

A full text of Governor Dayton's remarks, as prepared for delivery:

**Governor Mark Dayton
Inaugural Remarks
As prepared for delivery**

Let's Get Minnesota Working Again ... By Working Together

Thank you, Chief Justice Gildea.

Vice President Mondale; our excellent Lt. Governor, Yvonne Prettner Solon, and other distinguished guests; my wonderful sons, Eric and Andrew, and family; my friends; my fellow Minnesotans.

I am honored, humbled, and grateful to stand before you as Minnesota's 40th Governor.

I especially want to thank my fellow citizens, who voted for me, and placed your trust in me. I will do my very best to serve you well.

To those who voted for my two worthy competitors, I will do my very best to also serve you well.

I believe we all share the same aspiration -- for "a Better Minnesota" -- for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren. We may disagree on the details. May we never forget, however, that our honest disagreements and our freedom to express them are the essential rights and great strengths of our democracy.

Yet what a difference a decade makes. Ten years ago today, I was sworn into office in the United States Senate. Back then our country was on top of the world and on course to stay there. Tragically, two massive federal tax cuts, two lengthy wars, and two devastating recessions have damaged our pre-eminence and our prosperity.

Here in Minnesota, two state tax cuts, two wars, and two recessions later, we stagger from one huge deficit to the next. 208,000 Minnesotans are out of work. And a state which used to lead most others in economic growth has fallen toward the bottom.

The past decade has left our country, our state, and many of our citizens worse off than before, with lower standards of living, larger debts and deficits, and less assured of future success.

The stakes now are high. This coming decade will determine whether we suffer the historical declines of previous superpowers, or write a new chapter for future historians. If anyone can do it, we can. And we must.

Previous generations of Minnesotans and other Americans faced graver dangers, under worse conditions, with fewer resources, than we do today. They summoned their collective knowledge, courage, and resolve. They persevered. And they prevailed. By working together.

They won their independence. They preserved our nation. They overcame the Great Depression. They worked their way to the top. By working together.

Now it's our turn, our challenge, and our responsibility. Now is the time for us to summon our best, to be our best, to do our best.

To all Minnesotans, I say: Let's get Minnesota working again...by working together. That is what we are called upon to do - for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren.

To the 201 Minnesota legislators, who will take office tomorrow, I say: Let's get Minnesota working again...by working together. That is what we were elected to do.

We were all elected by just a fraction of Minnesotans; but our responsibility now is to serve all Minnesotans. If we serve only the people who voted for us, we guarantee destructive division, and we risk paralyzing gridlock. We must do better than that. The people of Minnesota expect better from us than that. Their futures depend upon us being better than that.

I have three top priorities, and I ask all of you to work with me cooperatively and constructively to achieve them.

1. To bring more jobs to Minnesota.
2. To balance the State Budget fairly.
3. To improve government services.

My top priority is to get Minnesotans working again. The 208,000 who are unemployed. The thousands more who are underemployed, stuck in low-paying dead-end jobs. Whose economic security is shattered. Whose hope for a better future is threatened.

Their futures are also our futures. As our great United States Senator Paul Wellstone said, "We all do better, when we all do better."

To all do better means we all must find common ground in our shared desire for a Better Minnesota. In our shared love for our state. In our shared appreciation for all it has given to each of us. Now, the future of Minnesota depends on us - on all of us working together.

To Minnesota's business owners and executives, working men and women, farmers, and civic leaders, I say: Let's get Minnesota working...together. We can't succeed without you. You can't succeed without one another.

As we work together to put Minnesota back to work, we have many advantages: talented, hard-working, productive people; strong companies; innovative small businesses; good schools, colleges and universities; valuable natural resources; and a priceless quality of life.

Let us recognize all that is good about Minnesota and make it better ... by working together.

My second, urgent priority is to clean up the state's financial mess, a responsibility I will share with the new Legislature and, ultimately, with all of you. Some people think eliminating a \$6.2 billion deficit, almost 20% of expected revenues, will be simple and easy. I don't. As my friend and former colleague, Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, likes to say, "For every complex problem, there's almost always a simple solution. And it's almost always wrong."

