



Alds. Linda McNeely (left) and Ann Thompson attend a neighborhood association meeting Saturday at St. Patrick's Church. The pair have united in a quest to improve conditions on the west side.

HOLLY McQUEEN/Rockford Register Star

Profile: Linda McNeely

- Age: 41
- Address: 502 S. Johnston Ave.
- Occupation: Accountant
- Education: Roosevelt University, Chicago
- Political experience: Rockford City Council, 13th Ward, 1996-present
- To contact: Call 987-9978.

Profile: Ann Thompson

- Age: 47
- Address: 804 Hoban Ave.
- Occupation: Park facility manager
- Education: Rock Valley College
- Political experience: Rockford City Council, 7th Ward, 1992-present
- To contact: Call 968-8389.

West-side aldermen allies for change

■ **Dynamic duo:** Some worry that Linda McNeely and Ann Thompson are too combative; others say their efforts are 'fantastic.'

By **SCOTT WILLIAMS**

Rockford Register Star

ROCKFORD — It was time for the Rockford City Council to receive another report on local economic development efforts.

And Linda McNeely was ready. The new 13th Ward alderman grilled representatives of the Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce on why more attention was not being paid to economically depressed areas on the city's west side.

That sort of confrontation has become commonplace since McNeely arrived on the scene at City Hall nine months ago. The 41-year-old newcomer has teamed up with 7th Ward veter-

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Political columnist Chuck Sweeny questions some west-side theories. **Page 3A**

an Ann Thompson in a battle for west-side legitimacy that is getting attention — and shaking up the establishment.

"I think it's fantastic," said Winnebago County Board mem-

ber Charles Jefferson, a longtime west-side activist. "Your hat certainly has to go off to those ladies."

Some worry that McNeely and Thompson are too combative when it comes to working for change. Others say the new alliance represents the west side's best hope in many years for significant improvement.

Please see **West-side, 4A**

■ **What's next, 4A**