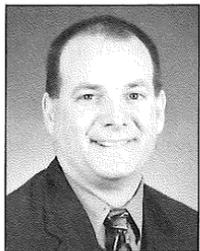


Politics with his pancakes

Woodard goes from breakfast with his buddies to the House

By **MIKE COOK**

In the corner of many cafes and coffee shops across the state is a group of local folks discussing current events.



Rep. Kelby Woodard

Rep. Kelby Woodard (R-Belle Plaine) is one of them. Now, his friends can talk about his performance representing them.

“There were 15 of us and most of the time we talk about high school basketball or football or St. Thomas football. Sometimes, we’d talk politics. Out of that group it became, ‘You oughta run,’ and I said, ‘I think I will.’ I went home after that breakfast and told my wife, ‘Let’s put up a website.’ She wasn’t surprised because she knew someday I might do that, but the

timing was a bit of a surprise. ... I’m glad I did it.”

Woodard, who had never run for public office, brings a global perspective to his seat.

With his criminal justice degree, Woodard began his career working for U.S. Customs Services before moving to the Target Corporation. There, he started by catching shoplifters and progressed to director of global security where he handled all the overseas operations from a security standpoint. About six years ago, he and another security director began Trade Innovations, a global security consulting company. “We handle everything from executive protection overseas to issues related to supply-chain security and, really, about everything in-between,” Woodard said.

That background helped him land the vice-chairman position on the House Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Finance Committee.

DISTRICT 25B

Population (2009 est.): 45,545

Largest City: Northfield

Counties: Rice, Scott

Top Concern: Balancing the budget without new taxes

A father of four school-aged children, Woodard also serves on the House Education Finance and Reform committees. He gets an earful about the issues at the dinner table.

His oldest child is a ninth-grader at St. Thomas Academy, the second-oldest attends Belle Plaine Junior High and the two youngest are in a Catholic elementary school.

Among the issues he’d like to address are alternative pathways to teacher licensure and funding inequities between districts. “Education is a big issue for me, and a large issue for our district,” he said. “There’s a lot of emotion and interesting innovate ideas surrounding it.”