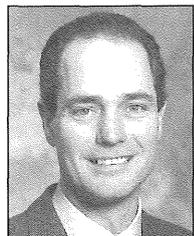


Mahoney working for bright future on the East Side

By Sarah Hallonquist

A self-described “street fighter,” Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) said he is getting to know some different rules to work in the Legislature.



Rep. Tim Mahoney

“The East Side kid in me sometimes has to learn to shut the door and take a deep breath,” said Mahoney, 45, who was born and raised in St. Paul’s East Side neighborhood. He has lived there all but nine years of his life.

A seat in the Legislature is a switch for Mahoney, a union pipe fitter with the St. Paul Pipefitters Local 455. After graduating from Harding High School in 1971, he attended St. Paul Technical College. He has done work in all kinds of buildings, from nuclear reactor sites to apartment complexes to the Judicial Center in the Capitol complex.

He said he’s prepared for a lot of on-the-job-training as a lawmaker.

“There’s no road map for this kind of job,” said Mahoney, who acknowledges that working behind a desk — rather than carrying a tool box — each day is something different.

Unlike pipe fitting, he said, legislative work doesn’t always allow him to know what his day will entail. So far, Mahoney said his new job has met and exceeded his expectations. While overwhelming at times, he’s not intimidated.

“This isn’t supposed to be rocket science,” he said.

Mahoney’s legislative priorities reflect his strong connection to his district. During his

campaign, he championed causes such as neighborhood and school safety, affordable housing, public education, and economic development. Many of those issues are key to the East Side, where many low- and moderate-income families live.

“It warms your heart to think you can have an impact,” he said. “Very few people get to say that.”

In the House, Mahoney wants to work on efforts to reduce youth crime and increase economic development in areas throughout the state. He also wants to help the growing community of Southeast Asian immigrants in his district.

The East Side includes Swede Hollow, an area that was home to many immigrant groups over the years. First, European immigrants including Swedes and Germans lived in the area. Later immigrant groups to live in Swede Hollow came from Mexico and Central America.

The ramshackle housing was cleared from the hollow years ago, but Mahoney sees the example of those earlier immigrant groups as an indication of what is possible for current newcomers to his district. He said today’s immigrant groups must have at least the same chances for success as their predecessors.

“It’s now the Southeast Asians’ turn to march through the East Side,” Mahoney said.

He serves on the House Civil Law, Family & Early Childhood Education, and Crime Prevention committees. He has not introduced any bills on his own yet because he wants to learn the process in full “before jumping in with both feet.” However, he is co-sponsoring nearly a dozen bills.

When the chance came up last year to run for the seat being vacated by former Rep. Jim Farrell, Mahoney jumped at it, knowing it was a rare opportunity.

“I made the decision to step in and see if I could help people from my side of town,” he said.

Farrell, who lost the race for Ramsey County attorney in November 1998, held the historically DFL-friendly District 67A seat for four terms. Mahoney knew the primary race would be the toughest part of his campaign; he faced three other Democrats in September 1998.

“I didn’t have any clue I was going to win until September 15 at about 8:15 p.m.,” he said of his victory.

Mahoney’s door-knocking, neighborhood work, and many endorsements paid off in the general election, too. He beat out the Republican and Reform Party candidates with 59 percent of the vote.

Mahoney is a single parent with two daughters, ages 11 and 19. During his spare time, Mahoney keeps busy with home improvements, baking, and reading. He said he’s somewhat of a history buff, with a particular interest in the Civil War.

District 67A

1995 population: 32,769
Largest city: St. Paul
County: Ramsey
Location: inner city
Top concern: “Youth crime, chemical dependency, child care, and economic development are really big issues that affect the East Side.”
— Rep. Tim Mahoney

Continued from page 14

1999 to 68.4 percent in 2000. The governor’s budget would increase that share to 69.6 percent in 2000.

The governor makes several recommendations concerning the state’s tobacco settlement money. Between this year and 2003, the state will receive \$1.31 billion in one-time settlement payments and \$574 million from annual payments.

The governor wants lawmakers to view the settlement payments aside from the normal state budget considerations, not as general revenues.

Under the Ventura budget, the \$1.31 billion in payments would be divided for a non-profit

foundation and three health-related endowments. The funds would be invested so that the principal would never be touched.

A Minnesota families foundation would be founded with \$600 million of the settlement money, and would provide grants to organizations promoting independence from government programs.

Another \$450 million would create two endowments to fund medical education and research, one at the University of Minnesota and one for statewide institutions. The remaining \$260 million would fund an endowment that would provide financial assistance to the state’s 49 community health boards.

In his letter accompanying the budget, Ventura promises voters that his administration will only grow stronger and its moves more spectacular as it gets more comfortable in the political ring.

“This proposal reflects only the initial budget,” he said. “The differences in this administration’s approach to governing will be even more evident in future budgets when I’ve had two years, instead of two months, to review programs.”