

2013 International Legislators Forum Biographical Information - Legislators

MANITOBA

[Honorable Peter Bjornson](#), Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training & Trade, MLA for Gimli
Elected in the June 2003 general election as MLA for Gimli, Peter Bjornson was appointed the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth by Premier Gary Doer on November 4, 2003.

On November 3, 2009 Premier Greg Selinger appointed Bjornson as Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade. Bjornson was re-elected on October 4, 2011 and remains the MLA for Gimli as well as the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade.

A lifelong resident of the Interlake, Bjornson currently resides just north of Gimli with his wife, two sons and daughter. A teacher by profession, Bjornson devoted 13 years of his life to his students. Bjornson's involvement at the scholastic level has included coaching volleyball and basketball, assisting with student council and participating in the drug and alcohol policy, school improvement, and discipline committees. A teacher advocate and member of the Evergreen Teachers' Association Executive, Bjornson served as President in 1996.

Bjornson has also served as a Councillor for the Town of Gimli where he gained valuable experience in local governance. During his term from 1998 to 2002, Gimli saw many improvements made and initiatives undertaken such as upgrades to recreational facilities, and other infrastructure projects such as the Harbor Park development and a new public works facility. Bjornson was also a key player in the historic municipal merger between the Town and RM of Gimli. A young entrepreneur, Bjornson ran a successful small business for 15 years.

[Cliff Graydon](#), MLA for Emerson

Cliff Graydon was born and raised in Arnaud and has spent the past 30 years farming grain and purebred Charolais cattle. Graydon has held various critic portfolios during his time in office including: MPI; Liquor Control; Lotteries; Gaming and Agriculture.

He was a founding member of the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association and served on its board of directors. He has also served as a member of the Stuartburn Piney Agricultural Development Association and the Prairies East Sustainable Agricultural Initiative.

Graydon and his wife, Rose Ellen, live in the Woodmore area and have two children, Amy and Warren, a daughter-in-law Venessa and three lovely grandchildren, Bailey, Colby and Reneé.

[Bidhu Jha](#), MLA for Radisson

Bidhu Jha, a Winnipeg resident since 1970, was elected as Radisson's NDP MLA in 2003, 2007 and 2011. He has been legislative assistant to the premier and minister of Energy, Science and Technology and was recently appointed as Manitoba's special envoy for international trade. Jha participates in several legislative committees on such issues as public accounts and finances, Crown corporations, social services, justice, and community economic development.

He has also received the prestigious Asia Pacific Award of Entrepreneurship from the Asper School of Business (University of Manitoba) and an honourable distinguished community service award by ICHHA, an organization set up to serve humanity. Jha is a published poet and writer of short stories and articles. A tireless worker in uniting Canada's diverse communities, Jha is a strong voice for equal rights for all.

Jha holds a degree in mechanical engineering and is trained in industrial engineering management and is a former business owner and CEO of Optimum Trading Corporation. Jha was a board member of major private and public enterprises including Manitoba Telephone Systems, Deer Lodge Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society and Crown corporations council, and a past member of the faculty of engineering advisory committee at University of Manitoba and Red River College. Jha is currently a member of the International Trade Council, Manitoba and works with chamber of commerce and other economic development agencies in Manitoba.

Honourable Gord Mackintosh, Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship, MLA for St. Johns

Gord Mackintosh was first elected as New Democratic Party MLA for the north Winnipeg constituency of St. Johns in 1993 and re-elected in four general elections. From 1999 to 2006 he served as the Government House Leader and Minister of Justice and Attorney General with responsibility for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. In September 2006 Premier Gary Doer appointed him Minister of Family Services and Housing and Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities. On November 3, 2009 Mackintosh became Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs with responsibility for The Manitoba Liquor Control Commission. On January 13, 2012, Mackintosh was appointed Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship.

