

*Governor Ventura arrived at University Club in Mexico City for a luncheon put on by the American Chamber and American Society. In attendance were approximately 300 Minnesota company representatives.*

In the speech the governor spoke of Minnesota companies, Minnesota tourism and free trade. Many Mexican media outlets attended the event.

*Text of the speech follows.*

Buenas Tardes, Amigos!

Thank you for inviting the First Lady and me here today. I can't think of a better way to start my trade mission in Mexico than by having lunch with some of Minnesota's best friends, and free trade's biggest fans. It's like the pep rally before the game.

Just remember - cheer loudly and clap often. You'll be doing your part for free enterprise.

I had no idea that the American Chamber/Mexico is the largest American Chamber of Commerce outside of the United States. With so many of you promoting the benefits of trade -- my job is half done! Still, I WOULD like to add a few more Minnesota companies to your membership.

I also want to thank the American Society for the important work they do in promoting friendship and goodwill between the people of Mexico and the people of the United States. Trade missions like this involve far more than simply doing business. Like everything else in life -- it's all about relationships.

Successful business leaders have always lived by that creed. August Busch III -- head of Anheuser Busch - is rumored to have said, "In good times...we do business with friends. In bad times...we do business with friends. *Make friends!*"

I hope to make a lot of friends this week. And the timing couldn't be better. Mexico's economy is getting stronger and healthier by the day. Less than three weeks ago, I told a Congressional panel that I couldn't wait to get here - because Mexico *has arrived*. It ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in the world in GDP and represents a market of huge potential for Minnesota exports.

Mexico is the United States' second largest trading partner. It's Minnesota's 11<sup>th</sup> largest market - a big improvement over the past few years - and *I know* we can do better.

The reason I know is not simply because the peso is recovering, Mexico has much more going for it than that. President Zedillo's leadership has helped create new markets for Mexico around the world. Over the past ten years -- Mexico's exports quadrupled - and imports increased by more than 300 percent. Even now, President Zedillo's strong commitment to democracy is

ensuring a smooth transition of power -- no easy task after 71 years! He is a true statesman, and I commend him.

And call me crazy, but I think I'll get along with President-elect Fox. After my own election, I said we shocked the world. I also said there was a great momentum for change in Minnesota -- people wanted new ideas - and they wanted to shake up the old political system.

Does that remind you of anyone?

(Vicente) Fox represents new ideas, energy and change - and I for one will do everything I can to help him and Mexico succeed. After a few years of working together, I might even be known as an "Amigo de Fox."

I don't think it's any secret how I feel about free, fair, and open trade opportunities for all people in all countries:

Expanding markets mean expanding sales, expanding jobs and higher wages. Some critics claim that small businesses don't really benefit from NAFTA, or from the concept of free trade in general. I would challenge those critics to go to any town - anywhere -- and talk to small businesses, farmers and young people about the new opportunities in front of them today because of free trade.

We have businesses of all sizes with us on this mission. Some are small - and some are working with small, family-owned businesses in Mexico. Many said that NAFTA has helped to cut the red tape and paperwork - and made it easier to expand their business.

I support free trade because it improves the quality of life for *all* Minnesotans. That's what I told the United States Congress when I testified last March in favor of permanent normal trading relations for China. That initiative passed the House and Senate last month, just in time for my NEXT business development mission to China -- in 2001.

This month, I was back in Washington before a Senate panel on international trade sharing my thoughts about how to keep the momentum going. I said we needed to do four things:

- Put politics aside - and grant the U.S. President A Fast Track Trade Negotiating Authority so that he can make common sense decisions that will help America compete in this fast-paced global economy. Politics can't, and shouldn't get in the way. It doesn't matter who the next U.S. President is - President Bush will need it as much as President Gore.
- Second - correct our past mistakes - and face the facts about failures like Cuba. The 45-year embargo hasn't worked. Communism remains. But markets are still shut to our products -- and human rights are still being abused.

