Westerberg, Blaine.



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## 5150 \*\* Another stadium panel is on horizon, but who's buying?

BY JAY WEINER DEC 2 '04  
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Even as news of a \$700 million state revenue shortfall was being released, yet another legislative stadium committee is about to be named.

Rep. Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, said Wednesday that he has been appointed co-chairman of a House-Senate stadium "working group" to "find solutions to the stadium problem." His district is the only area seeking a new Vikings stadium. But, Westerberg said, in light of the forecast, "it's going to be really hard to find money to put into a stadium."

Westerberg called the deficit's effect on stadium plans "critical ... I think we're going to be saying, bye, bye, Vikings, in 2012."

The team's Metrodome lease is scheduled to expire after the 2011 season.

Stadium doings have been somewhat dormant recently. The Vikings dropped their lobbyists even as Anoka County officials have quietly sought to woo potential team buyers who would build a stadium in Blaine. The Twins have been frustrated by a decade of rejections. The most active campaign is for an on-cam-

pus football stadium for the Gophers.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty acknowledged that any stadium proposals would be "not a front-burner issue."

Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson, DFL-Willmar, has reopened the door for Indian gambling to fund stadiums.

Jerry Bell, president of Twins Sports Inc. and the stadium advocate for Twins owner Carl Pohlad, said the team expected the forecast and hasn't made any decisions about what to — or whether to — propose another plan.

But Bell said he would prefer not to spend time and money through a long legislative session if there's no real chance of getting a bill passed in 2005.

"I'd rather know if it's not going to happen now, tell me," Bell said.

Sen. Geoff Michel, R-Edina, who wants a university stadium, said the forecast will have a "neutral" effect on plans to get state aid to help pay for a \$222 million stadium. He expressed optimism that such a proposal could make headway in the 2005 session.

Staff writer Dane Smith contributed to this report. Jay Weiner is at [jweiner@startribune.com](mailto:jweiner@startribune.com).



# Bush's stop in Blaine plainly heralds change

STAR TRIBUNE, SEP 15 '04  
By Chuck Haga  
Star Tribune Staff Writer

5224

It used to be said in old blue-collar Blaine "that the Democrats here wouldn't allow people to build houses with garages," Mayor Tom Ryan recalled Tuesday.

Why? Those would be Republican houses, he said, smiling.

The Blaine that President Bush visits on Thursday, between campaign stops in St. Cloud and Rochester, boasts broad vistas of new houses with attached garages — some overlooking a man-made lake, a championship golf course or one of the city's 55 soccer fields.

BLAINE continues on A8

## BUSH VISITS

President Bush will make three campaign appearances during a bus trip through Minnesota on Thursday. He will stop in St. Cloud, Blaine and Rochester.

Details on A8.

## BLAINE from A1 Legislator: 'We like to think we're lead dog'

The higher-end housing developments clustered around the National Sports Center, the Tournament Players Championship Golf Course and other attractions have altered the demographics and popular image of a sprawling, 34-square mile suburb once known more for its bogs and flatness.

Sports inspired the new Blaine. Soccer star Mia Hamm and golfing legend Arnold Palmer helped in recent years to put the city on the map as something more than a large blank spot.

Now the president is coming.

"Maybe he's going to promote the Vikings stadium for us!" Bernie Senne said Tuesday as she tended roses outside her house in one of the new residential developments.

She was kidding, mostly. She wore a Vikings sweatshirt, and a Vikings banner flew from the front stoop. And Blaine is, after all, one of the sites frequently mentioned as a possibility for a new stadium.

Senne has lived in Blaine for 31 years, the last 18 months in the Club West housing development near the centrally located city hall, built in 2001, and Blaine Town Square.

"I like the way Blaine is developing," she said. "It's nice to have the National Sports Center nearby, and a Vikings stadium would be great."

"When I moved here [to Club West], there was nothing else. Now we've got Target, Kohl's, Menard's, all kinds of eating places, sports bars, banks...."

Young An nodded as her neighbor listed the new neighborhood's amenities. An's husband, Jong Kim, is a medical doctor in training.

"It's easy for my children to play around here," An said, watching as 2-year-old twins Aaron and Justin Kim trooped through the yards. "In the afternoon, we walk along trails. When we go to the park, all the kids play together."

She smiled and patted her stomach.

"We're expecting another boy on Thanksgiving Day," she said. "Blaine is growing, and I am part of it."

Ryan, who has been mayor for eight years and served 10 years on the City Council before that, said he senses more pride in people, both newcomers and longtime residents.

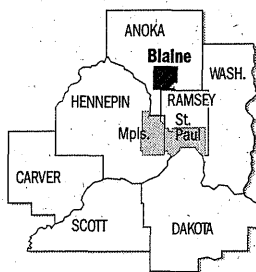
"Before, we got a lot of ridicule," he said. "We were pick-ups with gun racks. We were swamps. We were people opposed to any kind of change. If it wasn't ridicule, we were just ignored up here."

"But we're a player now." Rep. Andrew Westerberg, R-Blaine, also is popping buttons

## GOP gains in Blaine

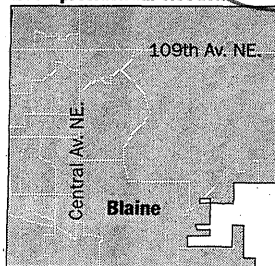
After backing Bill Clinton in 1996, the older, more developed portion of Blaine remained in the Democratic fold and voted for Al Gore in 2000. But the fast-growing area — the northern and eastern section — moved to the Republican column by voting for George Bush in 2000.

Voted Democratic  
Voted Republican

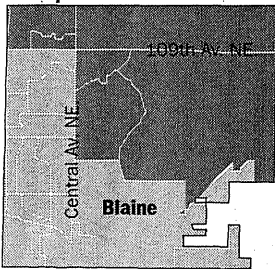


Source: Minnesota Secretary of State

## 1996 presidential election



## 2000 presidential election



Star Tribune

## BUSH VISIT President Bush will make three campaign appearances during a bus trip through Minnesota on Thursday.

► **St. Cloud:** Rally at Dick Putz Field at 9:45 a.m. Free tickets can be picked up at the GOP campaign office at 262 2nd Av. S. in Waite Park.

► **Blaine:** Health care forum at 12:25 p.m. at the National Sports Center. No more tickets available.

► **Rochester:** Rally at the Mayo Baseball Field at 4 p.m. Free tickets can be picked up at 922 N. Broadway.

People seeking tickets should bring a photo identification and the name, address and phone number of each person who will use a ticket.

too, I tell you.

"And we have more independents now than ever — people who want to make up their own mind, who appreciate elected officials who can make decisions and aren't always bound to a caucus."

Blaine "used to be pretty solid Democrat," he said. "But in the last election [in 2002], there was a lot of support here" for Republican Gov. Tim Pawlenty. "People were shocked."

## Building a history

Blaine started with a few strikes. Named not for a president but for a failed presidential candidate — Republican James G. Blaine of Maine — it developed slowly because the marshy land required extensive drainage before it could be farmed.

