



Thank you, Gretchen - not just for that introduction - but for your work for my Administration during the past 2 ½ years.

As many of you know, I am losing a fine Commissioner to the private sector. Gretchen Maglich has resigned from my Cabinet, and I want to wish her well.

Gretchen, you have done an outstanding job for us. One of the things I admire most about you is your ability to be fair and impartial.

You were able to constantly walk the balancing line between labor interests and business interests, creating trust among all parties. That takes great skill and leadership and we are going to miss your level head and your common sense.

So, today, before you leave us for good, you deserve a round of applause.

Thanks for inviting me to be here with you today. It's nice to see so many new faces in Minnesota.

As you now know, Minnesota is a great place to visit. From our urban arts community, to the Mall of America, to our beautiful lakes in the North, Minnesota is a summer getaway at its finest.

I hope you've had a chance to experience what we have to offer. I encourage you to come back with your families and *stay*.

One of my favorite things about being Governor is that I get to be the ambassador of this state. I have traveled the globe talking about the great attributes of Minnesota to tourists, business leaders and heads of state.

I understand we have some Canadians, a Mexican and a Taiwanese in the audience.

I've been to your parts of the globe to promote Minnesota, and I am in the midst of planning another trade mission to China for November.

Minnesota has a lot to offer, and I want to share it with the rest of the world.

Since many of you are more interested in workforce issues than trade, let me share with you some of what we're up to in Minnesota when it comes to workforce development.

As you know, our economy has changed, not just in my state but across this country. Our system needs to change in order to keep up.

The era of high unemployment and minimal job growth is gone.

For example, in Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota we have 1,400 steel workers who have lost their jobs because one steel plant has closed.

I have met these workers, and I will put them up against any worker in the world. They are hardworking people.

A workforce development program alone isn't going to save those jobs or the town, nor will an economic development plan alone.

It is the two things WORKING TOGETHER that will make the difference.

I believe a strategy that includes BOTH elements is absolutely necessary to tackle this and the other problems we are facing in Minnesota.

It is one of the reasons why we proposed, and the Legislature adopted, a major workforce reorganization in Minnesota.

We are merging the department that does workforce development with the department that is in charge of economic development. We are going to streamline our workforce programs, and bring decisions closer to the local level.

We have done a terrific job up to this very moment, but we can't just sit back and admire it. We need to move forward.

We need to recognize that in this economy, workforce development IS economic development.

And you know what?

The state with the best, most educated workforce is going to win

and rest assured.....

Minnesota intends to win.

Thanks again.