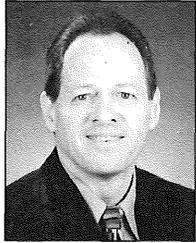


Start early and stay late

For Murray, new role offers much to learn and many challenges

By **LEE ANN SCHUTZ**

When Rep. Rich Murray (R-Albert Lea) goes home and opens the garage door, what he sees are car seats, strollers and a pink Corvette — child-sized.



Rep. Rich Murray

The grandfather of 10 — all girls — says his family is the “highlight” of his life, and that he and his wife are fortunate to have their children living so close and spending time at their home. However, he doesn’t regret running for office and his new role as a legislator. He doesn’t take his election for granted. His district tends to lean DFL. But this Republican’s 57-vote margin over DFL incumbent Robin Brown held up in a recount.

“I start early, and I stay late. There is

so much to learn, and I’m having a great time. I haven’t been this excited about something in a long time — other than my granddaughters,” he said.

People encouraged him for a number of years to run for office, but it never seemed like the right time. But now that he’s in the Legislature, he thinks he’s a good fit for the job.

He’s been a financial advisor for 25 years, working with small- businesses and farmers. His concerns are the same as theirs — grow jobs and balance the budget, he said.

“Those are probably the two biggest things I hear from constituents,” he said. Although the farming economy is doing well, he said the jobs in many of the local industries are low-paying and there is a lot of unemployment. With the area’s population base shrinking, he believes better and more jobs would help revitalize the communities. Murray said “bringing fairness to Greater Minnesota” in the distribution of state

DISTRICT 27A

Population (2009 est.): 34,972

Largest City: Albert Lea

Counties: Freeborn, Mower

Top Concerns: Jobs, a balanced budget, fairness for Greater Minnesota

resources is also an issue. The schools and nursing homes are not as well-funded as those in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, he said. “It’s huge. We have a lot of things that we need to take care of too.”

The vice chairman of the House Government Operations and Elections Committee, Murray also serves on the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance, House State Government Finance, and House Transportation Policy and Finance committees.