But as the metro area pushed and grew in all directions, the city spurted from 20,000 people in 1970 to 45,000 in 2000 and about 56,000 today.

More than a few of those new families moved to Blaine from parts south to be closer to cabins or other up-north destinations, Ryan said.

"The Metropolitan Council projects that we'll reach 86,000 in 20 years," he said. "When they made the projection, I didn't think that was possible. But I do now. The challenge for us is to do it right."

Bush will be the first president to visit Blaine, the mayor said.

"We just started a historical society," he said. "A lot of it has been lost. We've lost a lot of people recently who could have filled in parts of the early story of Blaine."

"Our baby doctor used to come out with a horse and buggy. His name was Dr. Robert Rosenthal, and he died just a few years ago. He told me it was a day deal to go out and deliver a couple of babies. You can still see some of the wagon tracks on the trails he used."

Chuck Haga is at  
crhaga@startribune.com.

over Bush's visit and the Blaine the president will see, if only briefly.

"When you say you're from Blaine, people know where it is now," he said. "We're a shining star. We like to think we're lead dog."

## Political change

Westerberg, who is seeking a fourth term this fall, said the new residential developments have drawn people with higher education and higher incomes.

"Many of the people moving in are definitely Republican," he said.

"This is a strong community, a showcase community, and it makes sense for the president to stop here. I'm really excited about it."

The political transformation is by no means total, said Ryan, who identifies himself as an independent. He's seeking a third four-year term as mayor.

"They're not all Republicans who are moving in," he said. "We have some wealthy Democrats,



# MnDOT building plan blocked

## House panel rejects proposal

By Mathias Baden  
Free Press Staff Writer

**ST. PAUL** — State Rep. John Dorn is on the verge of resorting to Plan B.

After the House Transportation Finance Committee decided last week to reject Dorn's proposal to

construct a \$15.3 million Mankato headquarters for the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Mankato DFLer said he and MnDOT District 7 might have to depend on the Senate.

"This is extremely early in the process. This is one vote in one com-

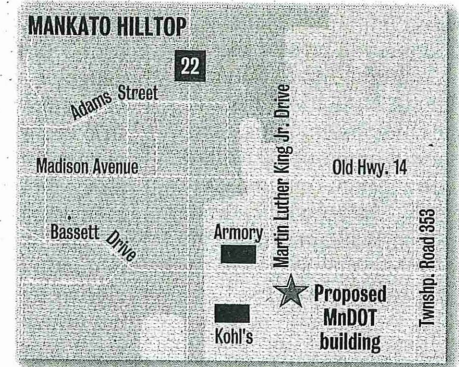
mittee," MnDOT Communications Director Lucy Kender said. "Of course, we're concerned."

It's not all that simple, Dorn said.

During a Transportation Finance Committee meeting last Thursday, the project failed to move ahead after a 10-10 vote.

Without that committee's recommendation and with pressure to keep a handle on spending, it'll be difficult

to get the project into the Capital Investment Committee's recommendation to the rest of the House. The Capital Investment Committee is allowed to endorse different priorities than those chosen by the Transportation Finance Committee, the Senate or Gov. Tim Pawlenty. Capital Investment Committee



J. Malmanger

Please see PROJECT, Page A8

# PROJECT: Governor still backs MnDOT building

Continued from Page A1

Chairman Phil Krinkie, R-Shoreview, said he wants a tight cap on the amount of money the state borrows this year.

It's unlikely that Krinkie's committee would add the MnDOT headquarters to its proposal, Dorn said.

However, if the Senate includes Dorn's bill in its transportation financing package, the MnDOT building might get funding during conference committee negotiations, Dorn said.

Constructing new headquarters to house MnDOT District 7 employees and equipment, Minnesota State Patrol officers, dispatch for both agencies and a licensing bureau ranked on the priority lists of the governor, Lt. Gov. and Transportation

Commissioner Carol Molnau and Transportation Finance Committee Chairman William Kuisle, R-Rochester. Dorn, MnDOT officials and Leslie Kupchella, a spokeswoman for the governor, agreed the Mankato headquarters isn't dead.

"It ran into a pothole," Dorn said, "and everybody knew we'd have to take some back roads and detours to get this. It's moving. It will move. I think the governor's priority will prevail."

The Pawlenty administration plans to fund the proposed headquarters, even if it comes down to end-of-session negotiating, Kupchella said. "The governor's made his priorities clear. He doesn't weigh in at all the committee levels."

In last week's committee

hearing, state Rep. Connie Ruth, R-Owatonna, voted for the new headquarters and asked for a show of hands — legislators call it a "division" vote.

She said before some committee members voted down Dorn's bill, they talked about their distaste for doing construction projects with money from the trunk highway fund, which is made up of gas taxes. "That would, in one sense, take away from roads," Committee Administrator Becky Girvan said.

Committee member and state Rep. Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, said he and other representatives voted against the proposed recommendation, because the trunk highway fund should be spent "strictly for roads," not for projects like the

proposed MnDOT headquarters.

District 7 Engineer Jim Swanson said MnDOT traditionally pays for bonding projects out of its trunk highway

fund, even though most state departments don't have such a funding source.

"We use this building to do things directly to roads," Swanson added. "It's like asking

us to plow roads but not buying any snowplows."

"I don't think anybody's against having it," Ruth said. "It's just that there aren't enough dollars."

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Concerned about 'bad apples' in the industry, the Minnesota Association of Mortgage Brokers wants the state to require loan originators to be registered.

But the state Department of Commerce thinks the proposal is unnecessary.

## State mortgage brokers' group wants more oversight from state

St. Paul Legal Ledger 2-19-04

BY MONTE HANSON  
Finance and Commerce

The Minnesota Association of Mortgage Brokers, fighting opposition from the state Department of Commerce, wants the Legislature to pass a law that would require mortgage loan originators in the state to be registered and to participate in continuing education programs.

The group said state Rep. Andrew Westerberg, R-Blaine, has introduced the Broker Registration Bill, which is expected to be heard in the Senate Commerce Committee next week.

