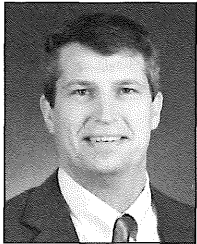


# Leading by example

An economic wonk, Bills wants to use his background to create solutions

By Mike Cook

Circling the walls inside the office of Rep. Kurt Bills (R-Rosemount) are posters made by his students that show the history of economic thought.



Rep. Kurt Bills

Those students, whom Bills still sees each school day, are a big reason why the high school economics teacher is now a House member.

"I want to show them the importance of getting involved," he said.

The affable Bills comes to his representative role with two years of experience on the Rosemount City Council, a position he sought in 2008. He won a 26-person contest for an open seat, spending just \$500 on his campaign and having no yard signs.

"Teaching is almost like a name-recognition

drive," he said. "There's door-knocking and then there's sitting in parent-teacher conferences every trimester for 14 years. It's getting to know people and treating them respectfully. There are no monikers in the classroom. I understand there are parents who are liberal, and there are parents who are conservative, and there are parents that don't care and there are parents who are wildly independent, but all of their children are going to be educated the same way in the benchmarks that are found in our educational standards."

Bills, a one-time head wrestling coach, teaches an Advanced Placement macroeconomics class at Rosemount High School beginning at 7:30 a.m. each morning before switching to his role as a legislator. He teaches an Advanced Placement microeconomics class in the fall.

Appropriately for a man who can discuss the pros and cons of many famous economists, his campaign slogan was "Let's

## DISTRICT 37B

Population (2009 est.): 45,621

Largest City: Apple Valley

County: Dakota

Top Concerns: Living within our means, job creation

Bring Econ101 to the Capitol."

"It's not a political ideology. It's we have to deal with scarcity, so how are we going to move forward, and so that we don't burn it up in the long run," he said. "I'm not a big anti-debt guy."

The father of four children ages 4-13, Bills also brings the perspective of a small-business owner. He and his wife, Cindy, operate a home daycare. "I fix everything they break," he says laughing. "Someday I will invent a better door handle."