



Thank you for that warm introduction.

Its great to be here on the Iron Range for the 114th annual Northern St. Louis County Fair. I am told that today is Kids Day. Are all of you kids out there having a good time? How about all of you older kids like me -- are you having a good time too?

I have been told that the St. Louis County Fair is a celebration of the heritage of northeastern Minnesota and I know that Kids Day is a day dedicated to our future -- our kids.

How many of you are from the Range? How many of you are from families where somebody worked in the mining industry. Whether you did or whether you didn't - mining has shaped the lives of every person from this area of the state in the past and will shape your lives in the future.

I am aware of the continuing crisis in the steel industry and the impacts that are beginning to be felt in Minnesota's iron mining. I know that cutbacks have already occurred at some plants and that the threat of further cutbacks is real. I want you to know that I take this crisis seriously.

So I want to talk a bit about what the Ventura Administration is doing on behalf of the future of the Iron Range to ensure that our kids continue to have the opportunity to grow an raise families here.

First, as you may know, legislation was passed this year that provides for the addition of three "citizen members" to the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board. One appointed by the senate majority leader, one by the speaker of the house and one by me _ the Governor. These three citizens, along with five state senators and five state representatives will advise Commissioner John Swift in his efforts to strengthen and diversify the Iron Range economy by working with the private sector to retain existing jobs and create new ones.

After careful examination of 58 applications, I am pleased to announce that I am appointing Patricia Ives to serve on the IRRRB.

Pat is a resident of Hibbing where she is the Director of the Kiddy Karousel Child Care Center, a position she has held for 28 years. She is a past president of the Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce and has served on a number of citizen boards including the Minnesota Early Childhood Care and Education Council. Pat is currently Chair of the Hibbing United Way and the Ironworld Citizen's Board. She also serves on the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission.

Most importantly to me -- Pat is a citizen. She is a lifelong resident of the Iron Range, runs a business here, and has been involved in the fabric of the community -- as a citizen -- for a number of years.

I believe very strongly that government should not be about politicians, but be a place where citizens can get involved and make a difference.



Next, I want to highlight what my administration is doing to preserve and protect a very important part of the heritage of the Iron Range -- mining.

As many of you know under the leadership of Commissioner John Swift and Trade & Economic Development Commissioner Jerry Carlson and this area's legislative delegation _ the Minnesota Twenty-First Century Mineral Fund was established. This fund is designed to serve as a revolving loan fund to help mining companies and the Iron Range have the ability to modernize and continue to compete internationally in the steel industry. This is a great step forward to help this part of the state -and the mining industry in particular -- to be viable for the next generation.

Next, earlier this summer -- by Executive Order -- I re-authorized state sponsorship of a committee called the Governor's Task Force on Mining and Minerals. This group is charged with making recommendations on what can be done to protect and enhance the long-term viability of mining in our state. We have now decided to rename this group the Minnesota Blue Ribbon Committee on Mining. We are changing the name because we want to broaden the scope of the committee. While in the past the Governor's mining group has mainly focused on state policy related to mining, we are now hoping to work more closely with Congressman Jim Oberstar, the Taconite Enhancement Committee, and the rest of the Minnesota congressional delegation to try to impact federal policy that impacts Minnesota's mining industry. I have asked IRRRB Commissioner John Swift to chair this group.

We mine iron in Minnesota and ship it off to Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania where it is made into one of the basic building blocks of our nation -- steel. Over the last year we have seen our country's steel industry literally besieged by the "dumping" of foreign steel at prices below what it costs to produce. To protect jobs governments like Brazil, Japan, Russia and elsewhere subsidize the costs of steel production and then dump their excess steel in the USA. In the end Americans lose jobs.

I am all for free trade. . . . I want to emphasize that point. I am for open markets and free trade. However, I also believe in fair trade. Selling goods for less than what it costs to produce them violates a basic laws of economics. When the government of a foreign country makes it possible -- through subsidies -- for a company to sell its product for less than it costs to produce it -- that's not fair.

The Clinton Administration has taken some action to limit the dumping of finished steel products. But they have taken less action on the dumping of steel slabs or semi-finished steel imports. The dumping of steel slabs is even more threatening to those of us in Minnesota and Michigan who make our living in the iron ore business. Between the two states we produce more than 90% of the iron ore mined in the USA. Every ton of steel slabs dumped into this country displaces more than a ton of Minnesota or Michigan iron pellets. You don't have to be a Harvard economist to figure out what that could mean over the long term to the Iron Range if the dumping of slabs is allowed to continue at such high levels.



This is not just an Iron Range issue -- this is a state issue. Businesses in over 200 Minnesota communities supply goods and services to the mining industry. All told, Minnesota's mining industry has a \$1.5 billion impact statewide. Because of the broad impact the mining industry has on the entire state, I am not going to sit back and remain silent.

Therefore, I am asking John Swift to convene the Minnesota Blue Ribbon Committee on Mining this coming October and take on the issue of steel dumping as its first assignment. I am going to encourage John and the IRRRB to convene a national conference on steel dumping right here at Ironworld, a place built with mining taxes and dedicated to our parents and grandparents who helped build this nation of steel.

I don't want celebrations of the Iron Range's heritage like the St. Louis County Fair to become celebrations of a grand past that is fading away. I want to also insure that our kids, the next generation, have a future here on the Iron Range, and elsewhere in greater Minnesota.

It has been a pleasure to be here. I will take a few questions from the audience, however, because it is kids day, only from kids!

Hope to see you all up there later.