

Bridging the divide

Poppe seeks results in bonding and education

By **BRETT MARTIN**

Rep. Jeanne Poppe (DFL-Austin) didn't exactly follow in her father's footsteps. Sure, they both have a background in politics and civic involvement, but she is a DFLer and her father was a Republican.



Rep. Jeanne Poppe

"I am involved in politics because I had my dad as a role model," Poppe said. "Perhaps the one thing he taught me is to stand up for what I believe."

After losing a close House race two years ago to Jeff Anderson, Poppe reversed the results in the last election. She said her district, like the country, is divided over issues and she intends to heal the division.

"I want to bridge that divide," she said. "We need more communication and more listening."

Poppe sees herself as a good listener and problem solver, which she attributes to her background as an educator. She is a career counselor on leave from Riverland Community College in Albert Lea.

"To be a good counselor, you have to be a good listener," she said. "You have to help people see what they might be missing by helping them see all sides."

One of Poppe's priorities is making sure the bonding bill passes to provide relief to her district hit hard by a September 2004 flood where two people lost their lives. Some constituents need help relocating and preventing future flood damage. Poppe is also focused on making sure all children receive a quality education from pre-school through college.

"Kids have got to be given every advantage they can be given in education," she said. A mother of three, Poppe considers how each legislative decision will affect her family.

DISTRICT 27B

2002 population: 36,857

Largest city: Austin

Counties: Fillmore and Mower

Top concern: Substantial rural economic growth

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"I think about how is it going to impact my mother who's living on Social Security and has medical needs. I also think about how it's going to impact my teenagers and future grandchildren," she said. "We have to think more long-term. We need more than a temporary fix; we need to solve problems."

Poppe serves on three House committees: Environment and Natural Resources, Local Government, and Rules and Legislative Administration.