Mackintosh worked for the Manitoba and Canadian Human Rights Commissions and was later Deputy Clerk of the Manitoba Legislature. As a lawyer with the Winnipeg law firm Thompson Dorfman Sweatman he was involved in environmental issues and notably was advisor to Elijah Harper during the Meech Lake constitutional crisis. Mackintosh has degrees in political studies and law. He lives in Winnipeg's North End with his wife Margaret and three children.

Larry Maguire, MLA for Arthur – Virden

Larry Maguire was first elected to the Legislature in 1999. During his time in office, he has held a variety of critic portfolios including: Finance, Rural Initiatives, Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Transportation, Government Services, InlandPort and Deputy Leader.

In addition to being a farmer for more than 30 years, he has played an active role in various farm industry organizations for more than 18 years. Larry was a former president of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, a founding member of the Keystone Agricultural Producers, Public Governor – Winnipeg Commodity Exchange and Director - Canada Grains Council.

In 1986, Larry was Mid Canada's Outstanding Young Farmer. For his contribution to the Agriculture Industry, Larry has been awarded a "Certificate of Merit" from the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Agriculture. As well, Larry received the Canada 125 Medal in 1992 and the Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2002 for his "contributions to the communities, their citizens and to Canada."

Larry and Beryl have two children, and six grandchildren.

Ron Schuler, MLA for St. Paul

First elected in 1999 as a MLA, Schuler is first and foremost a family man. In addition to raising his kids and being active in his community and church, Schuler founded a family-run catalogue sales business, which has been successful for over 15 years.

Schuler has held numerous critic portfolios during his time in office including: Labour and Immigration, Energy, Science and Technology, the Civil Service Commission, Lotteries and Gaming, Education and Citizenship & Youth.

A University of Manitoba graduate with a degree in International Relations, Schuler is also an independent businessperson, who has co-owned several successful businesses. The foundations for his successful business ventures were laid during his time as a junior executive at the T. Eaton Company.

Schuler is an active community volunteer, giving his time to a number of worthy efforts including Big Brothers, Citizens on Patrol, Citizens Against Impaired Driving, the Kidney Foundation of Manitoba, Max Reinhardt Theatre Canada, the Folk Arts Council, the German Canadian Heritage Foundation and the Manitoba Inter-Cultural Council.

Dennis Smook, MLA LaVerendrye

MLA Smook has represented LaVerendrye since 2011. Located in the southeast corner of Manitoba and bordering Minnesota to the south and Ontario to the East, LaVerendrye is one of the larger constituencies in southern Manitoba.

Dennis has always been community-minded, and enjoys working with people. With his wife Gwen, he has run a local business for over 30 years and currently serves as a marketing associate for the Ste. Anne Co-op in Steinbach.

Mr. Smook has a great deal of experience and a strong track record of community service including work with the Vita Curling Club, Vita Fire department, Minor Baseball, and Ducks Unlimited. He has also served as a trustee for the Boundary School Division.

In the Legislature he serves as the Manitoba PC Critic for Children and Youth Opportunities and Healthy Child Manitoba. Dennis and Gwen have raised their four children in La Verendrye because they wanted them to grow in a kind and caring environment that would assist in their development as responsible adults.

Matt Wiebe, MLA for Concordia

Matt Wiebe has a proven ability to bring people together. As a community organizer, Matt spearheaded several initiatives in his home neighbourhood of Elmwood around the issues of adult literacy training, support for new Canadians, neighbourhood beautification and crime and safety issues. The broad base of trust he built throughout the community was critical to his election as MLA for Concordia in 2010 and re-election in 2011.

With Wiebe as MLA, Concordia has continued to experience growth, including ongoing capital projects at Elmwood High School, Ecole George V and Hampstead School, and continued enhancement of the Hip and Knee Institute at Concordia Hospital.

Wiebe is dedicated to building a safer, healthier, greener northeast Winnipeg. He has served as a board member of the Elmwood Community Resource Centre as well as the volunteer chair of the Elmwood Safety Committee and the Communities That Care initiative. He's proud to be part of a government that is focused on public safety.

