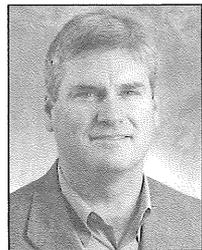


A call to public service

Emmer takes time to know the people and the process

By **BRETT MARTIN**

When Rep. Tom Emmer (R-Delano) moved just west of the Twin Cities metropolitan area after graduating from law school in 1988, he had



Rep. Tom Emmer

no idea the move would lead him into politics. In fact, he purchased the Old Shady Beach Resort Hotel, the last privately owned resort in Hennepin County, to enjoy rural life.

“I wanted to go somewhere where I could hunt in the front yard and fish in the backyard,” he said.

The country didn’t stay country for long. Developers came to Independence to start building, and a new road was slated for construction in front of Emmer’s home. This called for removing 300-year-old trees. Emmer contacted the mayor and saved the trees

the night before they were to be cut down.

“That’s the way the process is supposed to work,” he said. “Then the public service part took hold of me.”

The call to public service prompted him to run for city council. He served eight years on the Independence City Council and then moved up the road to Delano, where he served another two years before being elected to the House.

His city council experience gave him first-hand knowledge of the needs and expectations of the people he now represents. Because the area is experiencing rapid growth, Emmer said constituents are looking for a better transportation system.

“The city is exploding, so the issues we’re facing at home and the issues we’re facing here are the same,” he said. “The transportation infrastructure needs serious consideration. There are a lot of people moving into the area, and they need to be able to get around. They

DISTRICT 19B

2002 Population: 36,729
Largest city: St. Michael
Counties: Hennepin and Wright
Top concerns: Education, transportation

“The transportation infrastructure needs serious consideration. There are a lot of people moving into the area, and they need to be able to get around. They need access.”

— Rep. Tom Emmer

need access.”

Emmer serves on the House Civil Law and Elections, Ethics, Health Policy and Finance and Regulated Industries committees.

“What I’d prefer to do, as a new legislator, is to get my feet on the ground and learn as much as I can about the people and the process,” he said.

A trial attorney, Emmer compares serving as a new House member to serving on a jury. “You want to get all the information, get the facts then make an informed decision,” he said.

A solid foundation

Hosch uses business, local government background

By **MATT WETZEL**

Rep. Larry Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph) ran for the House because he believes some members of the Legislature had grown shortsighted.



Rep. Larry Hosch

“I was frustrated with some of the things that were happening,” he said. “There were many cuts that saved money in the short-term but didn’t look to the long-term implications.”

Hosch, who co-owns a home construction and remodeling business, is one of the youngest House members at age 27, but is not short on experience, having served as mayor of St. Joseph for four years. Despite working hard at his business and being involved in the community, some residents didn’t take him seriously because of his youth.

“I wanted to make St. Joseph my home,” he said. “I was tired of complaining.”

He sees education funding, paying for health care and jobs as the key issues facing his district.

“We have schools in the state that have declining enrollment. Operating referendums just aren’t working. We need the state to step in,” he said. Voters in the Rocori School District rejected three different levies, and now a fourth-grade class there has 33 children. He believes schools should be better supported by the state so students have equal access and equal opportunity.

Like children learning to play together, Hosch said legislators must do the same. If he could have offered the first bill of the session, it would reflect that value. “A mandate that we all have to work together,” he said. “There’s so many things that I want to do.”

Hosch has to balance two messages in his

DISTRICT 14B

2002 Population: 36,834
Largest city: St. Joseph
County: Stearns
Top concerns: School funding and health care

“We have schools in the state that have declining enrollment. Operating referendums just aren’t working. We need the state to step in.”

— Rep. Larry Hosch

district, with the St. Cloud area “exploding,” but the western half being predominantly rural.

Rural Minnesota and its needs are crucial, but sometimes rural folks have a hard time getting together and presenting a united front, he said. “I think really the most important area we have to deal with is jobs.”

Hosch serves on the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs, Local Government, and Rules and Legislative Administration committees.