The same measure won unanimous approval from the House Commerce

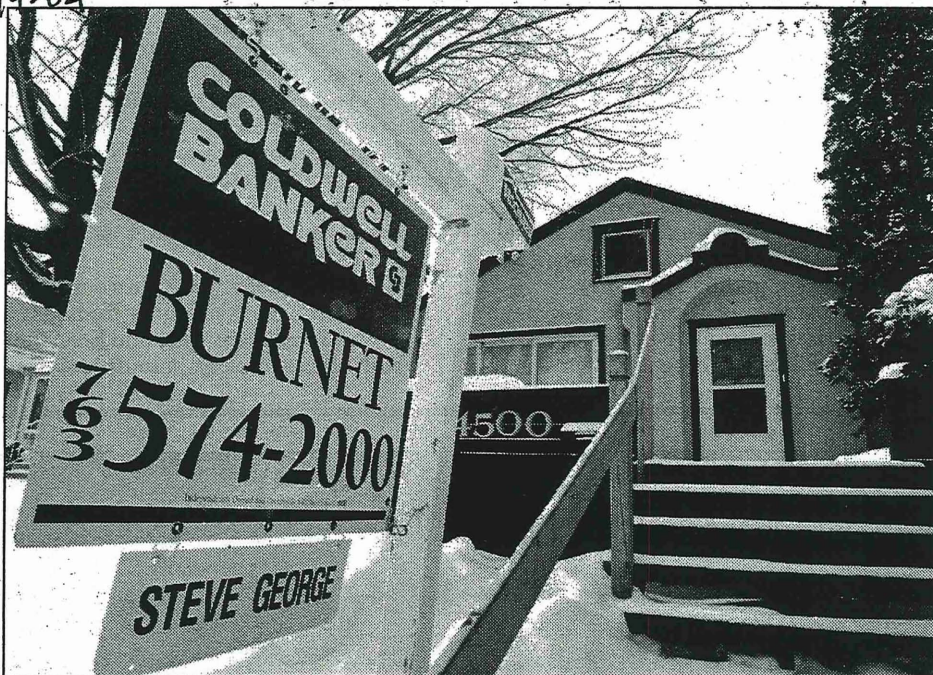
Committee a year ago before being pulled for further discussions.

"We think it makes a lot of good sense for Minnesota homebuyers to work with mortgage brokers who are screened properly and are educated," said Wade Abed, president of the mortgage brokers' group.

The booming mortgage refinancing sector and a strong housing market in the state have led to an explosion in the number of firms and people who work in the mortgage industry.

In July 2001, Minnesota had 1,267 firms that were registered as mortgage brokerages. Now, there are at least 3,000 firms operating in that sector in Minnesota — some of them with questionable credentials and ethical standards, Abed said. Real estate agents, dog groomers and hair stylists in the state are subjected to more oversight than loan originators, he said.

Abed said the law would bring accountability to the industry and eliminate some of the "bad apples" who work in the field. The law would require background checks of everyone who applies for registration. Banks, credit unions and



The booming mortgage refinancing sector and a strong housing market in Minnesota have led to an explosion in the number of firms and people who work in the state's mortgage industry. The number of firms has more than doubled from 1,267 in July 2001 to at least 3,000 today, and the Minnesota Association of Mortgage Brokers says some of them have questionable credentials and ethical standards. (File photo by Bill Klotz)



Rep. Andrew Westerberg, R-Blaine, has introduced a bill that would require mortgage loan originators in the state to be registered. The bill is backed by many in the profession, but opposed by the Department of Commerce.

finance companies that do mortgage business would be exempt.

Sixteen states, including Wisconsin and Illinois, have approved similar laws, he said.

Still, the Minnesota Department of Commerce opposes the proposal, saying the state already has enough safeguards to protect the public from dishonest or inept mortgage brokers.

Under current state law, mortgage brokerage companies must register with the state annually and can be subject to sanctions for inappropriate activities. Loan originators within each company, however, do not have to be registered.

"We think the person who owns the mortgage company should be responsible for the people they employ," said Bruce Gordon, spokesman for the state agency.

But he added that the Commerce Department is open to finding a compromise agreement.

"We're still working with and talking with the author and the industry on this," he said. "The door is not closed."

Mortgage industry officials are angry that the Commerce Department has shifted course after originally supporting the measure in the legislative session last year.

According to Abed, the mortgage association agreed to pull the measure from committee after Commerce officials asked to work with the group to make some adjustments to the proposal. When an agreement couldn't be reached, the mortgage group decided to reintroduce the law without Commerce support.

Abed said the Commerce Department was unwilling to manage the program. The agency and some Republican leaders oppose the measure because they think it would add costs and another layer of government bureaucracy, he said.

But funding shouldn't be an issue because the program would pay for itself through the licensing fees paid by mortgage brokers, Abed said.

Mark Teteris, who owns Lakeland Mortgage in Bloomington, said he supports the measure because it will help keep criminals out of the industry, create more professionalism and help employers hire the right people.

"It's too easy right now to become involved with the largest transaction [buying a house] in someone's life," he said. "All you have to do is pay \$800 for a mortgage brokerage fee and then hang out a shingle." ■



## Blaine stadium backers have edge on issue now

(St. Paul, the other potential Twins ballpark site, has no local officials up for reelection.)

Last spring, Hennepin County Board Chairman Randy Johnson, a Bloomington Republican, backed a Twins ballpark in Minneapolis. Last month, he won 74 percent of the vote in his primary race.

He said this campaign season, among more than 1,000 homes he has visited, three citizens have raised the ballpark issue.

"One was adamantly for, one was adamantly against and one was trying to think of something to ask me about," Johnson said, adding that the future of Hennepin County Medical Center and weapons screening at the county's Government Center far outweigh stadium concerns.

Commissioner Penny Steele, a Maple Grove Republican and Hennepin County's most outspoken ballpark-funding critic, won 74 percent of the vote in her primary race.

In her view, all local and regional issues are being dwarfed by the intensity of the George Bush-John Kerry race and the war in Iraq.

"They'll talk to me about national security issues, and I'm a county commissioner," she said.

Rhonda Sivarajah, the only

Anoka County commissioner who voted last spring against the local sales-tax proposal, said she's hearing opposition to the size of the potential subsidy for the stadium complex in Blaine. She won 70 percent of the vote in her primary race. Mostly, she's hearing that citizens want a referendum on the matter.

It used to be, back in the 1990s, that incumbents who supported sports subsidies were targets for opposition groups and Election Day challengers. Stadium opponents pandered to anti-tax voters.

Not this year. Not yet.

Even the organized opponents to the Anoka County stadium plan acknowledge that proponents have a leg up on them. That's because the project has been positioned as a potential coup for the northern suburbs, which have felt left out of metro-area development.

"It's hard to fight this dazzling thing that's on the horizon," said Ron Holch, of Coon Rapids, a leader of Taxpayers Against an Anoka County Vikings Stadium ([www.noanokastadiumtax.com](http://www.noanokastadiumtax.com)). "People in Anoka County are looking for ways to improve the economy and the business climate. I don't blame them. But I think a stadium is the wrong answer to that question."

No less a political scientist than House Speaker Steve Sviggum, R-Kenyon, agrees that

### Stadium debate update

**History:** The Great Minnesota Stadium Debate has been underway since the Twins first began lobbying for a new ballpark in 1996. Since then, the Vikings and University of Minnesota have presented a series of proposals, too.

**Where it stands:** Minneapolis and Hennepin County joined together last year to develop a plan that would place a \$500 million ballpark on land near Target Center. The county board voted to impose an increase in countywide sales taxes to pay for some of

the ballpark. No state money was ever approved. The Twins seemed willing to kick in about \$120 million, but the Hennepin-Minneapolis plan might have required more.

St. Paul also has a site, near Xcel Energy Center, and a city-only bar and restaurant tax to help pay for a ballpark. Again, there was an absence of approved state funding and the Twins contribution was still in flux.