Wiebe holds a degree in economics from the University of Manitoba as well as graduate studies in public administration. He grew up in the East Kildonan neighbourhood of Valley Gardens and has volunteered his time to organizations in and around Concordia, including the Keenleyside Outreach Centre, Elmwood/East Kildonan Residents Advisory Committee, Happy Days on Henderson/Take Pride Elmwood, Beautify Elmwood Community Committee and the River East Neighbourhood Network. Wiebe lives in north Winnipeg with his wife Kaila and their daughter Anna.

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MINNESOTA

[Representative Dan Fabian](#) (R) District 1A

Representative Fabian, serving his second term, was first elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 2010. He grew up in Fargo, ND, received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Concordia College and his Master's degree from North Dakota State University. Representative Fabian resides in Roseau, MN with his wife of 37 years, Roxanne. Before coming to St. Paul as a legislator, Representative Fabian spent 34 years as a high school physical education teacher. He also coached high school cross-country and track and continues to be a self-employed crop hail insurance adjuster.

Dan has carried major legislation to reform and speed up the environmental permitting process as well as extending deadlines for implementation of costly standardized septic systems. Dan also chief authored The Lands Bill, which aids residents in resolving state land disputes as well as the purchase and selling of private and state land. Representative Fabian currently a serves on the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance, and Policy Committees.

[Representative Ben Lien](#) (DFL) District 04A

Ben is serving his 1st term in the Minnesota state House of Representatives. He represents District 4A, which is the city of Moorhead and Oakport Township. During his first session Ben focused on funding for flood protection projects in his district, small businesses in border city communities and higher education. Long-term legislative goals for Ben are higher education issues, solutions for homelessness and small business development.

Representative Lien served as the Vice-Chair for the Property and Local Tax Division and also had Committee appointment to Government Operations, Higher Education Finance and Policy, and Judiciary Finance and Policy.

Ben grew up in Moorhead and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in political science from Minnesota State University Moorhead. He is employed with The Village Family Service Center. In his free time Ben enjoys music and traveling.

[Representative Jason Metsa](#) (DFL) District 06B

Jason Metsa is a fifth generation Iron Ranger and a graduate of Mesabi Community College. For a young person, he has extensive work experience, from owning his small painting company to traveling as a painting and armor subcontractor specialist for the Department of Defense to working for Nike and Apple at the World Cup in Berlin. He is also the former Associate Publisher to Spatial Media, LLC, a Washington DC area media company, with responsibility for the construction and geo-technology sectors.

Jason is passionate about his current position as Coordinator of the North East Area Labor Council in the seven county regions of Northeastern Minnesota and Northwestern Wisconsin.

Jason has been active in the family businesses: Grey Wolf Resort and the Comet Theater, the

oldest continuous operating movie theater in Minnesota. He knows the importance of hard and smart work.

Jason is a local homeowner, purchasing his home seven years ago. He is on the Board of Directors of the Range Mental Health Center, and volunteers for the Mesabi Trail Tour and other community events. He served for several years on the 5th Senate District DFL Board.

Jason Metsa is an active DFLer, managing Carly Melin's successful run for state representative and was the field manager and political director for Tom Rukavina for Governor. He has also worked for many DFL candidates, including Senators Al Franken and Amy Klobuchar, Mark Dayton and the Obama for President campaign.

Senator Tom Saxhaug (DFL) District 5

Senator Saxhaug was elected in 2012 to the newly created Senate district 5. This new district includes portions of Itasca, Cass, and Beltrami counties whose county seats are Grand Rapids, Walker, and Bemidji. The district surrounds the Chippewa National Forest and the Leech Lake Band Indian Reservation in north central Minnesota. Senator Saxhaug was first elected in 2002 and was re-elected in 2006 and 2010.