- Third - embrace emerging markets - inside as well as outside our borders. I'm doing everything I can to groom Minnesota's potential as a world competitor. But I believe our success will depend on the success we have in helping our minority communities -- our own Aemerging markets -- thrive at home. Minority-owned businesses are adding more value to our economy every day. In fact, our fastest-growing community in Minnesota is Chicano-Latino - and most of them are of Mexican descent. The population has grown 60 percent between 1990 and 1998. By 2005, Minnesota's Chicano-Latino community is expected to reach 170,000. As Governor, I am serious about tapping into the tremendous potential these new immigrants represent.
- And finally - COMPETE WITH COMPETENCE. That's a concept that comes pretty naturally to me. But its easy to be confident - because I'm also a big fan of Minnesota. Everywhere I go -- from Japan -- to Canada and Mexico (even the TONIGHT SHOW!) -- I tout our quality of life, wonderful amenities and bright, hard-working people. And it's not just me. An independent research company ranked Minnesota the Most Livable State in the United States for the fourth year in a row.

So I'll be doing a lot of bragging on this mission.

- I'll be telling anyone who will listen that I will put Minnesota workers and Minnesota manufacturers up against anyone in the world.
- We spawned the medical device industry, and performed the first open-heart surgery in Minnesota.
- We invented everything from post-it notes to the cardiac pacemaker to enclosed shopping centers. We even invented water skiing.
- We have Northwest Airlines - one of the top airlines in the industry and a sponsor of this event today -- operating out of a Twin Cities hub that is the 10th busiest airport in the world.
- Minnesota is also home to 13 Fortune 500 companies and world leaders in agriculture, medical technologies and telecommunications.
- *World Trade* magazine called Minneapolis, Minnesota the second best city in the U.S. for international business.

There is no doubt about it -- I am governor of a great state. But I'm not here to rest on my laurels - or wait for others come to me. I am here to build on what we have (and on what other governors have accomplished), and prepare for the next phase of this new economy.

I was given good advice about how to do that last year by some of the nation's best economic advisors at Harvard University. They told me my job was not to pick winners or losers because the new economy requires a new mind set. They told me to invest in basic infrastructure that benefits everyone: Schools, roads, energy, technology. And that's what we've been doing ever since.

Opportunities abound - for all of us. In North America alone, more than \$550 billion crosses the mutual borders of Canada, Mexico and the United States every year. That's \$1.5 billion a DAY, twice that of trade with all of Europe.

In Minnesota, we've seen dramatic improvement over the past year. Overall exports increased every quarter, and our top export markets did very well compared to the same quarter last year. Manufactured exports to Japan grew by more than 43 percent -- which tells me my tourism and trade mission to Japan last year was a case of perfect timing!

Exports to Mexico also grew by 33 percent. I'm anxious to see that trend continue and if we work real hard over the next week - we might see Mexico move into Minnesota's top ten markets by this time next year.

But don't get me wrong. I won't be satisfied with a nice bump in the numbers. When I think about the future, I don't think one --or even five years. In fact, when I took office I told my cabinet to think TWENTY YEARS into the future.

That's the way I look at this - and every other trade mission. We are not in Mexico looking for instant gratification. I don't want the doors we open to hit me on the way out. We are here in pursuit of common ground -- and common interests -- that can lead to long-term relationships that benefit BOTH sides of the border -- for decades to come.

Mexico and Minnesota already have so much in common. I met recently with several Minnesota companies and found out - firsthand - about some of the opportunities in Mexico. What they told me is truly exciting.

ADC Telecommunications would like to offer its broadband wireless spectrum access system to Mexico providers for the two-way delivery of high-speed Internet access to homes and businesses. If the government approves, Mexico would be able to upgrade its telecommunications infrastructure at a lower cost because this spectrum is unique technology is more cost effective and simpler to deploy than traditional wire-based technologies and can be integrated into existing networks. I strongly urge the Mexican government to approve two-way use of this wireless technology spectrum. Mexico would seize the telecommunications advantage, and ADC could increase its sales to Mexico by more than 50 percent. Common ground. Common interests. It's on our agenda this week. I've even spoken to U. S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky about this, and she is willing to help.

Mexico and Minnesota have something else in common. DRIVER'S LICENSES. If you have one B and you live in Mexico City B chances are good that it came from a Minnesota company. DataCard Group also supplies more than 95 percent of the Mexican market for credit and debit

cards. And since I'm a good example of what can happen when citizens get involved in their government -- I'm all for DataCards next venture in Mexico -- Voter ID cards.