My proposed budget solution will be reasonable, balanced - and painful - because I see no easy alternative. I will insist that any final solution make Minnesota's overall tax burden more progressive, not more regressive. I respect that no one likes paying taxes, and almost everyone would like to pay less. Which is why it's essential that everyone paying taxes knows everyone else is paying their fair share. And also knows that I will do everything possible to assure those hard-earned dollars are spent only to provide the best possible public services - for a better Minnesota.

To those who sincerely believe the state budget can be balanced with no tax increase - including no forced property tax increase - I say, if you can do so without destroying our schools, hospitals, and public safety, please send me your bill, so I can sign it immediately.

Otherwise, let's begin tomorrow, and in May conclude, this challenging, complicated, and essential process, by working together. And let's always remember that working together requires responsible cooperation and reasonable compromise, as well as sharing the best ideas we have.

Third, we must improve the services we provide our citizens, starting with education innovation, and including more affordable health care, better natural resource protection, streamlined business regulation, improved transportation, and greater cost-efficiencies throughout government.

While everything is important, education is first and foremost. Nothing is more essential to our state's success than providing all our students with the world's best education. Yet nothing has divided educators, policy-makers, and parents more in recent years than how best to provide it - and how adequately to fund it.

Meanwhile, we're failing our students - and thus failing our future. Overcrowded classrooms, like the 36 children in a fifth-grade classroom in Rochester. Four day school weeks, as in Warroad, forcing children to stay at home alone while their parents are working. Unaffordable college tuitions, leaving the single mother in Marshall with a Masters degree, \$100,000 in debt, and no job.

Better education for everyone is essential to getting Minnesota working again ... and to keep Minnesotans working in the future. To give everyone the skills necessary to succeed in an ever more competitive global economy. Doing so must be everyone's shared responsibility.

That is why I am asking every business in Minnesota to adopt a school. And contribute to its improvement. To visit the school and see its realities. To meet with teachers, students, and administrators and find out what they need to improve their school - now your school. A little

money, a lot of help, technical expertise, remedial reading volunteers, adult mentors, new books, used computers. Make that school's progress your shared responsibility.

Other areas of health and human services also need our help. To all Minnesotans, I ask you to remember the words of the Roman philosopher-leader Cicero that in a democracy, the most important office is that of citizen. I ask you to remember that our state's success is also your responsibility. I invite you to get involved in the betterment of your communities.

I ask every adult Minnesotan, who is physically able, to volunteer a part of one day, every month, at a school, hospital, or social service agency, as I did this morning at the Wellstone Elementary School and will continue to do as Governor and thereafter. Whatever you can do to help, whomever you choose to help: whether the young, the old, the sick, or the disabled, you're helping to get Minnesota working again... by helping one another.

In conclusion, let me note that Saturday was the first day of the second decade of the third millennium AD. What we do during the next four years will affect everyone who follows us, who will inherit their Minnesota from us. Their futures and ours are intertwined, and they are our responsibility.

All of us want - and need - a state that works better than today. One, in which everyone has a good, well-paying job, with affordable health care and secure retirement benefits. Where the world's most innovative companies employ the world's best-educated people to produce life-enhancing goods and services. Where strong economic growth and sound environmental protection are both honored and assured.

Our children and grandchildren, and their children and grandchildren, will inherit a state where people from all over the world, now live here ... together. How well they can work together then, will depend on how well we work together now. How well we accept, respect, and even come to appreciate our many differences. How soon we realize that those differences are among our greatest strengths, integrate them, and put them to work for all of us.

They will be born and raised in a state where their well-being will depend on how well we take care of our youngest citizens. Their values will depend on how well we take care of our oldest and sickest citizens. Their success will depend on how well we rebuild our infrastructure, protect our environment, and create new economic opportunities for them and their fellow Minnesotans.

Their better future begins with us. So does ours. A better Minnesota for all of us depends on all of us.

So, let us dedicate ourselves to rebuilding a successful state, one that again is the envy of the nation, a leader of the world. Let it be written that we were Minnesotans who led the way to something better than before, who created something greater than ourselves, who achieved together what none of us could have accomplished on our own.

By working together. Starting now.