Senator Saxhaug is a member of the Senate's Finance Committee, E-12 Division, Environment, Economic Development and Agricultural Division, Subcommittee on Legacy, and is the Chairman of the State Departments and Veterans Budget Division. He also sits on the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, Explore Minnesota Tourism, and the Iron Range Resources Board.

Senator Saxhaug completed his secondary education at Grand Rapids High School and later received his B.A. in History from St. Olaf College in Northfield. Prior to his election to the Senate, he served on the Grand Rapids City Council from 1995 to 1997, and was an Itasca County Commissioner from 1997 to 2003. He and his wife Nancy have two grown children.

Representative Chris Swedzinski (R) District 16A

Representative Chris Swedzinski was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 2010 and served on the Agriculture and Rural Policy and Finance, Capital Investment, Jobs and Economic Development Finance, and Judiciary and Policy Finance Committees. He was re-elected in 2012 and currently serves on Higher Education Policy and Finance, Capital Investment, and Commerce and Consumer Protection Finance and Policy Committees. In addition, he was appointed by Governor Dayton to the Legislative Energy Commission.

Chris graduated from Minneota High School and earned degrees in History and Political Science from Ridgewater College in Willmar and Minnesota State College in Mankato. He previously worked for Congressman Mark Kennedy and as a Rural Development Specialist for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Representative Swedzinski presently has a small welding business and farms in rural Ghent. He and his wife Jessica have three young daughters with another on the way.

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NORTH DAKOTA

Representative Lois Delmore (D) District 43

Lois Delmore was elected to the North Dakota House of Representatives in 1994. Her standing legislative committees are Judiciary and Transportation. During the interim, she serves on the Judiciary and Higher Education committees. A graduate of the University of North Dakota, she recently retired from her English teaching position at Red River High School in Grand Forks.

As a member of the Legislative Council, Delmore chaired the interim Judiciary Committee from 2000-2004. She also served on the P-16 Education Committee, the gaming commission, and the Supreme Court Services Committee. Delmore is a member of the North Dakota Lottery Commission, the Higher Education Round Table, the Crime Victims Services Board, the Supreme Court Future Planning Commission, the North Dakota Drug and Alcohol Commission, and the Grand Forks Schools Parent Information Board.

The North Dakota Bar Association and the National American Music Therapy Association and Certification Board have recognized her for her legislative service. She was also a recipient of the Phenomenal Woman Award in Grand Forks. A Flemming Fellow graduate, she also served on the CPA board in Washington, DC. She was chosen by the AtlanticBrucke organization for a teacher's study trip to Germany in 2008. Delmore is active in several women's organizations and is a state director for Women in Government.

Senator Joan Heckaman (D) District 23

Senator Heckaman recently completed her 4th session in the North Dakota Senate including service on the Education and Agriculture Committees. She is honored to have been elected as Assistant Minority Leader for the ND Senate and to the Legislative Management Committee. Her interim Committee assignments include the Budget Section, Administrative Rules, Health Services, and Education Funding. She is the legislative representative on the Governor's Autism Task Force and has attended the Darden School for Emerging Leaders as well as other national legislative meetings.

Senator Heckaman has a Bachelors Degree in Education from Valley City State University and a Masters Degree in Special Education from MSU. Following her retirement from teaching in 2004, she was called to return to the classroom as a case manager for students in special education on the Spirit Lake Native American Reservation near Devils Lake, ND, where she worked for 4 years. Since 2009, she has been teaching high school mathematics at the Alternative High School at Spirit Lake. Senator Heckaman and her husband, Dewey, live in New Rockford, ND, and have 4 children and 10 grandchildren.

Representative Curt Hofstad (R) District 15

Elected to the ND House of Representatives from District 15 in 2006, Representative Hofstad currently serves on the Energy and Natural Resources, Human Services Committees and is chair of the Water Topics Overview Committee.

