



Thank you, Susan, for that warm welcome.

It's an honor to be here - and a real privilege to be the first governor in Minnesota history to visit the Canadian Consulate - it is well overdue.

Minnesota and Canada have been friends and partners for a very long time, and it was just the right thing to do.

I've also come here to announce that I will be leading a second Business Development Mission to Canada from July 10<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup>. Last September, we accomplished a lot during my visit to Saskatoon:

- We signed major agreements on business, education and economic issues.
- And we announced a \$10 million contract extension for Minnesota-based ADC Telecommunications.

Canada is Minnesota's number one trading partner - and one visit just isn't enough. Think about it:

- Last year, Minnesota's manufactured exports to Canada grew by nearly 12 percent - to more than \$2.4 billion dollars. That's more than the total amount sold to our next three largest trading partners combined.
- Canada is also a big investor in Minnesota's economy. Nearly 20,000 Minnesotans are employed at companies at least partly owned by Canadians.
- Our strong connections reap benefits for both Minnesota and Canada - in trade, foreign investment, and in the thousands of visitors who cross our borders every day. I'm told that nearly half a million Canadians visit Minnesota each year. That makes Minnesota the 10<sup>th</sup> most popular U.S. destination for Canadian travelers.

I'd like to see if we might kick that up a notch!

As governor, I'm always looking for ways to strengthen Minnesota's position as a world competitor - and in the case of Canada, it's clear that some of our greatest opportunities lie closest to home.

So our mission in July will include visits to Toronto and Winnipeg, and will focus on three objectives:

- increasing exports
- promoting Minnesota's tourism industry
- and attracting Canadian partners and investments.
- In Toronto, we'll have the opportunity to promote Minnesota's information technology industry at the COMDEX trade show and conference.

And based on Minnesota's strong export performance last year, we'll be at the right place at the right time. Much of our growth in exports to Canada came from the sales of electronic equipment and computer components.

- We'll also encourage tour operators in both cities to develop more group tours to Minnesota. We'd like to see more of our Canadian friends.

Minnesota and Canada share more than just a border. We share common ideals, common principles and common goals. It's no wonder we do so much business with each other.

We also share Consul General Thompson - whom I'm happy to say will be joining us in Canada this July.

Susan - thanks again for the privilege of being *first*

-and thank you for everything you've done to reinforce and strengthen the relationship between Minnesota and Canada. You've been a good neighbor –

Thank you.