

- Commissioner Tinklenberg said it and I've said it before - the Northstar Corridor is the fastest growing corridor in this state.
- The huge growth in population and development has resulted in a transportation infrastructure that is unable to meet current and future demands on the system. It's the same way in a lot of other major transportation corridors around the state.
- Today we're here to celebrate the launch of the first mass transit system owned and operated by the state. One that responds to the demands in this corridor and links to the existing regional system. It gives people options.
- The citizens in communities along this portion of the NorthStar Corridor, and those in further outlying communities now have a choice – and the response has been overwhelmingly positive!
- I'm especially pleased to be here today because Commissioner Tinklenberg has directed his staff to be creative, innovative and to step outside the norm – qualities I stand behind and expect from my staff.
- I applaud Mn/DOT for its leadership and commitment to exploring transportation alternatives that provide immediate transportation solutions in this corridor.
- This is what my administration is about, getting out there and getting things done.
- But work in this corridor is not done. The key to meeting Minnesota's transportation needs is a long-term, statewide and multimodal strategy. It's about "Moving Minnesota" because transportation is key to healthy and vital communities.
- I'm not only here today to show my support for the NorthStar Commuter Coach, but my commitment to this entire corridor – from Minneapolis all the way to St.Cloud/Rice. A commitment that means we're serious about commuter rail, we're serious about facilities that support transit services; we're serious about improving the movement of freight, tourist travel, access and the use of technology.
- We need all the pieces if we're truly going to address congestion and growth issues in this corridor.
- Thank you very much.