He also served on the boards of the Starkweather School District, the Devils Lake Airport Authority, the Ramsey County Water Resources Board, and the ND State Water Commission.

He is a graduate of North Dakota State University with a Bachelor of Science degree. Mr. Hofstad farms in the Devils Lake area, and he and his wife (Annette) have 3 children.

Representative Dennis Johnson (R) District 15

Representative Johnson is a farmer, a board member of Mercy Hospital (Devils Lake); a MHEC Commissioner; and a member of the Farm Bureau, the Farmers Union, the ND Stockmen's Association, and the ND Grain Growers. He is a Vietnam veteran (U.S. Navy Seabees) and a member of the American Legion and VFW.

A member of the House since 1993, Mr. Johnson serves on the House Education Committee and is Chairman of the House Ag Committee. His statutory Committees responsibilities include: the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Agriculture, the Crop Protection Product Harmonization and Registration Board, and the Midwestern Higher Education Commission. Dennis is married to Donna and they have 3 adult children and 2 grandchildren.

Senator Larry Luick (R) District 25

Senator Luick was elected to the ND Senate in 2010 and currently serves on the Agriculture and Education Committees. He is the owner/operator of Luick Backhoe Service and has been a Certified organic farmer since 1990. A graduate of Fairmount Public School and the North Dakota State College of Science he holds several certificates for contracting, water works, pipe laying, design, and inspection in North and South Dakota and Minnesota.

He is the current chair of the Fairmount Public School Board and a committee member of FCT & Rosholt Sports Co-op, SD. He is a member of the Richland County Wheat Grower's Association; the Richland County Soybean Grower's Association; the Richland County Corn Grower's Association; the ND Farmers Union; the NWFMA Association; and the ND Knight's of Columbus.

His wife, Yolanda, (a Fairmount High School teacher for 30 years) and he have 5 children, Kegan, Laura, Landon, Kali, and Kamron, and make their home in Fairmont.

Representative David Monson (R) District 10

Representative Monson was elected to the House in 1993 and has served for ten years as Assistant Majority Leader, and from 2008-2010 as the Speaker of the House. He is a small grain farmer at Osnabrock and a retired School Superintendent. He received his Bachelor and Master's in Education degrees from the University of North Dakota. He serves as a director on several boards including North American Industrial Hemp Council, and Family Mutual Insurance Company (current president) and the Northeast North Dakota Heritage Association. He is a member of the Farm Bureau, Northern Canola Growers, North Dakota Pulse Growers, and the Eagles. Representative Monson serves on the Education and Environment section of the House Appropriations standing committee and the Budget Section interim committee as well as several other interim committees. David is President and a life-long member of Dovre Lutheran Church in Osnabrock.

David and his wife Mary have 3 grown sons, 2 daughters-in-law and three granddaughters and 1 grandson.

Senator Philip Murphy (D) District 20

Senator Murphy has been in the North Dakota State Assembly since 2010, where his current committee assignments include Industry, Business and Labor; and Natural Resources. He is a board member of the Mayville Golf Course; the President of the Mayville Portland Clifford Galesburg School Board; a board member and officer for Viking Township; and a volunteer fireman.

He holds an MA in counseling from North Dakota State University and BA's in history and economics from St. John's University and teaches economics, history, government, geography, and psychology. He was ND Geography Teach of the year in 2008, and U.S. National Council's Distinguished Teacher of the Year in 2009. In his spare time he enjoys fishing and hunting and serves as a golf coach.

Senator Murphy and his wife Michelle (Shelly) have 3 children.

Senator Ronald Sorvaag (R) District 45

Senator Sorvaag was elected to the North Dakota Senate in 2010 and served during the 2013 session as Vice Chairman of the Political Subdivisions, and a member of the Industry, Business, and Labor Committees. During the interim Sen. Sorvaag is serving as a member of the Legislative Management and Employee Benefits Committees. He serves on the International Legislative Committee and was recently appointed to the Midwest Council of State Government Economic Development Committee.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology from Concordia College in Moorhead, MN. Sen. Sorvaag studied at the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development, is a member of the Fargo/Moorhead /West Fargo Chamber of Commerce, past member of the Prosper Farmers Elevator Board of Directors, small business owner and a commissioner for the Fargo Park District.

