

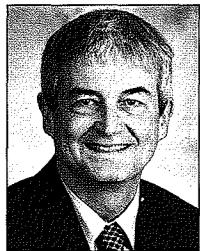
Not ready to relax

Doty spurns retirement, again, to represent district

By Mia Simpson

Rep. Al Doty (DFL-Royalton) is supposed to be retired.

He taught history for 31 years at Pierz High School and worked there as a wrestling coach and technology coordinator. He left those positions, technically entering retirement, in 1999.



Rep. Al Doty

It didn't stick. Two years later he was hired as senior advocate at Horizon Health Inc. which provides living options for senior citizens, where he served clients in Morrison and Crow Wing counties. It was there he received his latest call to duty.

"Gradually over the six years, it became apparent that the problems that I came to fix came from legislative decisions," he said. "And the more you get to know politics, the more

you realize these things can be fixed."

He unsuccessfully ran as an Independence Party candidate in 2004. Two years later, he was approached by the DFL and asked to run under its banner.

"I told them, 'I'm not doing a primary,' and I asked whether I had to change anything I'd said the last time," he said. He got the answers he wanted.

Doty said he feels in touch with the party platform, and he believes many problems must be addressed this biennium.

"There isn't one issue this time," he said. "You don't get a turnover like this on one issue. There are a lot of things that are out of control."

He recalls stories during his time with Horizon Health, when elderly women would speak through tears about the situations they were facing due to health care costs, rising property taxes and other local issues.

DISTRICT 12B

2002 population: 36,677

Largest city: Little Falls

Counties: Crow Wing, Morrison

Top concerns: health care costs, property taxes

"They are just strapped," he said. "They are completely out of options and have nowhere to go. That was really one of the reasons I decided to run. It wasn't one grandma; it was a group of them."

Doty is pleased with his committee assignments: the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee and its Veterans Affairs Division; and the Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs, Environment and Natural Resources and the Transportation finance divisions of the House Finance Committee.

"I really believe I can make a difference in my district," he said.