

Caucus crowds reflect changes in Credit River Township

By Mike Kaszuba
Staff Writer

Only 5 miles of two-lane road separated Credit River Township's DFL and Independent-Republican caucus sites Tuesday night. But the real distance between them couldn't be measured in miles.

The DFLers caucused last night at the old town hall, parked in the mud and wore flannel shirts.

The Independent-Republicans, in contrast, met in a new middle school, wore color-coordinated jogging outfits and business suits and talked of getting home to pay baby sitters.

Jeff and Dianne Frick, both young Reagan Republicans, moved to a subdivision in Credit River last year, part of the new migration from the Twin Cities that is changing the township. "We're probably loyal Republicans," said Jeff Frick. "We wanted to have more of a rural atmosphere."

The newcomers in the suburban homes are lawyers and teachers, not farmers. The aging farmers, throwbacks to Roosevelt Democrats, have trouble connecting with Reagan-era Republicans.

Last night, the Democrats in Credit River wanted to abolish registration with the Selective Service system, reaffirm the right to abortion and oppose capital punishment. The Independent-Republicans voted for



The DFL caucus, which drew young activists as well as aged farmers, was held in the little Credit River Town Hall.

public funding for private schools, spoke against abortion and made jokes about Democratic Sen. Edward Kennedy.

"The younger ones that are moving in are . . . what you call professional people," said DFLer Miles Mares, a 72-year-old farmer and member of the town board. "Not too many working people — high-paid individuals, white-collar, you would say."

Though downtown Minneapolis is 35 miles up the road, the road today is an interstate — Interstate Hwy. 35 hugs the township's eastern edge. The big mall in Burnsville is only 10 minutes away, and Prior Lake, Burnsville and Lakeville are closing in from the west, north and east.

New homes are popping up in the township, usually sitting on 2½-acre lots and owned by city people who want country living and room for a



Star Tribune map

horse. "(It's) all single-family homes," said Mary Schmitz, a Scott County planner. "Everything is pretty much on acreage lots."

But the future is not so much marching through Credit River as it is trickling through. The population jump for the 1980s is still measured in the hundreds, not thousands; the population now is just shy of 5,000. Almost half of the township's 29 miles of roads remain unpaved.



Staff Photos by Jeff Wheeler

Doug Draw read his resolution calling for abolishment of the Selective Service system at a DFL caucus in Credit River Township. The resolution was adopted.

The township's board is still controlled by farmers. Two of its three members, Mares and John Kane, are neighbors. All three are DFLers. And at least for now the developers who are building the homes for suburbanites have to go before the board for approval.

"We're growing less corn; we're growing more homes," sighed Kane. 51, who farms on his grandfather's homestead. "It's disappointing to see

it, for me. I'm a pretty agriculturally dedicated person."

For entertainment, the farmers with long memories still talk about Vince Mahoney, once justice of the peace. Mahoney was a certified Credit River Township character. He once handed down a decision voiding the Federal Reserve Act, held court in a drafty barn, used a horseshoe for a gavel and sat on an inverted milk can in his bib and coveralls. Swallows flew

through the barn during court.

The farmers know, however, that their day soon will pass, and so do the Independent-Republicans. "They represent the traditional farmers that . . . have always controlled the town board," said Larry Dyb, a local Independent-Republican precinct chairman. "(But) as the population builds, the simple township (government) is not going to be adequate."

1992 CR Caucus

Clipped By:



cdkostik

Sun, Jun 28, 2020