

## **ELECTION REPORT**

RE: 2010 MINNESOTA GENERAL ELECTIONS

FROM: REMI STONE, CROCUS HILL CONSULTING  
REMISTONE@COMCAST.NET / 612.419.0525

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True to form, Minnesotans turned out to the polls above the national average during this year's midterm election; not quite true to form, Minnesotans turned over the reins of legislative power to Republicans for the first time in nearly four decades.

Democrats entered the 2010 elections in Minnesota holding three of four statewide offices, five of eight congressional seats, and 133 of the 201 seats in the State Legislature. The dust is now settling and a seismic shift in the statehouse's political landscape is left in the election wake.

After the votes were tallied, Republicans re-set the powerbase and shook the Democrat establishment by unseating long-seated Congressman Oberstar in a notoriously blue district in the Iron Range and assuming control of the State Senate, a body that has been in Democrat control since 1972. According to Senator Dave Senjem (Republican Senate Minority Leader, R-Rochester), to achieve a Republican State Senate win was "the almost impossible dream..."

Republicans picked up 25 seats in the House of Representatives and 16 seats in the State Senate. They will go into the 2011-2012 Legislative Session with a ten-vote margin in the House (72 R – 62 DFL) and a seven-vote margin in the Senate (37 R – 30 DFL).

The above said, also true to Minnesota's traditional form is its split government between the Legislative and Executive branches. While the outcome of Governor's race is still up in the air, and maybe for quite a few months, the common belief is that even with roughly an 8,800 vote lead going into the recount, Democrat Senator Mark Dayton (the current vote leader) will squeak out a win over Republican Representative Tom Emmer, placing all four statewide offices in the hands of Democrats.

The full ramifications of the 2010 elections will not be known or felt in the Legislature for quite some time due to the domino effect following each general election. Senators and Representatives moving into other positions will create opportunity for change within leadership and committee membership. The delay in declaring a victor in the Gubernatorial race will cause delays in the Governor-elect's ability to set up the Administration. As a result, we may see additional shifts in the power structure as some legislators or staff may leave to take positions within the Administration.

The 2011 Legislative Session begins Tuesday, January 4, 2011 and these newly elected office holders will be sworn into office beginning a truly new chapter in Minnesota state politics. Observers will be looking to see how well the new Republican majority can work together and govern in this newly cast political dynamic, especially with the anticipated no-new-taxes / do-more-taxes tension if the corner-office at the Capitol goes to US Senator Mark Dayton.

## **Legislative Leadership**

### *In the Senate*

Republicans continue to make history by electing State Senator Amy Koch (R-Buffalo) as Majority Leader, the top post in the Minnesota Senate. She is the first woman to lead the chamber. She and her family run a utility service company and served as on the Senate Business, Industry and Jobs Committee.

Democrats elected State Senator Tom Bakk (D-Cook) as Minority Leader. Senator Bakk, a carpenter by trade, served as the Senate Tax Chair and on Business, Industry and Jobs Committee.

### *In the House*

Representative Kurt Zellers (R-Maple Grove) is slated to become the State of Minnesota's 55<sup>th</sup> Speaker of the House. Representative Zellers is a communications professional, with experience directing communications for Congressman Grams, the Republican Caucus, and as an account executive with Padilla Speer Beardsley. Representative Zellers served on the House Commerce Committee.

Republicans elected Representative Matt Dean (R-Dellwood) to become the next House Majority Leader. Representative Dean is an architect and runs a small business. He served as lead Republican on the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee and Licensing Division.

Democrats elected Representative Paul Thissen (D-Minneapolis) to become the new House Minority Leaders. Representative Thissen is an attorney and practices at the downtown Minneapolis firm of Briggs and Morgan. He chaired the House Health and Human Services Committee.

## **For Construction Interests**

Returning to the Capitol are several legislators with depth and experience in the construction industry. This is good news for individuals and organizations working on construction policy because it means that educated legislators with a degree of institutional knowledge will be back and likely working on bills important to the construction industry.

Traditionally, construction-related bills are discussed in the Senate Commerce Committee and Business, Industry and Jobs Committee. In the House,

construction-bills start the hearing process in the House Commerce Committee. Legislators on these committees become well versed on the policy issues impacting the construction industry, hearing from interested parties about topics such as jobs, licensing, payment, codes, financing, insurance, liability and indemnification.

In all likelihood, many of the legislators with previous experience on these committees will find a seat on the 2011-2012 committees. Returning legislators with construction-related committee experience are:

Senators: Bakk (DFL-Cook), Bonoff (DFL-Minnetonka), Gerlach (R-Apple Valley), Gimse (R-Willmar), Koch (R-Buffalo), Latz (DFL-St. Louis Park), Marty (DFL-Roseville), Metzen (DFL-South St. Paul), Michel (R-Edina), Parry R-Waseca), Rosen (R-Fairmont), Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park), Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook), Sparks (DFL-Austin), Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), Vandever (R-Forest Lake).

Representatives: Anderson, S. (R-), Anzelc, Atkins, Davids, Davnie, Fritz, Hoppe (R-), Johnson (DFL-St. Paul), Knuth (DFL-New Brighton), Lillie (DFL-North St. Paul), Loon (R-Eden Prairie), Mack (R-Apple Valley), Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul), Mullery (DFL-Minneapolis), Murdock (R-Ottertail), Nelson (DFL-Brooklyn Park), Sanders (R-Blaine), Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park), Slocum (DFL-Richfield), Zellers (R-Maple Grove).

Other returning legislators who have been involved in construction related legislation include Representatives Howes (R-Walker), Mcnamara (R-Hastings), Scott (R-Andover), Champion (DFL-Minneapolis), Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph) and Senators Jungbauer (R-East Bethel), Higgins (DFL-Minneapolis).

### **Grassroots Begins – Be Shameless!**

Now that the election is over and we know the players, it's time to add more subcontractor voices to the mix. Take the time to call your newly elected State Representative and Senator. Congratulate them on their win. Introduce yourself, your company and tell them a bit about ASA-MN.

***Our goal in 2011 is to secure financial transparency in construction projects and passing payment legislation that is fair to all the participants on a job.***

Keep an eye out for an ASA-MN postcard. It will have the names and contact information you will need to reach out and connect with your elected officials. Contact Remi Stone at 612.419.0525 or [remistone@comcast.net](mailto:remistone@comcast.net) for more information.

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For all of the election results, you can find them at the election link at the Minnesota Secretary of State's website: **[www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us)**