Anoka County, which would impose a countywide sales tax, has the lone Vikings pro-

posals on the table. Neither the team nor state has committed to the proposed \$650 million stadium, which would be the centerpiece of a \$1.5 billion retail-corporate-entertainment complex.

posals on the table. Neither the team nor state has committed to the proposed \$650 million stadium, which would be the centerpiece of a \$1.5 billion retail-corporate-entertainment complex.

The University of Minnesota wants its own \$222 million on-campus football stadium and hopes to raise more than 60 percent of that privately. But it needs state aid to pay for the remainder.

**Where it's headed:** After next week's election, the Twins will renew their efforts to forge

a ballpark plan. Anoka County officials are also hard at work, and the "U" is eager for stadium discussions.

**Wild cards:** How big will the state's budget deficit be this year? If it approaches the \$1 billion range, stadium talk will be pushed aside, most observers believe. But then there's the other unknown: Will Gov. Pawlenty's pressure to grab Indian gambling revenues mean that some of that new money funds stadiums?

Jay Weiner

stadium backers like Erhart and Blaine Mayor Tom Ryan may be immunized from political attack because "an opponent has to come out and say, 'I don't want the Vikings in Anoka County.' It's tough to take a position against somebody who is promoting his community," Sviggum said.

Another reason stadium talk has been muted could be the tedium of the debate, said Ryan, who's expected to win his third term easily.

"I think people are tired of it," Ryan said of the stadium issue. "They're looking for the government to come up with some kind of plan. We [Blaine and Anoka County] did our part. Until the state brings a plan back, I'll forget about it."

### State will revive it

The state will bring it back. Sviggum said he expects a Uni-

versity of Minnesota football stadium and a Twins ballpark to find a way onto the Legislature's agenda next year, but only after budget, health care and education issues are tackled.

As Anoka officials forge ahead, the Vikings, frustrated at the Capitol, have halted lobbying efforts. The Twins haven't.

Twins Sports Inc. president Jerry Bell has been campaigning for owner Carl Pohlad for a new ballpark since 1996 at a total cost of nearly \$10 million.

Next month, Bell said, he will begin seeking bipartisan support from legislative leaders for "buy-in" to a ballpark plan that won't face repeated amendments once it arrives at contentious legislative committees.

"If I don't see that, I don't think I'll waste Carl's money again," Bell said of lobbying efforts.

But, if Anoka is an indication, stadiums are deep on the back burner of most politicians.

Earlier this month at a candidates' forum hosted by the Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce, eight candidates from four legislative districts in or around Anoka County presented their platforms. Jobs, health

care, transit and the training of workers were topics of questions from the audience of 40 chamber members.

The Vikings stadium wasn't mentioned until one man spoke up and asked the candidates to lay out their stadium positions.

That man was none other than Erhart, whose stadium promoting has, so far, left him remarkably unscathed, and free to ask whatever he pleases.

Jay Weiner is at [jweiner@startribune.com](mailto:jweiner@startribune.com).

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## Voters tune out stadium talk

They seem to want candidates to address other issues this election.

STAR TRIBUNE OCT 25 '04  
By Jay Weiner  
Star Tribune Staff Writer

In Anoka County, the newest belly of Minnesota's stadium beast, an odd thing is occurring this campaign season: stadium politics are barely mentioned.

"Not once," said Rep. Connie Bernardy, DFL-Fridley, who is running for her third term

and whose district includes Blaine, where a new Vikings stadium has been proposed.

"I usually have to bring it up," said Rep. Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, whose district includes the 700 acres set aside for a proposed \$1.5 billion Vikings stadium and multi-use complex. "But the minute I bring it up, mostly I hear, 'Yeah, I'm for it.'"

Meanwhile, Anoka County Board Chairman Dan Erhart, the leading proponent of the plan that would require \$240 million of county sales taxes, is running for reelection next week.

No one is challenging him.

Has stadium fatigue set in with Minnesota's voters? Has public sentiment truly changed? Or is the Anoka County electorate's lack of engagement on the stadium issue an anomaly?

Yes. Hard to tell. And no.

Those seem to be the three consensus answers to those questions, according to candidates in Anoka and Hennepin counties, where, respectively, Vikings and Twins stadiums have been proposed.

**STADIUM continues on B5:**  
— "I think people are tired of it."  
— Kerry-Bush race and the Iraq war at the forefront.



# Dittrich, Hortman help eat into Republicans' control of state House

by Peter Bodley  
Managing editor

Two Minnesota House districts which include parts of Anoka County changed hands Tuesday as a resurgent DFL came close to ending Republican control of the House.

Pending a recount in a House district in Mora, which is presently in the Republican column, the Republican majority in the House has been reduced to 68-66.

And the victories of DFLers Denise Dittrich in District 47A and Melissa Hortman in District 47B helped shave that Republican majority.

They beat incumbent Republicans Bill Haas and Stephanie Olsen, respectively. The Hortman-Olsen race was a re-run from two years ago.

Dittrich beat Haas with 52 percent of the vote, 10,438 to 9,576, while Hortman edged Olsen with 50.89 percent of the vote, 10,836 to 10,440.

District 47A includes parts of Coon Rapids and the city of Champlin, while District 47B includes parts of Coon Rapids and Brooklyn Park.

Dittrich, Champlin, has been an Anoka-Hennepin District 11 School Board member for six years. She also taught in the Elk River School District. She ousted Haas, a former mayor of Champlin, who had served in the House since 1994.

"I think I had a good message for voters on the issues that are important to them," Dittrich said.

The top issue Dittrich learned from going door to door was education and education funding, followed closely by transportation, especially the Northstar Corridor commuter rail project, and health care reform. Dittrich made the decision to run against Haas back in February because she felt the residents and District 11 needed better representation in St. Paul, she said.

Her name recogni-

tion from being a school board member was an asset in the campaign, Dittrich said. Going into election day, Dittrich said she felt "positive energy" about the outcome and was buoyed by the strong backing she had received from supporters and neighbors.

"I had a lot of grassroots support," she said. "I feel elated. It was the best-case scenario."

Dittrich will resign her school board seat at the end of the year.

Hortman, Brooklyn Park, is a graduate of Blaine High School. A lawyer by profession, she serves as general counsel and vice president of the family business, John's Auto Parts in Blaine.

"I am very pleased and honored to have the confidence of voters," Hortman said.

She is ready to start her term at the Capitol to "do the work that needs to be done."

Two of her priorities are to make progress on funding for the Northstar Corridor and TH 610 expansion, Hortman said.

Indeed, Hortman believes the difference between the 2002 election she lost and this year was that "voters want a representative who will vote independently for the interests of the district and not the political party," she said. In going door-to-door, Hortman said people told her they wanted an end to partisan bickering at the Legislature.

"I am willing to reach across party lines to get things done," she said. "I am willing to work with Republicans."

Hortman, who consider herself a middle of the road moderate, is not afraid to buck the party line, she said.

