



Thank you all for agreeing to meet with me on such short notice.

I've invited you here today because Minnesota, like the rest of the country, is facing an economic crisis. I've asked you here because I need your leadership, your guidance and your support in our efforts to restore the state's economic vitality through travel and tourism.

Our confidence and our way of life were shaken by the events of September 11. The airlines were the first to feel the impact — but the effects continue to ripple through other industries — and will soon be felt in every sector and every region of the state.

We cannot — and WILL NOT — let the terrorists win.

Now, more than ever, it is important that Minnesotans take positive control of their lives, stay competitive in business, and pull together by getting together with family and friends.

Together, we need to stimulate:

- Business and in-state travel
- Hotel stays
- And consumer spending. We need to get people out to dinner, shopping at our malls and taking advantage of our art museums, theaters and entertainment spots.

I am asking for your active support in this war — because that's what this is — and you are the generals on the economic front. Where you lead, our economy will surely follow. If there are ways you can encourage your employees, clients and customers to get out — to see the sights, spend some money and travel — I want to hear about them.

My administration has been working hard since September 11 to increase travel and tourism — you will hear about some of these initiatives in a few moments from Commissioner Yanisch. But this is a job that requires the active participation of everyone — from government to consumers, and everyone in between. The tourism industry generates more than \$8 billion in sales every year — we all need to do everything we can to restore this important industry.

You won't hear much more from me this morning — because I'm here to listen to you. Before Dave Jennings starts the discussion, Commissioner Wheelock will provide an overview of our economy and impact of travel and tourism on our economy.

Again, thank you for being here today.