

**GOVERNOR PAWLENTY APPOINTS O'BRIEN TO
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Saint Paul – Governor Tim Pawlenty today announced the appointment of J. Dennis O'Brien to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). O'Brien is appointed to a six-year term that expires on January 6, 2014, and replaces Marshall Johnson.

"Dennis brings a great deal of knowledge, intellect, and balanced judgeship with him to the position," Governor Pawlenty said. "He has the passion for public service and will study the issues before the PUC to help lead Minnesota's future energy policy."

O'Brien, of St. Paul, is the state's director of strategic planning, a position he has held since 2007. He was an attorney and partner with Littler Mendelson in Minneapolis, from 2005 to 2007, where he practiced a broad range of employment law matters. Previously, he an attorney and partner with Rider Bennett from 1989 to 2005 and LeFevere Lefler from 1969 to 1989, where he brought an extensive knowledge, experience, and expertise in many aspects of education law, including labor relations and collective bargaining, employment matters, employee discipline and discharge, school funding and finance, and administrative procedures. He has successfully tried a number of cases before both state and federal courts.

O'Brien began his professional career as a special assistant district Attorney General, representing the state Department of Education and other state education agencies. He earned his juris doctorate degree from the University of Minnesota Law School and his bachelor of arts from the University of Minnesota.

"I look forward to continuing my public service on this very important body," O'Brien said.

The Public Utilities Commission is comprised of five commissioners who serve in full-time, paid positions at an annual salary of \$88,448. The PUC regulates the rates and services of electric, natural gas and telephone companies. The Commission acts through public hearings, contested case hearings, rule-making hearings, and informal complaint resolutions.