

A global view in St. Paul

Mack was page, intern, now member

By SUSAN HEGARTY

Rep. Tara Mack (R-Apple Valley) may be a new legislator, but she's a veteran when it comes to navigating the Capitol.



Rep. Tara Mack

Previously Mack worked as a page on the House Ways and Means Committee and served as an intern for former House Speaker Steve Sviggum.

"My internship taught me a lot about just how much people's daily lives are affected in St. Paul. Everything from the schools kids are going to, the roads we're driving on, property taxes, business climate — so much is determined in St. Paul. That was eye-opening for me," Mack said.

Her path toward public service began as a high school senior, when she attended the

National Young Political Leaders Conference in Washington D.C. She later graduated from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in political science and global studies. While in college, she studied for a year at a university in Italy and interned with the Master in Peace Keeping Management program.

"It was a tremendous opportunity. I lived with an Italian woman who spoke no English," said Mack, who thankfully had taken one year of language classes.

She also has worked as a volunteer coordinator on an Iowa ranch where abused and foster children "get out of the environment they've been in and get to be a kid for awhile."

The House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division is one place she'll be able to apply those experiences. Mack also serves on the House Health Care and Human Services

DISTRICT 37A

Population: (2007 est.) 39,190

Largest City: Apple Valley

County: Dakota

Top Concerns: Growing jobs, reforming healthcare and educating students for a global economy

Policy and Oversight Committee. She counts reducing costs and increasing health care choices among her top priorities. Creating jobs and ensuring that Minnesota schools are equipping students to thrive in a global economy are important too, according to Mack.

"Kids are being educated for jobs that haven't even been invented yet," she said.

Mack and her husband, Justin, are active in mission work through their church. "We do live in a privileged nation, and we have a lot of things that a lot of the world doesn't have. I think it gives us great global perspective," she said.