

August 23, 2008

## Lenzmeier's solutions make him a responsible candidate

I have been an attorney in St. Cloud for more than 25 years. I am a past president of the Stearns-Benton Bar Association.

I would like to advise the voters of two areas in which Lenzmeier has been part of the solution to problems within the legal system.

A growing number of persons wish to represent themselves and courts have been struggling with how best to accommodate them. Court personnel, not being attorneys, cannot provide those who represent themselves without an attorney with legal advice or assistance. Brochures and self-help videos go only so far to help people with the forms and procedures.

Lenzmeier, as a member of the County Law Library Board, helped develop a program that has placed an attorney from the local legal services office to assist these people.

Recently, an issue has arisen regarding the representation of indigent parents in Children in Need of Protective Services and Termination of Parental Rights proceedings. The public defenders have had to withdraw from such engagements and it has fallen to the counties to pick up the slack.

The county board and Lenzmeier, in conjunction with Stearns County Attorney Janelle Kendall, took an early role on this issue and passed one of the first comprehensive programs to temporarily handle such cases.

Lenzmeier has been an effective advocate for financially responsible solutions to the legal system funding problems facing this county.

By Michael J. Ford, St. Cloud