Senator Sorvaag and his wife Carla have 2 children and make their home in Fargo.

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SOUTH DAKOTA

Senator Jason Frerichs (D) District 01

Senator Frerichs, a fourth generation farmer/rancher from Wilmot, SD, currently serves in the South Dakota State Senate. Frerichs manages a 150 head beef cow/calf operation; he also raises corn, soybeans, wheat, and alfalfa. In 2007, Frerichs graduated from South Dakota State University cum laude with a Bachelors Degree in Agriculture Education; he also obtained minors in Speech Communication and Animal Science. At the age of 23, Frerichs was elected to the South Dakota State Legislature (2008), and he served as a Minority Whip in the South Dakota State House of Representatives from 2009 to 2010. In 2010, Frerichs was elected to the South Dakota State Senate.

While serving in the State Legislature, Frerichs has been a strong advocate for agriculture, education, and the development of renewable energy. Frerichs currently serves as the Senate Minority Leader. Frerichs is actively involved in the Farmers Union at all levels and currently serves as the Roberts County Farmers Union Education Director. Frerichs is also currently a member of the following organizations: South Dakota Education Association, SD Stockgrowers, United States Cattleman's Association, Wilmot Saddle Club, Sons of the American Legion, and Peace Lutheran Church. In his spare time Frerichs enjoys spending time with his family, horseback riding, participating in ranch rodeos, boating on the lakes, golfing, and hunting.

Representative Spencer Hawley (D) District 7

Representative Spencer Hawley was elected to the South Dakota House of Representatives in 2010. He graduated from Brookings High School and South Dakota State University as a political science and economics major. He is the owner of Hawley Insurance Services in Brookings. Representative Hawley is retired from the military having served 30 years with the South Dakota Army National Guard.

Representative Hawley currently serves on the Commerce and Energy and Health and Human Services Committees. He is involved in many community activities including the Brookings City Board of Appeals, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission, Brookings Chamber of Commerce, Brookings Economic Development Corporation and the National Guard Association in South Dakota. He is a member of the American Legion, Elks, Ducks Unlimited and other organizations.

Representative Hawley and his wife Barbara Ann reside in Brookings,, have four children and three grandchildren.

Representative Scott Parsley (D) District 08

Scott serves as Assistant General Manager for Member Services at East River Electric Power Cooperative, headquartered in Madison, South Dakota. He has worked for East River for 25 years. He served as staff assistant before being named to his current position in 1990.

He is a native of Brookings, South Dakota and earned his B.A. degree from Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa.

Scott serves on the American Coalition for Ethanol (ACE) Board, serves as Vice-President on the Board of Directors of Consumer Federation of America, and serves on the South Dakota 4-H Foundation Board of Directors. He has also served a key role in the development of the Prairie Winds project.

Scott and his wife, Valerie, have a son, Nicholas, and two daughters: Caitlin and Christina.

Representative Jim Peterson (D) District 4

Representative Jim Peterson has served from 2004 to 2010 the Senate; and 2000-2004 (reelected in 2013) in the House of Representatives. He is currently the Minority Whip and previously served in that same role in the Senate. He is a member of the Commerce and Energy, and Taxation committees.

A 1965 graduate of Augustana College, Representative Peterson has worked as a science teacher (Parker High School) from 1965 to 1966, and he has farmed since 1966.

