

Thank you.

One of my favorite things about being Governor is that I get to visit lots of interesting places and talk about Minnesota. A couple of years ago I led a trade mission to Japan and last year we went to Mexico and Canada.

In June I'll be heading to China on one of the biggest trade missions ever by any U.S. governor.

But today it's Berlin.

And it's great to be in this beautiful and historic city—even if it's for just a little while.

I'd like to thank members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany and the American German Business Club for their help in facilitating this trip.

And a special thanks to Philip Haleen—Minnesota's honorary trade representative here in Germany—who worked especially hard make my visit possible.

When you think about it—it's kind of ironic that I'm here at all.

Four years ago, the political “experts” weren't giving me much of a chance to be elected Governor of Minnesota.

But we shocked the world.

And now, after three years in a job I was never supposed to have, there are plenty of media and academic “elites” who still can't stand the fact that I was elected Governor.

But that's their problem.

I just love driving them all crazy.

First they said I couldn't govern. But after three years, and over \$4.8 billion dollars in tax rebates and tax cuts, they are having a hard time making that stick.

Of course, what really drives them crazy is that I don't make decisions based on politics. I make decisions based on good public policy. And if in the process it costs me an election, well, I'll just go back to the private sector.

What I have learned over the past three years is that most politicians are more interested in self service rather than public service.

Just last month our state legislature passed a plan to fix a recession-induced budget deficit. They ignored my advice to use sound financial management practices to secure structural balance and preserve our credit rating into the future.

Their plan simply put a band aid on the budget by using up all the state's reserve funds—which will “fix” things just long enough to get the politicians through the next election.

Is that responsible leadership? I don't think so.

They were too busy thinking about the campaign trail to worry about doing the right thing. And that's a shame.

In fact, that's why I decided to run in 1998. I believed then – as I believe now – that the people deserve accountable, responsible and limited government.

I felt so strongly about it I put it in writing.

(Hold up Beliefs and Principles pocket folder)

These are my Beliefs and Budget Principles. You've each got one inside your folder—right behind the business card.

Every agency head and manager in my administration has one. Open it up and turn it around. There it is at the top of the list: Accountable, Responsive and Limited Government.

On the other side are my “Budget Principles”. Sound, practical reminders: Be fiscally conservative and prudent. Never forget it's the people's money. Elected officials ought to do what's necessary – not necessarily what's nice.

I ran for governor in 1998 against a well-financed Democrat with the most famous political name in Minnesota—and an even better financed Republican.

I may have been well known in the wrestling ring – but not in the political ring—even though I had served as the Mayor of the fourth largest city in Minnesota.

In fact, it always irritated me when the media would refer to one opponent as *Attorney General* Hubert H. Humphrey, III and the other opponent as *Mayor* Norm Coleman. But when they referred to me—even though I was a former Mayor—It was always *former wrestler* Jesse Ventura.

But we all know the important thing in politics is money. The other guys had it. I didn't.

I ran my campaign on a shoestring—because I refused to take money from special interest groups.

And I knew I could never be the kind of politician my father talked about when I was growing up. He said all politicians must be dishonest—because they spend a million dollars to get elected to a job that pays one hundred thousand.

Well, I know my father would be proud of me because I spent less money to get elected than I will be paid over the four years of my term.

We shocked the world – and we did it without so much as a penny from special interests.

I won that election because I said I would make my own decisions.

See—no strings attached.

And since the election, I listened to the people who elected me and I have not changed.

I hired good people who are experts in their fields and then followed the advice of one of America’s greatest presidents. Theodore Roosevelt once said:

“The best executive is the one who has enough sense to pick good people to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.”

That has been my philosophy, and I believe it has served me, and the people, well.

As my commissioners went to work I asked them to work hard at:

- Bringing government back to the people.
- Celebrating citizen involvement.
- Listening to the people.
- Encouraging public service.
- Engaging real citizens in a real dialogue about real policy issues.

These beliefs and principles formed the foundation—the doctrine—of my administration.

From these core principles, we began to develop a strategic vision for Minnesota that centered around four key priorities:

- Healthy, Vital Communities
- Self Sufficient People
- Service, Not Systems and
- Minnesota: World Competitor

We call these priorities – and the 29 initiatives that support them – the *Big Plan*.

So now we had a road map. But a road map doesn't do you a bit of good if you don't chart your progress along the way.

And I demand results.

We've measured those results and posted them on my web site. And we update them regularly so that Minnesotans can see for themselves how we're doing.

Now personally, I'm not a computer wizard, but I sure know the value of the internet.

The Internet brings us closer together – whether we live in Minnesota or Berlin – and reinforces the fact that we live in a global community.

That is why I am here. To talk to one of Minnesota's real cultural and economic friends about tourism and the value that travel and tourism can bring to our economies.

At home I'm known as Jesse "The Tourism Governor" Ventura. And I'm here to invite all of you to come visit us in beautiful Minnesota.

More than 30,000 Germans visited Minnesota last year, and I think we can do better.

Travel & tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world today and is one way to cultivate and maintain good relations among all the people of the world.

Minnesota and Germany have enjoyed a good long friendship; and I hope we can sustain that for a long time to come.

You might not be aware that waves of German immigrants brought their culture, work ethic, ingenuity and dreams to Minnesota more than a century ago. In fact, today more than two million Minnesotans—including myself—claim German ancestry.

