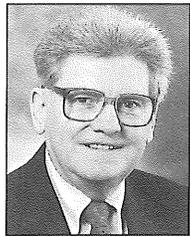


Mahon wants less airport noise, more funding for cities

"Who am I? Why am I here?" Rep. Mark Mahon (DFL-Bloomington) throws out his arms and imitates failed vice presidential candidate Admiral James Stockdale.



Rep. Mark Mahon

But Mahon is joking, of course, and answers the questions as quickly as he asked them.

He's serving in the House to tackle the same issues he faced during his 17-year tenure on the Bloomington City Council: airport noise, property taxes, and economic development along the Interstate 494 corridor. After being encouraged by family members and DFL colleagues to take a shot at higher office, Mahon (pronounced MAN) jumped at the chance in the newly drawn district.

"Some of us thought it was time to have a Democrat serving the district again," he explained, giving credit for his victory to his wife and campaign coordinator, Florence.

But Mahon himself knows something about plotting a successful course. He served a four-year stint in the U.S. Air Force as an air traffic controller in the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. After his tour, he got a job as a union official for Case International Harvester in St. Paul, where he

worked for 35 years before retiring in 1990.

He also served on the Bloomington Port Authority since 1982, and as a Metropolitan Waste Control Commission commissioner since 1983. He resigned both posts after becoming a member of the House.

Mahon defeated two-term Independent-Republican Rep. Joyce Henry to win his seat. The election was one of the year's closest, with only 55 votes separating the candidates.

His new constituents want to avoid another hike in property taxes, something Mahon knows is directly linked to state aid for cities.

"Cutbacks in HACA (homestead and agricultural credit aid) and other local government aid translate to higher real estate taxes. The city budgets are already tight. If there are more cuts [in local government aid] that means higher taxes."

The suburban district, which also includes the southwestern corner of Richfield, is well within earshot of the Mpls-St. Paul International Airport. Not surprisingly, noise abatement is near the top among constituent concerns.

Mahon has served on a number of panels addressing airport noise and co-founded the Bloomington-Richfield Airport Action Group (BRAAG) that opposed the extension of Runway 422.

From his new seat on the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee, Mahon hopes to directly influence state policy on noise mitigation. Last year, the committee helped to target more funding for soundproofing of area homes and public buildings.

Mahon welcomes the opportunity to serve in the House and acknowledges there is "much to learn." Although there is the potential to have more of an impact at the Legislature, he also has to persuade 200 other legislators to his point of view. On the Bloomington City Council, he only had to persuade a handful of people.

"I've yet to determine whether this is a promotion or not," he joked.

—John Tschida

District 40A

Pop.: 31,723
Distribution: 100% in urbanized areas
Counties: Hennepin
Largest City: Bloomington (portion)
Location: southern Metro
1992 presidential election statistics:
 Clinton/Gore: 46.2 percent
 Bush/Quayle: 30.0 percent
 Perot/Stockdale: 23.2 percent
 Other: 0.6 percent

Transportation and spending top priorities for Wolf

A year ago, Rep. Ken Wolf (IR-Burnsville) had no idea he would end up as a member of the Legislature. But when redistricting created an open seat in District 41B, the city council veteran of 10 years decided it was time for a change. As a representative of District 41B, he'd have "the opportunity to serve [the public] in a little different capacity, with different issues, and different challenges."



Rep. Ken Wolf

In his first run for the Legislature, he bested his opponent by about 1,500 votes.

Public service is not a new area of work for Wolf. In addition to his tenure on the Burnsville City Council, he was active in the League of Minnesota Cities and the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities, and he chaired the Dakota County Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

"I'm not unfamiliar with the [legislative] process," explained Wolf, pointing out that his work in city government has brought him to the Capitol many times. "But I'm learning more and more every day, and the learning process will never end."

Prior to becoming a House member, Wolf

spent 28 years with Control Data Corporation, and then ran a restaurant in Savage for two years. Describing himself as "semi-retired," he still does part-time computer consulting for a medical company. He hopes to use his extensive corporate and "public budgeting" background to contribute to the ongoing legislative conversation on "fiscal responsibility" in government.

Wolf hopes the Legislature will include itself in that discussion. He has co-authored a bill calling for a reduction in the size of the Legislature (HF478). It would reduce the Senate to 34 members, down from the current 67, and trim the House to a body of 68, down from 134.

Wolf also serves on the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, and hopes his experience on the Dakota Solid Waste Advisory Committee might "bring some perspective to that [policy] area" as well.

But a major issue for his new constituents, Wolf said, is transportation. His district, which covers the southeastern corner of Eden Prairie, southwestern corner of Bloomington, western Burnsville, and all of Savage, contains a severe traffic bottleneck along Interstate 35W near the Minnesota River, and at the Bloomington Ferry Bridge between Savage and Bloomington. When other members speak of redistributing dollars

away from the southwestern suburbs, Wolf will be there to suggest that the area is far from perfect.

He was also told on the campaign trail "to get the deficit under control." Indian gaming and gambling expansion is also an issue he'll be watching, considering the proximity of his district to Mystic Lake Casino.

As for the session ahead, Wolf says he's excited about his move from city to state government, and is sure his new job will be both "interesting and educational." He's not here with a set agenda.

"There's an awful lot of knowledge and wisdom and experience up here. . . I really feel like a college freshman, and right now I'm in a listening mode."

—Marnie Sadlowsky

District 41B

Pop.: 31,914
Distribution: 100% in urbanized areas
Counties: Dakota, Hennepin, and Scott
Largest City: Bloomington (portion)
Location: southwestern Metro
1992 presidential election results:
 Bush/Quayle: 38.4 percent
 Clinton/Gore: 34.4 percent
 Perot/Stockdale: 26.7 percent
 Other: 0.5 percent