

76-1332



GOVERNOR RUDY PERPICH

The State Of The State TRANSCRIPT

A Message To The 70th Session Of The Minnesota State Legislature And The Citizens Of Minnesota

This document is made available electronically by the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library as part of an ongoing digital archiving project. <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/lrl.asp>

January 5, 1977

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
STATE OF MINNESOTA

J
87
M62
1977
Ja. 5
c. 2

634.4
12710

STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

GOVERNOR RUDY PERPICH

JANUARY 5, 1977

Mr. Chief Justice, Members of the Court, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the 70th Session of the Minnesota Legislature, fellow constitutional officers, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens:

This is the beginning of my eighth full day as Governor of Minnesota. It's my first opportunity to appear before you.

Some of you have been my friends and colleagues in Minnesota state government for as long as fourteen years.

You have shared the burden--and satisfaction--of making this the most progressive and successful state in the union.

To those of you who are here for the first time, as new members of this outstanding Legislative body, I say "Welcome".

To the veteran Legislators in this Assembly, and to your leaders, I say "Well done".

This is the hardest working, most productive Legislature in the nation. And in terms of records of accomplishments, it is one of the most underpaid.

As one with a deep interest in Minnesota history, I can tell you today that we have never had a Governor who has accomplished more than Wendell Anderson.

And we never had a Legislature that made as big a mark on the life of Minnesota people as you have made in the past four years.

It is now our challenge to continue that remarkable record.

I'm not here today to lay out a detailed Legislative program or budget. We will be back in this Chamber in twenty days to begin that task. Today I simply want to tell you how I feel about Minnesota, our government, and our people.

This nation has just ended its Bicentennial year. It is not a conclusion, it is just a beginning.

In this first year of America's third century, it is time to look ahead to what the future holds for the people of our state. I know our people and I am optimistic.

As Minnesota's chairman of the Bicentennial, I have traveled to more Minnesota communities and met more Minnesota citizens than any other elected official in our 119-year history. They have taught me the meaning of the Minnesota spirit.

The people of this state are an inexhaustible resource of faith and optimism, pride and high expectations. They try hard. They work hard. They look forward to better lives for themselves, their children, and to those who haven't been so fortunate.

Our people are committed to education and to opportunity. They believe you can succeed if you work at it.

They know Minnesota is not perfect. But they think we do better than just about anybody else. They are proud of the Minnesota effort to build and maintain a high quality of life. They support the Minnesota partnership for progress--with personal effort and the hard cash of their tax dollars. And they expect their leaders to live up to their promises and live up to their ability. We can do that and now is the time to begin.

Minnesota is just emerging from a damaging national recession. Our economy has done better than the nation's. Our unemployment is far below the national average. Our state budget is balanced. And our state credit is good.

But too many Minnesota workers still do not have jobs. And a savage, unrelenting drought has struck a tragic blow to farm families, the communities, and our vital farm economy.

Raging forest fires have severely damaged our important timber, resort and outdoor recreational industries.

The most important thing we have to do this year is to put people back to work. And we can do that.

First, through an even stronger state housing effort, to create productive jobs for construction workers and help people find decent places to live.

Second, through the Governor's Task Force on drought aid we established last week, to bring state and federal resources to bear on the immediate problems of our farmers.

Third, through using special resources to provide temporary work for farm families and others in need of help.

Today I am announcing a special \$2 million work program for hard-pressed farm families in our worst drought areas. We will use federal funds from the 1976 Public Works Employment Act. We will offer public service jobs for up to 15 weeks at prevailing wages. The Governor's Manpower Office and the State Department of Agriculture will put this program into operation this week.

These are not state government jobs. They will not affect our state budget. But they are a responsible and productive way to make use of federal help.

These temporary jobs will help our farm area families who are suffering the most. They will help farmers through the winter to spring planting time. And that is what we must do.

Fourth, we can, and must, do much more to develop good economic information and sound economic planning in Minnesota. In the long run, that is how we can insure permanent jobs and stable economic growth.

We can do better. And I will ask the Minnesota State Planning Agency to see that we do.

Fifth, our state is already a research and development center for electronics, computer technology and agriculture. Expanding our knowledge has meant expanded job opportunities. As one example, the University of Minnesota developed a way to use low-grade ore, revitalized the mining industry and created thousands of jobs.

The main emphasis of my message today is jobs. But we can also do better in health.

The state is blessed with many of the best health care resources in the nation.

We have excellent professional training. We work hard to improve the environment in which our people live. And we have superior health facilities.

But we are missing some great opportunities. Health care costs are too high. We don't put enough emphasis on illness prevention, on physical fitness or active recreation. We should do more in making progress against serious and crippling diseases.

We have made many important state commitments in the past six years. This year we need to dedicate a portion of our human and financial resources to finding some of the answers to better health care for more people.

Every dollar of our investment will bring five, six or seven additional dollars of federal, private and foundation funds. I believe we can keep such a commitment, and I hope you will help me do it.

