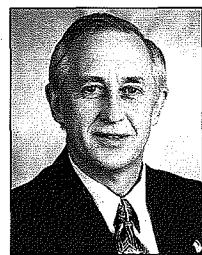


A change in venue

Shimanski trades in fields for House floor

By STEPHEN HARDING

Rep. Ron Shimanski (R-Silver Lake) is trading in his 66 acres of land and 25 head of beef cattle in McLeod County for a desk in the House Chamber.



Rep. Ron Shimanski

One of the three farmers in the House, Shimanski sits on the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee and the Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Finance Division of the House Finance Committee.

Shimanski is excited to serve on these two committees because he "wants to keep agriculture as a driving economic force in Minnesota, and assist the agricultural

industry through legislation that helps it move forward to the 21st century." Shimanski also believes it is important to keep "agriculture as a vibrant industry through research available at the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture."

In his committee work, Shimanski wants to make sure the needs of all veterans are being taken care of, be they from the current conflict in Iraq or for those that fought more than 60 years ago in World War II.

But, Shimanski said, education funding and transportation are the two key issues in his west central Minnesota district.

With declining or steady school district enrollments, the amount of money from the state has decreased or remained stagnant while operating costs continue to increase. Several operating levies have been voted down, he said. "The taxpayers are saying that

DISTRICT 18A

2002 population: 36,487

Largest city: Hutchinson

Counties: McLeod, Meeker

Top concerns: Education funding and transportation

they don't want to spend any more; they don't want to be taxed any more," Shimanski said.

Improving and maintaining transportation infrastructure is another issue facing Shimanski's district, where he feels that the state highways have not been kept up to date. "There are ongoing projects and things in the schedule, and we want to make sure that we maintain good processes of improving our highways," Shimanski said.

Shimanski, who works as a layout and design technician, also serves on the Labor and Consumer Protection and the Telecommunications Regulation and Infrastructure divisions of the House Commerce and Labor Committee.