His current and previous service includes: President, Northern Growers Ethanol Plant, 2000-present; Chair, Grant Devel School Board, 1988-1994; member, South Dakota Board of Environmental Protection, 1978-1994; Chair, Revillo Elevator Board, 1984-1990; Clerk, Lowe Township Board, 1970-1980; Chair, Devel County Democrats, 1994-2000; Chair, Zoar Church Council, 1970-1980; member, National Rifle Association (NRA); Member, South Dakota Corn Growers; member, State Board member, South Dakota Democrats for Life; member, South Dakota Farmers Union; and member, South Dakota Soybean Association.

Representative Peterson and his wife Jane have 4 children.

Representative Lee Qualm (R) District 21

Representative Qualm was born and raised in Platte, SD, and has completed his first year in the SD House of Representative. He served on the House Agriculture and Transportation Committees. He is a 4th generation farmer who continues to manage and operate the family farm in a cash grain business. He and his wife of 35 years, Trudy, have four children and five grandchildren.

Lee understands and believes in agriculture. He and Trudy built, owned and managed Gramps Lodge west of Platte for 10 years. He understands and believes in business – small and large.

Lee was a Founding Board Member of the SD Corn Growers serving as President in '91-'92 during which time the SD Corn Growers board was instrumental in education, promotion, development and use of Ethanol across the United States. Lee has served on the local Co-op and Farm Bureau boards in the past. He served as President of the Trinity Lutheran Church Council of Platte during fund raising and a building project of the new church building completed in 2000. He is currently president of the Abundant Rock Church in Platte.

Lee was a youth group leader in his church for over 15 years. He has coached baseball and softball. He has a heart to serve, the strength to lead and a belief in the principles the United States was founded on and fought for by our forefathers.

Representative Roger Solum (R) District 5

Representative Roger Solum is serving in his third term in the South Dakota House of Representatives. As a freshman legislator, Representative Solum was appointed to serve on the House Taxation and House Commerce and Energy committees. During the second session of his first term, he was tasked to serve as the Vice-Chairman of the House Commerce and Energy Committee. Upon returning for his second term, he was appointed as the Chairman of the House Commerce and Energy Committee and continues to serve in that position today. He also continues to serve on the House Taxation Committee.

In May of 1999, Representative Solum retired from the military after nearly 27 years of service. After his military service, he spent 10 years as a project/construction manager with an international telecommunications construction company and is presently an instructor in Energy Operations at Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown, SD. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration specializing in Project Management. He has three grown children and he and his wife (Lisbeth) reside in his hometown of Watertown, SD.

Senator Chuck Welke (D) District 02

Senator Welke was an educator for over thirty-five years in SD. He has served as a teacher, a coach of numerous sports programs, an athletic director, and an administrator. Following the 2010 school year Senator Welke retired to spend time with elderly parents and grandchildren. He also spent time as a substitute teacher. In 2012 he was elected to the SD State Senate. The former government teacher serves on the following committees: Local Government, Taxation, and Retirement Law. Senator Welke has learned a lot in his first session and is looking forward to learning more in the interim so that he can be a more effective legislator in his second session.

Chuck and his wife Ellen, who have been married 38 years, have three grown children and six grandchildren.

Representative Susan Wismer (D) District 1

Representative Wismer is in her third term in the South Dakota legislature, serving District One. She serves on the Appropriations Committee, Redistricting Committee, the Government Operations and Audit Committee, Legislative Planning Committee, and participated in the Council of State Government's Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development in 2010.

Wismer is a graduate of Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD with a degree in English and journalism. She took her accounting coursework at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, WA. She and her husband returned to Britton in 1984 and raised their family in their hometown.

Representative Wismer is a Certified Public Accountant and has been engaged in a public accounting and tax practice for over 20 years. Wismer was a member of the first class of South Dakota Ag and Rural Leadership Program. She is a member of South Dakota Farmers Union, where she served on the state and national policy committees. She has served as secretary-treasurer of the Britton Development Corporation and Britton Area Hospice for several years. She is a member of First Presbyterian Church of Britton and has served on several state Ministry Committees for the church. She is a member of the South Dakota Society of Certified Public Accountants.