

Thank you.

This is a big, fun week. It started last weekend when 6,000 kids dressed up for Halloween came through the residence to see the First Lady and myself, and it will end with what promises to be a great trade mission to Japan.

In the middle I kicked off the 4th week of The Big Plan – Minnesota: World Competitor – a leader among nations and states. I could not help but think that if we do that job right – and set Minnesota up for being competitive in this new economy – that life will be very good indeed for all those little children who shook my hand on the Halloween Walk. (Well ... I didn't shake all of their hands – there's no shaking hands with a foam "cell phone" or a walking M&M.)

And here I am in the middle of this important week standing in front of several hundred Policy Analysts.

This is not something a person thinks about before they become Governor – the idea that there are several hundred policy analysts working full time to envision a future, every day.

The most public attention is paid to the top appointees, as I'm sure you are aware. Am I right???

They come and go, but the analysts stay. I had quite an eye-opener recently when my office sponsored the first Deputy Commissioners' Retreat that I believe has been held in many, many years. Each of the 150 introduced themselves and how long they had worked in state government. When it was all totaled, the deputies had served ONE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY EIGHT YEARS! And that wasn't even including my 10 months!

No matter how long you have worked in your job – one year or 10 -- My challenge to you today – as it was to them – is to join me in thinking NEW about your jobs. Experience can be a tremendous asset, but it can also be a liability if it serves to bog you down in the way "things have always been."

I believe this is a new day:

- It's a new day because neither one of the old parties dominates your future in this Administration. Your best thinking does not need to run through a filter of political realities to be heard by me.
- It's a new day because you are serving under a Governor who's #1 priority is running the best executive branch of government the people have ever been served by. I don't care what impression the media reports would give you: I give you my word, and my actions speak even louder than my words.



- The Ventura Administration believes in the work of state government. I took pains to appoint THE BEST CABINET. In fact, the highest compliment came from Skip Humphrey recently when he told me that it probably is the best in the nation. That's fine, but I never assume. And as Will Rogers once said, "Even if you ARE on the right track, if you don't keep moving you'll get run over." So I've put a 360 degree-feedback evaluation in place to measure the progress of each individual commissioner. Yes, they speak for me, but yes, the buck also stops with them to get results; and I have THE BEST NON-PARTISAN STAFF (they've all been through my 12-step program for recovering Republicans and Democrats). From many different backgrounds, they've come together to carry my agenda together and get results.
- It's also a new day because I have laid out a four-part Big Vision to guide the thinking and actions of the Executive Branch. I want to point out Steven Bosacker, my chief of staff, and Wendy Wustenberg, my director of Government Relations, for working with me and the cabinet pulling this together. I am trusting both of them and the Government Relations staff in the Governor's Office to develop the initiatives of The Big Plan and I want you to know that they speak for me as they work to bring agencies TOGETHER FOR RESULTS within a structurally balanced budget.
- Here's another dose of New Day Thinking: This administration's progress on key issues will be measured in real ways by using Minnesota Milestones, the Children's Report Card, and other important measuring sticks for progress – or lack thereof. And when I get "lack thereof" I will get very directly involved, rest assured!
- It's also a new day because I have proclaimed that there will be no silos in the Ventura Administration. I didn't say there "AREN'T" silos – I said there "WILL BE NO SILOS." It is taking more time than even I thought possible. Right now, I bet every one of you is thinking "YEAH, that's what he thinks." Well think again. If you remember nothing else from my talk today, remember this: NO SILOS. When you get called to cooperate with people from another agency, no matter what your biases – go sit at that table and get work done.
- And here's the biggest New Day change: I'm not here for politics, I'm willing to wait 20 years to have the actions of the Administration be judged. To that end, I care deeply about a structurally balanced budget, common sense principles in bonding, and the idea that there are always, always better ways of doing business.

Let me talk a little bit more about these last comments because the more you can each understand these basic ideas, the easier time you will have working on the development of new policy over the next three – or seven – years.

When I was first elected, the system required me to put together a 23 billion dollar budget in about six weeks. You try it sometime – it wasn't easy.

I was extremely frustrated by the lack of ability by departments to explain what they did, or why they did it and not somebody else. I would hear one presentation about alcohol prevention, walk

across the road and hear another one pretty similar. But nobody could tell me why the duplication made sense.

I saw a terrible neglect of basic technology to serve the people. The State of Minnesota is in the stone ages, and I have no interest in being Governor Flintstone. When the people are doing their business via the Internet, we need to, too.

