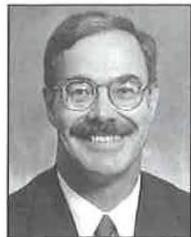


Reuter not playing games with fiscal restraint

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

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

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

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