

Passionate about business

Loon calls for economic recovery through job creation

By KRIS BERGGREN

Rep. Jenifer Loon (R-Eden Prairie) had long considered running for public office but thought she'd wait until her daughters,



Rep. Jenifer Loon

Erica, a high school sophomore, and Rachel, a sixth-grader, were older, perhaps off to college. However, she saw a rare opportunity when former Rep. Erik Paulsen decided to run for the congressional seat vacated by former

U.S. Rep. Jim Ramstad.

"An open seat doesn't come along every day," Loon said.

Furthermore, she welcomed the chance to be a role model. "As a mom of two girls, I want them to know you can have a family and a professional life. I want them to know the door is never closed to them."

Though new to the House, Loon is a political pro who was "always interested in the legislative process." The South Dakota native majored in government and international relations at Augustana College, took an internship in then U.S. Sen. Larry Pressler's office, and was later hired there as a legislative assistant. She also worked for the Small Business Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Loon believes her passion for small-business growth makes her a "good fit" for a district where, she said, "there are 2,200-2,400 businesses; most are small or sole proprietorships." Nurturing small businesses will stimulate economic recovery through job creation faster than any other measure, she believes. Specifically, she's interested in "tax and regulatory issues, access to capital and government regulation related to small business, especially women- and minority-

DISTRICT 42B

Population: (2007 est.) 41,805
Largest City: Eden Prairie
County: Hennepin
Top Concern: Job growth/small business development

owned businesses."

Another top priority is education. Loon, an active member of parent-teacher organizations, said Eden Prairie schools, like many districts statewide, are educating a growing number of English language learners and children of color, and she's concerned about the achievement gap.

Even though the budget crisis threatens to overshadow idealism, Loon wants to promote "a top-notch education for our kids in Minnesota. We can't say 'Down the road we will figure out how to better educate our kids.' This could be a good year to dig into policy, not things that are monetary-driven."