

## Peichel seeking Morrow's 23A seat

By Mark Fischenich

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Rebecca Peichel is going straight from the political science classroom to the political arena.

Just two weeks since the rural Fairfax resident graduated from the College of St. Benedict with a degree in political science, Peichel has started her campaign to unseat Democratic Rep. Terry Morrow of St. Peter.

A Republican, the 22-year-old said her youth offers one advantage.

"I have a lot of energy and enthusiasm," Peichel said.

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Republican Rebecca Peichel of rural Fairfax has started her campaign to represent District 23A.

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## 23A: Might be competition within GOP

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And her age doesn't mean she's without the right experience to represent District 23A, she said. The district, which stretches from North Mankato to Sibley County and includes all of Nicollet County, has a strong rural flavor along with a pair of colleges — Gustavus Adolphus in St. Peter and South Central in North Mankato.

"Being a college student, growing up around agriculture, I really see the need for someone who can go up to St. Paul and advocate for District 23A," Peichel said.

Her family has a hog farm in western Nicollet County, and she said she learned the value of hard work early. Peichel pointed to leadership experience in 4-H, FFA and student government. She was student body president at St. Ben's.

But she also has political experience in both Minnesota, where she was an intern in the district office of Republican Congressman Erik Paulsen of Eden Prairie, and in Washington, D.C., interning with the National Pork Producers Council.

Those opportunities provided lessons in both constituent service and public policy, Peichel said.

She spent little time during an interview criticizing Morrow, saying only that she opposes the two-term incumbent's votes for tax increases. Morrow supported a successful legislative effort to increase the gas tax to boost funding for road and bridge projects, and he's backed several unsuccessful efforts by the Democratic Legislature to raise taxes on wealthier Minnesotans to ease the severity of cuts in state spending.

"I just believe that right now, when Minnesota and our whole nation are in tough economic times, we can't be voting to raise taxes," Peichel said.

Her campaign will be centered on reducing the tax burden on businesses, promoting economic growth and job creation, and being a strong advocate for agriculture.

With the state facing a projected budget shortfall for the next biennium of \$5 billion or more, Peichel said she would seek to erase the red ink by elevating efficiency and accountability in government programs.

Former North Mankato Mayor Nancy Knutson filed paperwork with the state Campaign Finance Board earlier this year for a possible contest against Morrow but has not announced a run and didn't return calls from The Free Press seeking comment on her plans. Peichel said she knows of no other Republican candidates who are running. District 23A Republicans have scheduled their endorsing convention for May 27 in St. Peter.