

Leading by example

Hamilton knows the process works with commitment

By **BRETT MARTIN**

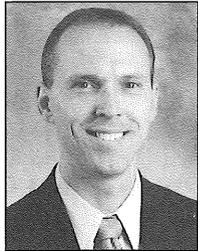
For the Hamiltons, politics may be becoming a family affair.

"When I won my election, my son, Tyler, who was president of his elementary school student council, said, 'Dad, that's great! Maybe that will help my career,'" Rep. Rod Hamilton (R-Mountain Lake) said. The entire family, including his fifth-grade daughter, Haley, and wife, Lynee, hit the campaign trail, knocked on doors and handed out literature.

"Without their support, I could not, and would not, be here," Hamilton said.

Working on a hog farm south of Rochester, and seeing the issues that farmers face, drew him into politics.

"I sat down with two local farmers at a Happy Chef restaurant and we wrote a list on



Rep. Rod Hamilton

a napkin of what we would like to change. We took that list to the Minnesota Pork Producers Association," Hamilton said. "The list then went to legislators and those changes ended up becoming law."

After seeing the process in motion, he wanted to be part of it.

"It's a process that does work if you're committed," he said. "It's extremely rewarding to know you can make a difference if you're committed to the process until the end and willing to work hard."

With an impressive resumé in agricultural issues — past president of the Minnesota Pork Producers Association, member of the Minnesota Farm Bureau, winner of the Young Farmers & Ranchers competition in 2001, former member of the governor's Livestock Task Force — he's a natural for the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee. He also sits on the House Ways and Means Committee and House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee,

DISTRICT 22B

2002 Population: 36,610
Largest city: Worthington
Counties: Cottonwood, Jackson and Nobles
Top Concern: Increased funding for education

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including the Technology, Bioscience and Medical Products Division.

Hamilton, a former member of the Mountain Lake School Board, introduced HF5 to increase the basic education formula allowance.

"When I was going around visiting with constituents, the two main issues of concern were skyrocketing health care costs and education," he said. "I want to promote quality education and make sure our children get the good education they deserve."

Education expert

Outsider comes inside to bring about change

By **RUTH DUNN**

Rep. Sandra Peterson (DFL-New Hope) is no newcomer to the limelight. During her tenure as president of the Minnesota Federation of Teachers, the state's second largest teachers' union, her face and name appeared in newspapers and on TV across the state. Four years ago, she was instrumental in the federation's merger with the Minnesota Education Association, to create Education Minnesota. She served as co-president of the new union for three years and then as vice president.



Rep. Sandra Peterson

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Peterson is familiar with the legislative process from the outside. She's testified and lobbied on behalf of bills, and was appointed by several governors to numerous legislative task

forces and committees. But seeing the process from the inside is a different story. "I'm learning like everyone else," she said. Peterson serves on the House Education Policy and Reform and Transportation committees.

Peterson, a former teacher in the Robbinsdale School District, is not surprised that there are more educators than any other occupation represented in the House. "Every day in their classrooms, teachers see how the Legislature affects their lives." Teachers also possess skills for campaigning, like being able to communicate with voters, she said.

Legislative gridlock was the big factor in her election from a swing district, said Peterson. "Voters are upset with both political parties. People told me if they went to work and didn't get the job done, they would not be paid. People want us to get things done and to make decisions that will benefit the state in the long run. We have to focus on results, or we will

DISTRICT 45A

2002 Population: 36,983
Largest city: New Hope
County: Hennepin
Top Concerns: Education, transportation, economy

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not see a second term."

A widow since 1990, Peterson has two grown sons and a 2-year-old granddaughter who might grow up to be a teacher someday, if Peterson has any influence.

She enjoys city life and is an avid movie buff. She has also been known to hunt game birds in Manitoba, Canada, and to return to the homestead near Benson that has been owned by her family since the 1800s. She loves to read non-fiction books, especially biographies, because she learns so much from them.