She has already got into trouble with the DFL party by stating publicly she would work with Republican Rep. Kathy Tingelstad, Andover, to secure state funding for

Northstar, Hortman said.

In the rest of the races affecting Anoka County, all incumbents were re-elected.

▲ District 17A: Rob Eastlund, R, incumbent, 11,804; Pat Sundberg, DFL, 10,460. The district includes the city of St. Francis in Anoka County and portions of Isanti County. Anoka County totals were Eastlund 1,824, Sundberg 1,328.

▲ District 47A: Denise Dittrich, DFL, 10,438; Bill Haas, R, incumbent, 9,576. District 47A includes the city of Champlin and five precincts in Coon Rapids (11, 12, 42, 43 and 45). Anoka County totals were Dittrich 3,973, Haas 3,461.

▲ District 47B: Melissa Hortman, DFL, 10,836; Stephanie Olsen, R, incumbent, 10,440. The district covers a portion of Brooklyn Park and five precincts in Coon Rapids (31, 32, 34, 41 and 44). Anoka County totals were Hortman 3,804, Olsen 3,158.

▲ District 48A: Tom Hackbarth, R, incumbent, 12,479; Mike Starr, DFL, 9,056. The district includes Bethel, East Bethel, Oak Grove and Burns Township as well as parts of Sherburne County. Anoka County totals were Hackbarth 7,232, Starr 3,804.

▲ District 48B: Jim Abeler, R, incumbent, 12,123; Bob Trewartha, DFL, 7,119. House District 48B encompasses the cities of Anoka and Ramsey.

▲ District 49A: Chris DeLaForest, R, incumbent, 13,856; Jim Pithan, DFL, 8,124. The district includes Ham Lake and part of Andover.

▲ District 49B: Kathy Tingelstad, R, incumbent, 10,873; LeeAnn Mortensen, DFL, 8,472; The district includes the southwest corner of

Andover and north and east Coon Rapids.

• ▲ District 50A: Barb Goodwin, DFL, incumbent, 11,586; Nathan Jones, R, 6,579. The district includes Columbia Heights and Hilltop, a portion of Fridley and parts of Ramsey County. Anoka County vote totals were Goodwin 10,839, Jones 6,089.

• ▲ District 50B: Char Samuelson, R, incumbent, 10,821; Geri Evans, DFL, 10,009. This district covers parts of Fridley and portions of Ramsey County. Anoka County vote totals were Samuelson 312, Evans 367.

• ▲ District 51A: Andy Westerberg, R, incumbent, 12,468; Kendra Brodin, DFL, 10,107. District 51A includes most of the city of Blaine, except for the southwest and southeast corners.

• ▲ District 51B: Connie Bernardy, DFL, incumbent, 10,4990; Pam Wolf, R, 7,943; Darrel Benedix, Independence, 696. The district covers Spring Lake Park, southwest Blaine, parts of Fridley and portions of Ramsey County. Anoka County vote totals were Bernardy 7,244, Wolf 5,157, Benedix 433.

• ▲ District 52A: Ray Vandever, R, incumbent, 13,531; Rob Raphael, DFL, 9,238. The district includes portions of Washington County and eastern communities in Anoka County - Linwood and Columbus townships and the northern half of Lino Lakes. Anoka County vote totals were Vandever 5,515, Raphael 3,875.

• ▲ District 53A: Phil Krinkie, R, incumbent, 10,005; Paul Gardner, DFL, 8,253. The district includes parts of Ramsey County and the southeast corner of Anoka County. Vote totals in Anoka County were Krinkie 6,646, Gardner 5,333.

Peter Bodley is at: peter.bodley@ecm-inc.com

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**Another term** **51A**

The record-breaking voter turnout on Nov. 2 was incredible. I want to thank each and every person who took time to take part in the democratic process. Minnesotans again led the country in voter turnout, and that itself is quite an accomplishment in an election that saw the highest number of ballots ever cast nationwide.

I specifically want to thank the citizens of Blaine who have entrusted me to continue serving as their state representative for another two years. I pledge to work hard to make sure the needs of our community are addressed by the legislature.

I encourage you to contact me with your ideas and concerns. If you would like to share your thoughts about the upcoming session, please feel free to e-mail me at

rep.andy.westerberg@house.mn or call my office at 651-296-4226. Or, if you prefer, you can write to me at 549 State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155.

I look forward to hearing from you and to representing you at the Capitol.

**Andy Westerberg**  
State Representative,  
District 51A

# MOUNDS VIEW/NEW BRIGHTON/ST. ANTHONY SUN FOCUS

MOUNDS VIEW, MN  
WEEKLY 12,927  
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# BLAINE-SPRING LAKE PARK SUN FOCUS

ROSEVILLE, MN  
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## Citizen involvement helps legislators

To the Editor:

Ever since I became a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives, I have made the effort to solicit input from constituents. I highly value advice from local residents, which helps me to better represent the people of Blaine.

This year, I have been impressed with the very high level of citizen involvement. I have been contacted by literally thousands of citizens, sharing their views on such important local issues as a proposed stadium for the Vikings to the traffic situation on Hwy. 65.

I sincerely thank all of the people who have taken time away from their busy schedules to write, call, come to town meetings and return survey cards. Your opinion is important to me, and rest assured that your voice is being heard.

I encourage you to continue sharing your questions and ideas with me. I want to know your thoughts about the issues most important to you. Please feel free to call my office any time at 651-296-4226. Or if you prefer, drop me an e-mail at rep.andy.westerberg@house.mn, or write me a letter at 549 State Office Building, St. Paul, Minn., 55155.

**State Rep. Andy Westerberg**  
District 51A  
(R-Blaine)

DISTRICT 51A

# Andy Westerberg

Rep. Andy Westerberg, 50, a Republican from Blaine is seeking a fourth term in the Minnesota House. His DFL challenger is Kendra Brodin, 28, also of Blaine, a political newcomer.

We think the district eventually might outgrow Westerberg's laid-back style as the fastest-growing city in Minnesota undergoes demographic change. But Westerberg, an insurance agent, is a solid, predictable Republican who knows the community and is known. "I believe the Republicans have done a really good job over the last six years," he says.

Brodin, a lawyer who is active in church and community work, is campaigning as a moderating influence who concentrates on district issues such as "fair funding" for Blaine schools and affordable health care. She is short of specifics although Brodin has the promise to become an excellent, well-equipped candidate in the future.

Our endorsement in District 51A goes to **Andy Westerberg**.



**Andy Westerberg**

## House District 51A



PIONEER PRESS

10-13-04

## FIND OUT MORE

**Andy Westerberg:** www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members/members.asp?district=51A

**Kendra Brodin:** www.kendrabrodin.com

## PIONEER PRESS OCT 24 '04 House District 51A

Last session, Minnesotans were frustrated by partisanship at the Capitol. Both parties were guilty of this, but Blaine's current representative blames only one party — and it's not his. This kind of blaming and party politics created partisan gridlock at the Capitol. I am an independent-minded candidate who will reach across party lines and will do what's best for the citizens of my district and the state of Minnesota.