Minnesota's environmental quality and energy crisis also demands our serious attention.

The Dakota Indians named the state Minnesota--"Minne" for water and "Sota" for white.

The Indians understood the environment, lived it and loved it.

Perhaps the most tragic story of all in our decades of environmental exploitation is the story of how we destroyed the land, the independence, and the way of life of American Indians who preceded us by centuries on this land.

This administration will give special emphasis to improving state services for Indians. My recommendations will be included in the state budget.

Jobs are a major concern for all of us. And there is no need to abuse the environment to protect jobs. In fact, Minnesota history shows that the destruction of our natural resources means the destruction of industries that put people to work.

Our first major industry in what we now call Minnesota was furs. There were more than 150 fur outposts in Minnesota.

In that era, our leaders thought there was no end ever to the fur-bearing animals. They would continue to multiply no matter how many pelts were taken.

Wars were fought over the fur industry. This area, in fact, was colonized because of its fur-bearing animals.

There was no thought of tomorrow, and so those animals were destroyed and, in fact, they're just starting to come back.

Less than a century ago, miles and miles of white pine stretched all the way from southeastern Minnesota to the Canadian border. Thousands were employed as mill hands and lumberjacks in a great timber industry.

Our leaders in the 1880's were convinced there was no end to the white pine industry in Minnesota.

And most of those early lumberjacks were farmers. They harvested crops in the fall, trees in the winter.

Farmers planted crops, but nobody planted trees. Government could have required that one section be replanted as soon as cutting started on another. If that had been the law, we might still have a white pine industry in Minnesota, and majestic white pine trees today.

But no one made them do it. And 67 billion board feet of lumber left Minnesota. So did a major industry, and the jobs that went with it.

Commerical fishing is the same story. That industry in Minnesota, for all practical purposes, is gone--because nobody thought ahead.

When the fish are gone, the jobs are gone. When the trees are gone, the jobs are gone. And when the fur-bearing animals are gone, the jobs are gone.

Minnesota's natural iron ore took 1.5 billion years to form. In one person's lifetime--75 years--we mined all the natural ore in Minnesota. Nothing was done to preserve the environment in Northern Minnesota.

Minnesota's natural ore mines employed many more people than we have working now in the taconite industry. When the natural ore was gone, the jobs were gone.

If we had just had Legislative mine-land reclamation, there would be more jobs in Minnesota--jobs that restore and enhance our environment. Those jobs could be with us today.

Only one state in the union has done less in mine-land reclamation than Minnesota. This administration intends to improve our standing dramatically.

Today we are witnessing the destruction of another magnificent resource--Lake Superior. For thousands of years the lake was pure. And in less than 20 years we befouled it. It will take 500 to 1,000 years before the asbestiform fibers settle out of the water.

It saddens me to think that 30 years ago we didn't heed the warning of one individual, now a Legislator, who spoke out in opposition to granting a permit to Reserve Mining allowing them to dump taconite tailings into Lake Superior. At this time, I want to publicly recognize that individual, representative Willard Munger of Duluth.

And we still have not found a way to stop Reserve Mining from dumping into that lake and preserve the jobs of 3,000 Minnesota human beings at the same time. We must do that and we will together during this Legislative session.

Lately we have started to do better. And we've been fortunate. We've had a second chance to turn environmental exploitation into environmental, social and economic efforts to develop these great resources. I'm proud of those efforts and I will continue to support them.

We are also facing the terrible effects of drought on our water resources. And they must be preserved and perpetuated.

The first step is to find out what we really have. We must finish the public water inventory of surface waters now underway. And we must start as soon as possible to make a comprehensive inventory of our underground water.

The record has improved in recent years. But most important, our attitude is better. We are trying harder to keep what we have left.

We must also try much harder to preserve what we have left of our national energy resources. That means we must stop wasting energy. Except for peat, Minnesota has no natural energy resources at all.

Energy conservation must become a major state goal, not because it is the proper thing to do, but because it's the only sane thing to do. Our quality of life depends on it.

We have some of the nation's pioneer energy conservation measures but they are not enough. This year I will ask the Legislature to approve the farthest-reaching and most comprehensive energy conservation program ever considered by any state.

It won't be an easy program to pass. It will affect a great many people. It will require some difficult changes for all of us. But there is no alternative--except disaster.

My proposals will include a state government energy conservation program to cut out energy use by 10 percent. It will require consideration of alternative energy in any new state buildings.

Conservation can do more than save energy. It can give us the time to develop alternative energy sources.

We must support plans to bring Alaska's oil and natural gas to Minnesota. We must also support the proposed coal use study of Minnesota's Environmental Quality Council.

And I pledge to you today that I will do everything I can to continue the Anderson Administration's effort to bring a new National Solar Energy Institute to Minnesota.

We have an opportunity to become a model state in energy conservation and research. I can't imagine a more important goal.

