

Campaign Notebook

Debate to take place during Vikes game

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MANKATO — Here's the choice for Monday night: Favre, Moss and Peterson or Walz, Demmer and Wilson.

For a brief moment this week, it looked like fans of politics and football might get a reprieve from the choice. Minnesota State University, where the 7 p.m. 1st Congressional Debate will take place, sent out a news release stating the start time as 6:30 p.m. — which would have allowed debate-goers to get home sometime in the second quarter of the Vikings-Jets Monday Night Football game.

But, as it turns out, the start time remains 7 p.m.

for the 90-minute debate between Democratic Congressman Tim Walz, Republican nominee Randy Demmer and Independence Party candidate Steven Wilson.

The timing could have turned out to be even worse. A special legislative session to deal with emergency assistance to flood-damaged parts of southern Minnesota was tentatively scheduled for Monday.

As late as Friday afternoon, Demmer — a state representative from Hayfield — was worried he might end up on the “physically unable to play” list as far as the debate. Demmer said he would have no choice but to do his legislative duty but promised to hustle to Mankato as soon as the special session ends, even if it

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means arriving in the middle of the debate.

But Gov. Tim Pawlenty, still awaiting a White House decision on federal disaster aid, announced the special session would be postponed until a later date.

The event, sponsored by Debate Minnesota, is at 7 p. m. in the student union ballroom.

Party disagreement

Democratic state Rep.

Kathy Brynaert and Republican challenger Dave Kruse attracted a large crowd at a debate earlier this week at the AmericInn Hotel and Conference Center.

The hour- long debate was a fast- moving, 20- question affair sponsored by Greater Mankato Growth.

Brynaert, seeking her third term in the House, emphasized her long history of community involvement in Mankato. Kruse focused on his belief that government — especially at the federal level — is becoming increasingly intrusive and operating outside the bounds of its constitutional authority.

Several questions at the event, solicited from the audience and the Internet, reflected the concerns often heard from the tea party movement. Others ranged from whether Girl Scout groups should be able to camp free in state parks (both candidates support) to whether the state should authorize a casino at Canterbury Park (Brynaert opposed it previously but promised constituents to give it a second look; Kruse is opposed to government getting into the entertainment business.) Asked if they would support repealing the federal health care reform, both responded with complete clarity.

Brynaert, saying the approach is very similar to what Republicans proposed less than 20 years ago, answered: “ No. Absolutely not.”

Kruse, characterizing the bill as a confusing mixture of regulations and taxes, said: “ Yes. Absolutely I would.”

Meet the IP

Area residents can get a closer look at some Independence Party candidates early next week. On Monday, Wilson said he will be debuting his first TV ad, which will air in several TV markets including in Mankato.

Wilson hopes his ad will stand out for one reason — it doesn't attack either Demmer or Walz, instead showing people saying they're tired of political games and are looking for a candidate with ideas.

“ The focus within our campaign is to have a positive, solutions- based approach,” Wilson said in announcing the ad.

And on Tuesday, Wilson will join IP gubernatorial candidate Tom Horner and state House candidate Mark Meyer of Lake Crystal at a “ meet and greet” at the Indian Lake Winery in rural Janesville.

The event is scheduled to run from 5- 8 p. m.