I will think creatively about funding solutions to help improve our schools, not vote to cut \$185 million from Minnesota K-12 education like my opponent did. I will also make sure that Blaine gets its fair share of transportation money. My opponent voted to cut transportation funding and send 60 percent of the metro area funding to the southwestern suburbs.

The Pioneer Press may have endorsed my opponent, but noted that I am "campaigning as a moderating influence." Blaine residents can make up their own mind — more of the same partisanship, or fresh, new representation that puts the needs of our families above party politics. I will be an independent voice for the people of Blaine and their families.

**KENDRA BRODIN**  
Blaine

BLAINE

# Taxes, schools top list in 51A race

BY BOB SHAW

Pioneer Press

10.16.04

The House race for District 51A in Blaine pits a Republican incumbent and insurance agent against a Democratic challenger who is a lawyer and choir director.

Andy Westerberg, who has represented the district for six years, is challenging Kendra Brodin.

Westerberg said lowering taxes and boosting Minnesota's quality of life are his key issues.

"When I first ran, Minnesota had the second-highest taxes in the country," said Westerberg. He said he helped pass the largest tax cut in state history.

Despite the tax reductions, he notes, Minnesota still has higher state taxes than Wisconsin does. "Wisconsin has a smaller budget even though they have 500,000 more people," he said. "I don't mind paying more as long as we get something for those dollars."

Westerberg's position on other issues:

**Stadium:** "I support a Vikings stadium in Blaine, but the key question is: At what cost?"

**Education:** "We need to continue to have the best K-12 program in the nation." He said the federal government mandated improvements in special education and promised to pay 40 percent of costs but has never approaching that amount.

**Teachers:** Westerberg favors higher teacher salaries but suggests that decision be left to local school boards. He also supported a bill to allow teachers and police to talk to each other about law-breaking students without fear of violating privacy laws.

**Gas tax:** He supports a gas tax increase of 10 cents a gallon to pay for roads and bridges. That tax would generate \$320 million annually for roads and bridges, he said. He also favors toll roads.

Westerberg is married and has four grown children.

Brodin, the mother of a 10-

month-old daughter, says education is her No. 1 concern but she has positions on transportation and other issues as well.

Brodin worries that cutbacks in early childhood development programs will hurt children in the long run.

She said that for every dollar invested in such programs, society saves \$8 in future costs, such as welfare and prison programs. The family recoups \$4 of that, she said.

Brodin's position on other issues:

**Activity fees:** She's bothered by extra school fees. Fees for extracurricular activities, from sports to debate clubs to band, mean poorer students can't afford them.

**Talent knows no finances.** For example, you might have a potentially brilliant young basketball player who just can't afford the sport.

**Busing fees:** Brodin said busing fees mean that any child living less than two miles from school must pay up to \$300 a year to ride a bus.

"Two miles is a long way, especially in a Minnesota winter. Kids' safety is potentially sacrificed, for raising revenue."

She said the area deserves more transportation money: 60 percent of the metro transportation money goes to southern suburbs, she said.

"We need to fight for our share."

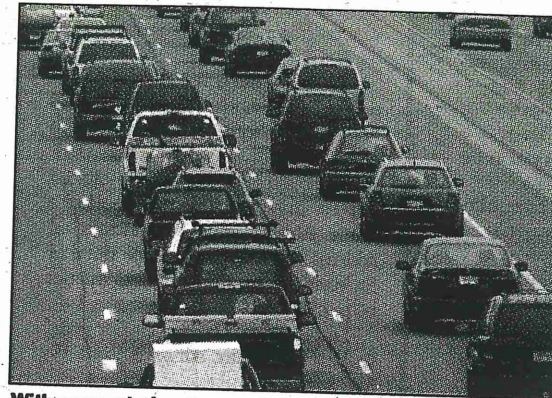
**Taxes:** Brodin said she wants to keep taxes reasonable but that the level of taxation depends on the state's needs. "I don't like higher taxes, either. But for schools or adequate roads, I don't mind chipping in."

Brodin is a part-time attorney and a part-time choir director for the seven choirs at St. Philip's Lutheran Church in Fridley. Her husband is pastor at the church.

Bob Shaw can be reached at bshaw@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-5433.



# Study for second Twin Cities beltway proposed



With congested metro roads and increased suburb-to-suburb traffic, lawmakers are considering whether now is the time to study construction of a second beltway outside the I-494/I-694 corridor. (Legal Ledger file photo)

If approved, the study for feasibility and cost of adding outer freeway ring to system may cost up to \$50 million

St Paul Legal Ledger

51A BY DAVID KNUTSON News Editor 3/25/04

Lawmakers are considering a bill to study construction of a second beltway around the metro area. The legislation calls for the Department of Transportation commissioner to produce a preliminary plan for a beltline outside the existing I-494/I-694 system in the Twin Cities.

Questions remain on the scope of the plan. During a hearing on the bill Tuesday before the House Transportation Finance Committee, one of the

authors, Rep. Andrew Westerberg, R-Blaine, noted that a second beltway might need to take into account suburb-to-suburb traffic as well as that headed directly to the core cities.

"Business and jobs are not just downtown," Westerberg said.

Frank Pafko, north metro area manager for MnDOT, said several options are possible for the scope of such a plan.

The plan could include only new "principal arterial alignment" routes. Or it could have a timeline and process information.

Freeway Study continued on page 2

**Freeway Study:**  
'It would be nice to start looking at what the future needs of the region are going to be,' says Kuisle.

Continued from page 1

Even more detail such as technical evaluations of the 19-county region is possible, Pafko said, though it would likely add a year to completion of the study and might cost \$1 million.

The cost of the study has not been determined, although estimates put it as high as \$50 million.

Jon Olson, division manager of public service for Anoka County, told lawmakers that there has been discussion of a second beltway since 1991. Anoka County officials support the study, Olson said. He added that counties and cities around the metro area are paying for maintenance on roads due to heavy vehicles avoiding congestion on the existing I-494/I-694 beltway.

"We believe these heavy vehicles are avoiding the metropolitan area, causing a significant hardship for local roads," Olson said.

MnDOT officials have no idea how much a second beltway would cost, but the route could be anywhere from 175 miles to 250 miles long and run into the billions of dollars.

"This is a very expensive proposal, but one with huge benefits," Olson said.

Rep. William Kuisle, R-Rochester, noted the high cost of the project but also its benefits, given anticipated growth in the metro area.

"It would be nice to start looking at what the future needs of the region are going to be," Kuisle said.

## Blaine residents are split on stadium proposal

STAR TRIBUNE MAR 23 '04  
By Dane Smith  
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Informal meeting discusses big development plan 51A

It was about half thumbs-up and about half thumbs-down from the 75 citizens in Blaine who showed up Saturday to hear a proposal to build a Minnesota Vikings stadium as the centerpiece of a huge economic development project in their city.

"I studied stadium proposals for a project in college, and this is probably the tightest, best proposal I've ever seen," said Brandon Philipczyk, who grew up in Blaine and recently graduated from North Dakota State University.

