

# Reuter not playing games with fiscal restraint

Rep. Doug Reuter (R-Owatonna) likes to turn dreams into reality. The idea for his successful board game Sequence came to him in a dream. Another long-time dream came true when he was sworn in as the state representative for District 28A.



Rep. Doug Reuter

"I dream a lot," Reuter said. "I keep paper and pencil by my bedside to write down ideas for products or services or solutions to problems

that come to me."

He woke up from a particularly vivid dream in 1974 with the full blown idea for his board game, he said. "I worked on it off and on for the next two years. Then, it sat in my closet until 1981 when I sold the rights to manufacture and distribute it to Jax [a New Hope-based game company]."

With no advertising, the game "didn't do much for the first 12 years," Reuter said. "But in the last three years, it has really taken off and sales are now at about one and a quarter million copies." In November 1995, Reuter quit his job as human resources director for Owatonna exercise equipment manufacturer Cybex to devote his full attention to marketing the game.

Reuter, 47, was born in Superior, Wis., but grew up in the Twin Cities area. His parents eventually settled in New Hope where they are now retired.

After high school, Reuter joined the U.S. Navy, where he met and married his wife, Nancy, while stationed in Seattle. They now

have three children, the oldest of whom is a senior at Owatonna High School. Chipping away at college courses at Metro State University, Reuter eventually received his degree in business administration in 1991. He worked in the field of human resources for 22 years, including his stint in the Navy and five years as an independent consultant.

He was first exposed to the legislative process as a lobbyist for Reuter, Inc., a waste management firm founded by his uncle. In the 1980s, the company was pushing recycling, composting and refuse-derived fuel as an alternative to landfills and mass incineration. Reuter made presentations before the Metropolitan Council, Legislature, city councils, and county boards, and eventually lobbied in 30 states.

"I am proud of the fact that, as a direct result of my efforts, we have many fewer mass incineration facilities in this country than we would have had," Reuter said.

Now, as a legislator, he sits on the other side of the desk. "As a lobbyist, I had the easier job," Reuter said. "Now I'm responsible for actually making laws."

Reuter's first exposure to party politics was as a Republican activist in Eden Prairie, where he and his family lived for 18 years. There, he ran for city council in 1982 and 1984 and for mayor in 1986. He lost all three races, but stayed active in the Republican Party, serving as a local officer and state delegate.

After moving to Owatonna, Reuter was offered a position on the executive committee of the Steele County Republicans in March 1996. The following month, incumbent Re-

publican Rep. Gary Worke announced that he would not seek re-election. Reuter quickly decided to run for the seat.

"Education, crime, the stadium, and welfare reform were the top issues during the campaign," Reuter said. "The proposed Twins stadium is the number one issue that I have heard about since. Virtually none of my constituents favor public funding of the stadium."

Since the election, another concern has emerged in Owatonna: property taxes. Lost state aid school funding and a \$29 million school bond referendum "combined to produce a large property tax increase, some as high as 200 percent," he said.

The answer is to control spending, he said. "Coming from the private sector, there is no automatic 4 or 6 percent increase in spending every year. It's tighten your belt, increase production while decreasing spending. We need to bring that attitude to government."

— Steve Compton

## District 28A

**1996 population:** 34,287

**Largest city:** Owatonna

**Counties:** Steele, Waseca

**Location:** southern Minnesota

**Top concern:** "Since the election, property taxes have become a huge issue in Owatonna. The school district lost state aid funding, and at the same time, a property tax increase was kicking in for a \$29 million school bond referendum. Those two combined to produce a large tax property increase, some as high as 200 percent."

—Rep. Doug Reuter

## Frequently called numbers

<b>Secretary of the Senate</b>	
231 Capitol .....	296-2344
Voice mail/order bills .....	296-2343
<b>Chief Clerk of the House</b>	
211 Capitol .....	296-2314
<b>Index, Senate</b>	
110 Capitol .....	296-2887
<b>Index, House</b>	
211 Capitol .....	296-6646
<b>Information, Senate</b>	
231 Capitol .....	296-0504
<b>Information, House</b>	
175 State Office Building .....	296-2146
<b>Committee Hotline, Senate</b> .....	296-8088

<b>Committee Hotline, House</b> .....	296-9283
<b>Sergeant at Arms, Senate</b>	
Senate Chamber .....	296-7159
<b>Sergeant at Arms, House</b>	
45 State Office Building .....	296-4860
<b>Counsel and Research, Senate</b>	
G-17 Capitol .....	296-4791
<b>Research, House</b>	
600 State Office Building .....	296-6753
<b>Legislative Reference Library</b>	
645 State Office Building .....	296-3398
<b>Revisor of Statutes</b>	
700 State Office Building .....	296-2868

<b>Governor's Office</b>	
130 Capitol .....	296-3391
<b>Attorney General's Office</b>	
102 Capitol .....	296-6196
<b>Secretary of State's Office</b>	
180 State Office Building .....	296-2803
<b>Capitol Security</b>	
B-4 Capitol .....	296-6741
<b>Emergency</b> .....	296-2100
<b>TYT*, Senate</b> .....	296-0250
<b>TYT*, House</b> .....	296-9896
or 1-800-657-3550	