But whatever we do to conserve energy, we are still going to need more of the electrical power it provides.

Because of your good work, we now have state laws that regulate the siting of power plants or power lines in the state. But some of our citizens think they are unfair.

You already have Governor Anderson's recommendation before you.

And I want to announce today that Speaker Martin Sabo and Majority Leader Nicholas Coleman, Senator Gerald Willet and Representative Willard Munger have agreed to hold joint hearings on power line sitings within the next two weeks. They will be held in the area affected by the UPA-CPA line. Lieutenant Governor Alec Olson will represent me at those meetings and will give the power line conflict priority attention.

We will need more electrical power in Minnesota. We must be sure that we get it the right way.

Our energy and environmental needs require a new commitment of government, industry and the people of Minnesota to form a partnership for the future.

In the long run, our high quality of life depends on our ability to keep a healthy environment, healthy people and a healthy economy.

To do that, we must also have a healthy relationship with the federal government in Washington.

That's why I have assigned Lieutenant Governor Alec Olson to improve state-federal cooperation and coordination.

Vice President Mondale comes from this state. We have two strong senators and real Minnesota leadership in the United States House of Representatives.

They can help us and I know they will, not only to bring more federal dollars to Minnesota, but also to help cities and counties and school districts keep doing a good job for our people.

We can speak for all Minnesota government, state and local, and that is what I'm asking Lieutenant Governor Alec Olson to do.

The state of Minnesota does a good job for its people. We have identified and assisted those with special needs. We have developed many programs and improved many others. We have invested heavily in opportunity for our people.

We have tried to make state and local government work well and give our people more equal services through fair taxes and fair funding. We have also improved our management of state funds and state budgets. We have been able to do our work and serve our people without increasing any major state taxes during the past two Legislative sessions.

I hope we will not increase taxes in this session either. We will have enough revenue to keep our state budget balanced for the next two years and that makes us more fortunate than many other states. But there will be no extra money.

The resources provided by our taxpayers are precious. They come from people who work hard for a living. We already ask more from them than most states do.

It is time for us to enter a new era in Minnesota state government. The time is coming when Governors and Legislators will no longer be judged on the number of their new proposals or their success in passing them. Instead, the test will be our wisdom and skill in making present laws work well for our people.

There will continue to be a need for some new laws and for refinement of the laws we have.

But our highest priorities should be management, responsiveness, cooperation instead of competition--the best possible service at the lowest possible cost.

We must pay as much attention to the quality of our stewardship as we do to the nobility of our purpose. That is what our people want and that is what they deserve from us.

For my part, I do not intend to make promises that we cannot fulfill.

We already have excellent state government leadership, thanks to Governor Anderson, the LEAP Program and this Legislature.

Our financial stability has earned this state government a triple A credit rating, the highest there is.

Because of administrative and organizational reforms, we have better tools than ever before. Now, together, is the time to use those tools.

We do not need more state employees. We do need to get full value for every dollar we spend.

And all of us meet today to celebrate the Minnesota spirit-- that people are the strength and purpose of government.

As I see it, I have three tasks before me:

1. To run the Executive Branch honestly, efficiently, openly and compassionately.
2. To cooperate with you, the Legislature, in making sound policy and carrying it out well.
3. Above all, to listen to and talk with, the people.

As I try to do that, my goal will be a government that works hard for people and not for self-preservation. My goal will be a government that responds more imaginatively to the needs and the rights of the people of Minnesota.

The number of women and minority citizens in positions of responsibility is insignificant compared with their contributions to society. I pledge to bring more minorities and women into major policy positions in state government.

I will also work for more participation and involvement of the people who give us their resources and our strengths. Many people have volunteered to help and I know that they can help. They have much to show us and we have much to show the nation by making good use of them. I am determined to do that.

I'm also determined to give individual Minnesota citizens the information and help they need from our state agencies.

This state has pioneered open meetings, but real openness means being willing and prepared to answer the questions of citizens with great respect and greater speed. It also means listening to complaints and suggestions and taking recommendations seriously.

The openness of government to the public is the key to responsive, compassionate and truly effective government.

I approach my new tasks with great enthusiasm for what has been accomplished, and great excitement for what still remains to be done.

I promise today to work untiringly with you to fulfill our Minnesota spirit. I've worked in this building for a long time and know most of you well. My office and my staff will help you in any way we can.

But I also need your help. I ask for it and I welcome it. And we can all succeed if we work together and live by the words described in a plaque that was presented to me by a center for handicapped people. The plaque reads: "None of us is as smart as all of us."

We have been blessed by the land of this state. Our resources have given us productive farms and forests, mines and other industries.

But our state has not been made great just because of those resources. It is our people who have made those resources productive--farmers and forest managers, miners and factory workers, good business people, good Legislators and good public officials.

The real resource of this successful society is our people and the Minnesota spirit they have produced.

Have a good session.

Thank you very much.