Successful stadiums around the country tend to be those that are planned as part of a larger entertainment complex, and the Anoka County-sponsored proposal features corporate office and retail space, a hotel, a

Vikings museum and a health-care facility.

Others were emphatically sure that the project, one of several stadium proposals now before the Legislature, is a bad idea and an unwise use of as much as \$240 million in local tax increases.

"This will bring noise, pollution and a big mess to my backyard and it's going to increase the crime rate and vandalism," said Sandy Connor, who lives near the proposed site. "We can have good business development without stadiums. We don't need 20,000 more cars on our roads."

Stadium proposals, especially those that include a sizable contribution from taxpayers, always draw strong opposition

in Minnesota, but the Blaine project appears to be relatively popular in the northern suburbs.

State Rep. Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, told the audience at the Blainebrook Bowl meeting hall that his surveys of hundreds of constituents is showing approval by about a 2-1 ratio.

Connor said she thought Westerberg's questionnaire was tilted to prompt a positive response.

When a member of the audience asked for a show of hands, about half said they favored the stadium proposal and about half raised their hands in opposition.

Elected officials in the region, who see the proposal as a chance for the northern suburbs

to at long last attract an economic megaproject, appear to be lining up behind the proposal enthusiastically. State Sen. Don Betzold, DFL-Fridley, told the group that he supports it. It has been unanimously approved by the Blaine City Council and by the Anoka County Board with only one dissenting vote, Betzold said.

The main presenter of the plan at the meeting was Steve Novak, a former state senator and now division manager for government services for Anoka County.

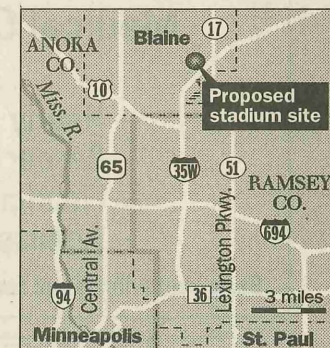
Novak's role rankled Tom Jablonski, a Blaine resident and an engineer, who forcefully criticized his public elected officials for serving as promoters of the plan. "They should be critically

analyzing this, not promoting it," Jablonski said. "All we're hearing about is the benefits, not the costs."

The event, a town hall meeting conducted by Westerberg on the stadium proposal, also drew a few interested parties from outside of Anoka County.

Dan Dobson, a leader of a statewide group, the No Stadium Tax Coalition, said claims about the project creating 6,000 jobs and paying for itself through increased state and local revenues are grossly inflated.

Dressed in a Vikings jersey and rooting for the project was Larry Spooner of Plymouth. He said that the Vikings are close to leaving Minnesota and that if that happens, Minnesota will become "a third Dakota."



Jane Friedmann/Star Tribune

"It is a quality-of-life issue," Spooner said. "As Minnesotans, we deserve the best, from bike trails to stadiums."

Novak said the project needs the full and energetic support of Anoka County for it to have a chance. "This is a classic opportunity for the north suburban area that may never come again," he said.

Dane Smith is at  
rdsmith@startribune.com.



BLAINE-SPRING LAKE PARK  
LIFE

ANOKA, MN  
WEEKLY 1,350

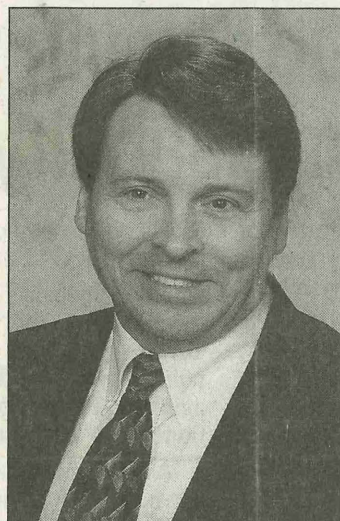
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**Blaine's Rep. to Mn/DOT: Make plans for second beltway**

51A  
**Rep. Andy Westerberg insists that population explosion will dictate new multi-lane beltway in Twin Cities.**



Rep. Andy Westerberg

State Representative Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, has introduced legislation that would direct the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) to establish preliminary plans for the construction of a second beltway around the Twin Cities.

The Westerberg proposal, House File 2247, calls for Mn/DOT to identify a potential route for a new multi-lane beltway outside of the current Interstate 494/694 loop by July of next year.

"The question isn't if a second beltway will be built, but when," said Westerberg.

"The metropolitan area is expected to gain one million new residents by 2020," Westerberg said.

"The current transportation infrastructure simply cannot accommodate such population growth, and we must begin to plan for the future," he said.

Westerberg said that it is important for the Transportation Commissioner to begin

the planning process sooner rather than later in order to reduce costs associated with construction and right-of-way acquisition. In 2004 dollars, a second beltway would cost an estimated \$8.6 billion to construct, but rising property values threaten to make costs of future construction far greater.

"We must allow the state and local communities to begin acquiring land for future highway construction as soon as possible," said Westerberg.

"Property values continue to rapidly rise across the metro area. Dollars we can invest now will save taxpayers millions—if not billions—in the future."

The legislation does not suggest potential routes for a new beltway.

However, Westerberg said that a good candidate for one segment would be Viking Boulevard, from Highway 10 to Highway 65.

To view this and other legislation introduced by Westerberg, visit his website at [www.house.mn/51A](http://www.house.mn/51A).

QUAD COMMUNITY PRESS

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**Legislature proposes second highway loop**

Traffic concerns have led to a proposal for the Minnesota Department of Transportation to plan a second highway route that would circle the Twin Cities outside of the Interstate 494/694 loop.

State Rep. Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, introduced the legislation, saying that the area will outgrow the road infrastructure eventually and should plan ahead. His bill would require MnDOT to identify a potential route by next July.

**Proposal could net Century \$5.5 million**

A bill introduced by Sen. Michele Bachmann, R-Stillwater; Sen. Mady Reiter, R-Shoreview; and Sen. Debbie Johnson, R-Ham Lake, asks for \$5.5 million from bond pro-

ceeds to remodel and convert space on the east campus of Century College. Work would include a technology center and classroom building, design and construction of a new building for science labs and classrooms, and a new library and learning resource

center at the college.

Companion legislation was introduced in the House by Rep. Doug Meslow, R-White Bear Lake.

The bills are currently in committee for consideration.

BLAINE-SPRING LAKE PARK  
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ANOKA, MN  
WEEKLY 1,350  
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**Republicans endorse Westerberg for fourth term**

State Representative Andy Westerberg, R-Blaine, was unanimously endorsed for reelection on April 24 by District 51A Republicans.

Westerberg is seeking his fourth term to the Minnesota House of Representatives, in which he serves as a member of the Transportation Finance, Transportation Policy, and is Vice Chair of the Regulated Industries Committee.

Said Westerberg, "A constituent recently told me that I was the best state representative he ever had. Comments such as that, as well as words of encouragement from many in the community, have persuaded me to seek another term in the House to continue working on the critical issues important to the people of Blaine."