That's almost half the people in Minnesota.

Cities all over Minnesota celebrate Oktoberfest—and I don't have to tell you how much fun that can be.

To top it off, at least four Minnesota cities have sister city relationships with German cities, including:

- St. Paul and Neuss (NOICE)
- New Ulm and Ulm
- Redwood Falls and Nuesass (NOY-SASS)
- and Hibbing and Waldsode (VALD-SODA)

So it's no surprise that Minnesota and Germany do a lot of business together. Germany is one of our state's most important trading partners.

Over the past six years, Germany has:

- Bought more than \$3 billion worth of Minnesota's manufactured goods.
- Consistently ranked as our state's third, fourth or fifth largest trading overall partner.
- Accounted for 5 to 6 percent of our total export trade.

Last year, Minnesota's manufactured exports to Germany totaled more than half a billion dollars. That's an increase of 7 percent over 2000 – more than double the growth rate of U.S. exports to Germany.

I'm not the only one who sees Germany's importance to Minnesota. Hundreds of companies see it. And thousands of Minnesota workers know it, because one in eight manufacturing jobs in our state depends on exports.

About 550 Minnesota companies have operations here. Companies like: Ecolab, 3M, ADC Telecommunications, H.B. Fuller, Honeywell, Medtronic, Lawson Software, Tennant, Toro and the St. Paul Companies.

For these companies and many others, Germany is the gateway to trade in the European Union.

- For example, a medical device company called Nonin (NAH-NIN) in Plymouth, Minnesota does business in more than 90 different countries – but they recently told us that their success in Europe depends on Germany above all others.
- NewLeaf Designs, a Minnesota food storage and handling company, has decided it's time to expand their international presence. Where? They told us their next big opportunity is right here in Germany.

I like telling these stories – because the way I see it, part of my job is to be Minnesota's chief traveling salesman. And since I'm known for having a fairly strong competitive streak, it's a talent I've put to good use.

Let me tell you a few important things about my state.

- Minnesota has been one of the world's leaders in technology and innovation ever since a University of Minnesota graduate by the name of Seymour Cray developed the supercomputer more than 50 years ago.
- Today, we have nearly 8,000 high tech industries employing 200 thousand people. Our state boasts the fourth-largest concentration of software companies in the United States and our industry attracts the world's best technical talent.

Germany is a major market for medical and scientific instruments. And it just so happens that Minnesota is a world leader in medical devices, research and biotechnology. In fact, we're not just on the cutting edge; we practically invented it.

- We invented the blood pump, the cardiac pacemaker, the anesthesia monitor, and we pioneered the mechanical heart valve design.
- We performed the first open-heart surgery, the first successful bone-marrow transplant, led the way with other organ transplants, and were the first to use artificial blood in a patient.
- And we're home to the Mayo Clinic, one of the world's premier treatment and research hospitals.

When you consider all that, no one should be surprised to learn that Germany is Minnesota's second-largest market for medical instruments.

Maintaining and increasing exports is important to us, but so is Germany's direct investment of capital and ingenuity in Minnesota.

German entities own at least 10 percent of more than 100 Minnesota companies and thousands of Minnesotans are cashing paychecks because of that investment.

And our German employers are some of our best employers.

Allianz Life Insurance of North America is a prime example. This German company plays a significant role in the lives of its 1,600 Minnesota employees and in the economic vitality of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area.

And last year Allianz opened a new \$80 million dollar North American headquarters building in Minnesota.

We'd like to see even more German investment like that in Minnesota. And we can offer far more than gratitude in return.

When it comes to education, motivation, and innovation, Minnesota's workforce is unmatched.

- Minnesota ranks third in high school graduation and sixth in college graduation in the United States.
- We have the nation's highest proportion of people in the workforce and the lowest rate of absenteeism.
- We consistently rank among the three healthiest states in the nation, and we rank number one in life expectancy.

Our Twin Cities metropolitan area has one of the highest concentrations of high-tech workers in the nation. And we are home to several large, well-known companies, including 16 Fortune 500 headquarters.

Our location near the center of the United States is ideal for shipping and ensures we have easy and efficient access to most global markets.

We top all other states in future development capacity and in providing opportunities for employment, income and an improving quality of life. And we generally rank among the nation's top 10 states for major corporate expansions.

One of the characteristics of Minnesotans is that we tend toward understatement. Our highest form of praise is that something's "pretty good" or "not bad."

I hope I've convinced all of you that Minnesota's a "pretty good" place to visit, and "not bad" to live, work and do business in.

Actually, we can let others do the boasting. An independent research company has named Minnesota the "Most Livable State" in the country – for five years in a row!

No doubt – I consider myself very lucky to be able to serve as governor of the great state of Minnesota. I took an unconventional route—from Navy SEAL, to professional wrestler, to actor, to radio talk show host—and it's been a wonderful ride.

When I decided to run for political office, almost no one took me seriously. I wasn't supposed to be elected Mayor of Brooklyn Park. But I won. And I wasn't supposed to be elected governor either.

I am proud that I did it, but I am even more proud that I did it with the same values that my Mom and Dad raised me to believe in.

Those values are simple: Tell the truth, be fair to people and never quit.

Thank you very much.