But there is no stronger case for pursuing common ground -- than when human life is involved. Minnesota companies - like 3M and Medtronic - have brought life saving and life-enhancing technology and products to Mexico.

3M has been in Mexico for over 50 years and today - I'm happy to say 3M products have found their way into virtually every sector of the Mexican economy, including health care. I applaud Tom Engles for his vision and his leadership.

Medtronic's deep brain stimulation therapy is a completely new approach to controlling tremors and other side effects of Parkinson's disease. The results are immediate -- and dramatic. I'm looking forward to meeting people who benefited from this treatment on Wednesday at Mexico City General Hospital. I'm also anxious for this treatment to become available back home in the United States.

Minnesota is known for its innovative technologies - and for entrepreneurs like Larry Lamb a genuine pioneer in the field of digital animation and special effects. Lamb and Company produced the United States' first computer animated network TV program. Larry and other Minnesota production companies will show their wares this week to Mexican film, television and advertising executives. With such a large Spanish-speaking audience - on BOTH sides of the border - the common ground covers a very wide area. And Minnesota aims to become the most FILM FRIENDLY, COST FRIENDLY AND INNOVATIVE production market in North America.

Minnesota's technology and medical device industries are second to none, and the same is true of Minnesota agriculture and processed foods. As for common ground - the facts speak for themselves.

Minnesota sold \$46 million dollars in food products to Mexico last year - making it our second largest market.

Golden Valley Microwave won my International Trade Award this year. They make ACT II popcorn - the number one microwave popcorn in Mexico. It's number one because the company bothered to find out what Mexicans like - and customized their popcorn to satisfy local tastes. While I'm here - I'll have to try the chile and lime popcorn.

Minnesota turkeys are also popular in Mexico especially the dark meat. More U.S. consumers like white meat. So the Turkey Store Company in Minnesota sells most of the white meat in the United States - and its Mexican partner sells the dark meat. I'd say that's a very efficient use of our turkeys.

This week - in both Mexico City and Guadalajara - we'll focus on developing more partnerships that benefit Minnesota and Mexico. We'll visit a corn factory in Guadalajara that processes

Minnesota corn -- and pursue a closer relationship between the University of Minnesota - and the University of Guadalajara.

It's a natural fit - because the University of Minnesota found common ground with Mexico a long time ago.

It produced Norman Borlaug - who earned the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize for his work in developing high-yielding wheat that led to the Greening of Mexico.

University faculty have worked together with Mexican researchers to improve nutrition, reduce air pollution, and reduce greenhouse gases.

Mexican students are gaining practical training in agriculture at the University of Minnesota - while Minnesota students study international food systems next year in Mexico.

The educational connection extends to a special friendship between Minnesota and Mexico children who share their love of the Monarch butterfly. Students throughout North America are enrolled in *Journey North* - an online program based in Minnesota that tracks the migration of the Monarch butterfly. These children have come to think of the Monarch as a kind of goodwill ambassador - because it travels every spring from Mexico - to Minnesota and Canada - and then back to Mexico in the fall. Each year, the students make paper butterflies attach messages of friendship - and send them back and forth on a symbolic migration.

Well, I like the Monarch too - in fact I signed legislation making it the official state butterfly. So the First Lady and I have some paper butterflies of our own to deliver to *Journey North* students tomorrow at Papalote Children's Museum.

Connections like these expand our horizons and foster understanding and friendship. As I said - we don't conduct business in a vacuum. Cenex Harvest States, a company representing 40,000 corn and soybean farmers in Minnesota, told me -- point blank -- Awe're in the relationship business. I couldn't say it better myself. And the companies I spoke to all said - Awe value our relationships in Mexico.

I hope my visit this week will help bring Mexico and the state of Minnesota even closer together. And when we leave Mexico, our work will have only just begun.

As for me, I will continue to tell anyone who will listen - even the United States Congress - that we need to open up markets around the world to Minnesota products and services. Why? It's simple:

My name is Ventura.

I'm a governor.

It's my job.

Thanks for inviting me -- Bueno Ventura! It's great to be in Mexico!