During this term, Westerberg successfully secured \$5 million in bonding dollars to construct, furnish, and equip a sport event center on the campus of the National Sports Center. The new facility is expected to attract conventions and sport groups and enhance the local economy.

Westerberg is a co-founder of the Highway 65 Task Force, which has solicited input from area residents and businesses about a proposal to upgrade this important transportation corridor. Westerberg has also authored legislation during this session that directs the Minnesota Department of Transportation to identify a corridor for a second Twin Cities' beltway.

"Blaine is growing quickly, and so are its needs from the state," said Westerberg. "I am pleased to be able to provide an experienced voice at the Capitol for our community. I pledge to continue working to improve our schools, upgrade our infrastructure, and enhance our business and job creation environment."

Westerberg, who owns and operates the Westerberg Insurance Agency, resides in Blaine with his wife Catherine. The couple have four children and are active members of the Way of the Cross Church.



## BLAINE-SPRING LAKE PARK SUN FOCUS

BLAINE, MN  
WEEKLY 7,800  
OCT 21 2004

1) How would you resolve the budget deficit that has left cities and counties scrambling for money? Is Minnesota being served best by adhering to a "no new taxes" pledge as subscribed to by the governor? Do you support an increase/expansion in taxes? If so, please be specific.

2) Are you willing to increase funding for public schools, by how much and what for?

3) Three stadium proposals are before the Legislature — Twins, Vikings and University of Minnesota. Do you support public funding for any or all of these stadiums? Why or why not?

### Kendra Brodin

Family: Husband, Rev. Ryan Brodin, one daughter

Education: Augustana College, BA; University of Pennsylvania, Masters in Social Work; University of Minnesota Law School, JD



Kendra Brodin

Occupation: Helgen and Helgen, P.A.; attorney; St. Philip's Lutheran Church, choir director

Political and civic experience: Blaine Park Board commissioner, Neighborhood Watch co-captain, WATCH Legal Observation Project volunteer, Thrivent

Chapter Leadership Board, St. Philip's Social Benevolence Committee, youth mentor

1) No one wants tax increases, but taxes are one way that government is able to fund programs vital to our families. We should not turn to tax increases as a first response to our problems, but rather find responsible and creative ways to address them. If revenue needs to be raised, we must be honest and not hide behind fuzzy math, increased fees, and budget shifts. Our families expect our legislature to have open and honest debate on issues affecting our lives. A "no new tax" pledge does not allow for that debate and is a disservice to our families.

2) Yes. For the first time in Minnesota history, the legislature made \$185 million in cuts to our education system. This lost funding should be restored. Education is a priority for our families and communities and an investment in our future! Representatives who say they value education and then support cuts that have crippling effects on our schools must be held accountable. Increased funding should begin with early childhood education, which suffered from the last legislative session despite the fact that many respected economists believe it is the best investment we can make in our future economy.

3) I support public funding for stadium projects if there are guarantees there will be economic advantages that outweigh the potential disadvantages. Attention must be paid to the type of jobs and tax base created, infrastructure implications of such undertakings, and quality of living issues for surrounding

## Kendra Brodin: putting family values to work, no more politics as usual

"We need to talk sensibly about issues and not let petty politics get in the way of real improvements for our community," said Kendra Brodin. "I would consider a legislative session a failure that did not accomplish things for the state."

Brodin is running for the District 51A seat in the Minnesota House of Representatives, which encompasses most of Blaine.

Brodin and her husband Ryan, live in Blaine with their infant daughter. Ryan Brodin has served for the past four years as pastor at St. Phillip's Lutheran Church in Fridley, where Kendra is a choir director and active on the church's Social Benevolence Committee.

Although Brodin moved to the district just a couple of years ago, "the minute we moved in the door I was

Page 6

### District 51A



Kendra Brodin

invested in the community," she said, and soon won an appointment to the Blaine Park Board.

"We chose to live here," she said.

"We wanted to live in this district. We liked the people and the town."

An honors graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School, Brodin is eager to continue her family tradition of public service.

"We love our state and our country, she said. "This is the best way I feel that I can help others."

"I come from a family of teachers, as does my husband, so education is near and dear to my heart," she continued.

As a legislator, Brodin would support investments in Early Childhood and Family Education, special needs education, talented and gifted education, and higher education.

She also will champion improvements to transportation. "There's growing congestion on local roads," she noted. "In my district, transporta-

tion is a huge issue," she said. "We are growing so rapidly. People need to get to and from work."

Brodin shared many voters' frustration with the stalemate at this session of the legislature. "The current legislators were elected to accomplish something," she said. "Not getting things done is not an option."

"There are values that cross party lines," she maintained. "There are always compromises to be found."

Kendra Brodin is challenging Andrew Westerberg, who was elected in 1998. In three terms, Westerberg received a 28 percent AFL-CIO voting record on working family issues.

Contact:

Kendra Brodin

Phone: 763-717-4758

www.kendrabrodin.com

kendra@kendrabrodin.com

June 16, 2004

residents, particularly here in Blaine for the proposed Vikings stadium. Use of public money for a private venture must be kept to a minimum. There are many investments that our public monies compete for, and we must find the solution that best serves our priorities, like our schools and roads.

### Andy Westerberg

Age: 50

Address: 3070 Goodhue St. N.E., Blaine

Family: Married with four children. State Representative, 3rd term; MN Amateur Sports Commissioner; Insurance agent-registered rep, 25 years.

Education: AA degree, Anoka-Ramsey Community College; CLU Designation, American College.



Andy Westerberg

Community involvement: Past President North-Metro Assoc of Life Underwriters, Past Director Fellowship of Christian Golfers, SLP/LION, former volunteer firefighter, active church member.

1) The budget question is really "What is the appropriate price of government?" How much should the taxpayer pay? Questions like this played a part in the birth of our country. In solving this question, we must consider

neighboring states like Wisconsin's budget which is \$5 Billion less than ours though they have approximately 500,000 more citizens. It is critical to have a fair playing field or we risk losing quality jobs for working families. Budgets are hard on our checkbooks at home. Government must make tough decisions too. Questioning priorities must continue, raising taxes should be the last solution.

2) YES. I believe education doesn't cost, it pays. Expenses continue to escalate and schools have bills to pay too. I will work for an increase on the per-pupil formula to help cover these increases. We should find a way to reward school districts which out-perform other districts. Special Education needs and federal mandates are not matching up with appropriate funding and something will have to change to improve this situation. School transportation issues need to be addressed and I will spend a considerable amount of time on this issue next session. Dollars invested in education equal future savings.

3) UM should receive some help, however the majority of cost should be paid by user fees and donations. Twins and Vikings are a tougher issue. These teams are extremely important to our state and I will try very hard to make sure they stay here. The Viking proposal is more than a stadium. It is a stadium with private development producing needed jobs and revenue to our communities. While it seems logical to me that the taxpayer help to some degree, two questions arise. One - how much? Two - how do we get the whole state to participate?