It was obvious that I needed to beef up the ability of the Executive Branch to decide how to get the job done for the people, and how to be more accountable for that work. Remember, I'm a conditioning coach. I curb appetites and shape up teams just for fun!

But this one I can't do alone. In an organization of 49,000 full and part time employees, it takes every commissioner, every deputy, everybody. Including every POLICY ANALYST. Every single one of you is as much an extension of me as the commissioners are.

Why you? Because every one of you does have authority to move ideas – and I have a very strong interest in whether each of those ideas moves us forward on that track.

Mostly, because every one of your ideas has something in common: it costs money. On Wustenberg's desk there is a note I wrote for her: Nothing Costs Zero. And the budget is MY responsibility. PERIOD.

That's why every state government policy proposal will be looped through my office and through Finance. Those of you responsible for these ideas will please work constructively with the folks there to answer the questions I require them to ask.

They are also working under one very fixed guideline that I want you to hear from me: No SUPPLEMENTAL SPENDING.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe 23 billion dollars is more than enough money to work with over the next two years.

Your ideas are valued. But they must be paid for by dollars that have been provided by the taxpayers of Minnesota. Never, ever forget that it's the public's money. Every ballpoint pen, every ream of paper, every office chair, every computer, every long distance dollar. Every single commissioner and every one of you who receives a state paycheck, benefits, and a retirement is paid for by the taxpayers of Minnesota.

Every one of us in this room must value this relationship as never before, and respect that these jobs we have are in SERVICE TO those taxpayers – not the other way around. It's about “Bang for the Buck.” – and it's up to all of us to take that point of view TODAY – not next Monday or next year.

That's why I created the Big Plan.

It has taken months to get it down on paper this far for obvious reasons:

First, there was the budget process.

Then there was SESSION – five months worth.

Then every commissioner – new and reappointed – was given several opportunities to contribute.

And then it was important to “get real” by linking each initiative with real indicators so we can evaluate.

I strongly encourage you to read the entire Big Plan document. We brought copies along with us today.

As policy analysts, I guarantee you will be frustrated that there isn't more written down. Go ahead – be frustrated.

Good ideas come from frustration.

The citizens are frustrated with government. Every poll will tell you that. From that frustration has come some good ideas:

- We are the first state in the nation to experiment with tri-partisan government – and it works just fine. No easier nor harder than the old two-party system, but just look at the last legislative session and you'll see clearly that a lot got done. Some say more got done than would have been possible if it was the same old two-way battle of spending against tax cuts. If taxpayer frustration caused the push for permanent tax cuts and the biggest rebate in the nation, then I say frustration is OK.
- Thanks to frustration, we will also be the first state in the nation to give our voters the chance to decide how their legislature should look. Small, large – one house, two houses. No matter how you feel about the unicameral issue, I ask you to publicly support the citizens right to decide.
- Frustration with “government” is also going to kick you and me and everybody else in the executive branch to stand and deliver as never before. There are no more lines for a driver's test thanks to action over at Public Safety. Public Service and Commerce are blended together in an effort to provide the same or better service with no new money. And Charlie Weaver is now chairing the SAFE Coordinating Council to figure out how to get better results out of ELEVEN different departments that spend ONE BILLION DOLLARS on prevention issues. Those are just a few examples of improvements, large and small, that are under way.

It's about SERVICE, NOT SYSTEMS. That's one of the Big Plan main goals, and probably the one that rests most heavily on our shoulders in this room.

Think very, very carefully about what is – and isn't – the State's role. Remember that rules are just as burdensome and costly as laws passed by the Legislature.

Even with rules, NOTHING COSTS ZERO – and I will always consider the merits of any idea based on how much it costs and who pays and what better result will occur.

As of this year, the Governor has veto authority over rules, and I will use it if I feel a given rule is breaking my budget principles or running counter to success in the Big Plan goals. The devil is – always – in the details. And that's why communication is important.

Communicate with whom, you might ask?

Let me give you two strong suggestions.

ONE: Spend more time working inside of the executive branch. REALLY TALK with people in other agencies. Get frustrated. Find solutions. Don't just stay in your offices thinking it's OK to get prepared to work with some special interests to get something rammed through the Legislature. Those days are over.

TWO: Help get out and involve citizens in the trade-offs that come from new policy. I'm talking REAL citizens. The folks who aren't represented by somebody who knows how to get around government. You know who I'm talking about – it's the association staff people, the registered lobbyists, the lawyers, and the inside baseball types who make up the "club" that understands exactly what it is you do.

