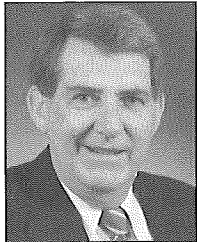


# No shortcut to service

## Newton relishes opportunity to make tough decisions

By SUSAN HEGARTY

Rep. Jerry Newton (DFL-Coon Rapids) traveled a lot of miles, many overseas, before landing a House seat in St. Paul.



Rep. Jerry Newton

After attending Osseo High School, Newton began a 23-year career in the military that took him to France, Belgium, Turkey and Vietnam. His children attended NATO schools while Newton steadily achieved the rank of command sergeant major. He returned to Minnesota in 1985 and inherited his father's grocery store business.

His experience with foreign school systems gave him a broad perspective on education finance and policy, both public and private. Newton drew from that knowledge when he

served for eight years on the Anoka-Hennepin School Board. He counts an anti-bullying policy among his top accomplishments.

Now, he couldn't be happier than to serve on both K-12 education committees during his first term as a state legislator. His district is experiencing declining school enrollments and an inequitable source of school funding, he said.

"I'm a strong supporter of the 'New Minnesota Miracle' and seeing that over a period of time phased in. ... It does provide for the equity I'm looking for in school finance," Newton said.

Newton also serves as vice chairman for the House Veterans Affairs Division. Besides a concern for the welfare of veterans home residents, Newton said he would like to ensure that returning veterans are welcomed home with health care options to help them deal with their physical and emotional pain.

### DISTRICT 49B

Population: (2007 est.) 37,788

Largest City: Coon Rapids

County: Anoka

Top Concern: Budget deficit

While serving on the Coon Rapids City Council, Newton helped shape legislation that is now a national standard for railroad safety, and at the same time, quieted train whistles in residential neighborhoods. He also helped form the Highway 10 Corridor Coalition to ease traffic congestion, two experiences that will serve him well on the House Transportation Finance and Policy Division.

After 21 years in the grocery business, Newton is now retired and spends his leisure time tracing his family's roots, which carries him back overseas in mind, if not body. "I prefer to be here (at the Legislature) at this time rather than any other time because it's a mess. I'm hoping I can make an impact."