It's easy to understand how you might develop well-worn paths to those people because in many cases I'm sure they are very easy to work with. But I am deeply worried about the influence those people have on mid-level staff in the departments. Because, let's face it -- Governors and their cabinets come and go. It's very possible that the best job insurance is to work more closely with the people who get money from government than those who are elected or appointed for a much shorter time to lead change and improvement.

It is frustrating. From that frustration, I've watched some leaders bypass straight talk like this and move to sanctions rather than "carrots." Policies like school vouchers and privatization are born of frustrations with "the system."

I may be a reformer, but I'm not an extremist. I'm a new thing – a centrist.

I like government doing what it does very well – and I like incentives over baseball bats. (By the way I'm not talking about stadiums, although I don't like those much, either.) The more aggressively you challenge yourselves and each other and your department heads to think creatively, the less likely it will be that others can resort to extreme attempts to FORCE change.

Here's a specific challenge: Dare to eliminate stupid laws and clean OUT old policies. I will value you as highly or MORE for eliminating laws rather than adding more.

Your worth to the people of Minnesota is no longer measured by how many policies you make – but by how they add measurably to the better life here. Sometimes, and often, that is best served by getting government OUT of people's lives. I believe that with all my heart.

Specific to the BIG PLAN:

HOW DOES YOUR WORK CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTHY, VITAL COMMUNITIES?

- Are you helping local leaders make decisions that look just as “smart” 10 years from now as today?
- Do you have ideas for the next wave of improvements to our public school system?
- These and other Big Questions are listed under Healthy, Vital Communities in The Big Plan.

HOW DOES YOUR WORK CONTRIBUTE TO EVERY MINNESOTAN HAVING A SHOT AT BEING SELF-SUFFICIENT?

On this I will not give an inch. It's been totally twisted by media and naysayers who aren't wanting to hear what I'm saying. There isn't a person alive today – newborn or middle-aged or elderly – who doesn't need some help every day. The question of the day is, “What help do they need from state government?”

I believe in education. I believe in good, affordable transportation. I believe in keeping our people safe. That's right in the Constitution.

I also believe there is a place for helping those who truly are in need. People who, through no fault of their own, cannot live independently. That's called compassion, and I have TONS of it for circumstances beyond someone's control.

When somebody needs more than the support of family or friends, there is a big net of nonprofit services and churches and other places close by. That's called COMMUNITY, and I believe in it strongly.

Those of you in human services need to help figure out where the connections make sense between local service and state government, and where the results can be measured. I'm trusting Commissioner Michael O'Keefe and a number of other department heads to knit all these programs into something that makes sense over the next year.

FINALLY, Minnesota is already a world competitor. If we were a nation, we would rank 28th in the world. That was quite a surprise for me to learn a few months ago.

That's quite a responsibility, and so I've been going to school on how to keep the best of our economy and weatherproof us against what is to come from competition or recession or both.

At Harvard University two weeks ago, one of the former advisors to the President said something very simple. He said to be sure to invest in basic infrastructure and not mess around picking winners in this rapidly changing economy.

He was talking about:

- Good schools,
- A whole transportation plan,
- Workforce training programs that actually get used and work with higher education,

- And Technology that can benefit everybody including in rural areas.

In that session as well as at Standard and Poors in New York, it was stressed over and over again that our AAA Bond Rating is very important to our success as a state.

Since this room is full of people who create new ideas for Government, I want to be clear with you about my views on bonding.

- As with the budget principles, I have bonding principles.
- I believe in the clear, tough criteria for bonding passed last session.
- Do not go out on a limb supporting local projects. It isn't going to happen.
- We're going to take care of what we already have – not add more. The neglect of our public buildings is tragic, and this budget will recommend a healthy share for repairs.
- The Smart Growth Principles also apply to bonding decisions. We will not be party to moving economic activity from one part of the state to another. We will also not look kindly to ideas that encourage urban sprawl in any of our regional centers.

I'm giving you a lot of "don'ts" today, but I'm also giving you encouragement to be the most creative you've ever been.

Anybody could be a policy analyst back in the days when the answer to everything was a new program.

This Centrist Era in Minnesota government is designed for the best and brightest to be in your field.

What could be better than an administration that respects solid research and results? SCIENCE over EMOTION. POLICY over POLITICS.

What could be better than a Governor who is willing to lead into gutsy, targeted efforts that get the job done instead of politically correct attempts to look busy but come up short?

What could be better than a Governor who will have the backbone to redirect money toward the best ideas – and not put you off because "there's no new money."

It's called competition, and it exists in the world of policy as of today.

Work with me. The best is yet to come.

Thanks for inviting me here today.