

GO, STALLIONS!

This is a winning high school. Your athletic and academic teams work hard...and the award cases are full to prove it. Your test scores are among the highest in reading and math, which means that every student is working hard so the whole school is successful.

IT'S GREAT TO BE HERE. GIVE YOURSELF A BIG HAND FOR BEING EXCELLENT.

I'm working very hard to be an excellent Governor.

- I care very deeply about learning...not just for you, but also for me. We're never done learning.
- When I got elected, I had to get a \$23 BILLION budget done by Christmas. And I turned it in to the Legislature three weeks early! How many of you get your term papers done three weeks early? The point is that you can do anything you set your mind to doing.
- I'm still learning, every day. I LOVE THIS JOB.

THIS MORNING, I WENT TO SCHOOL AT THE MINNESOTA HISTORY CENTER.

How many of you have had a history class?

How many of you buy the idea that those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat the bad mistakes of the past?
WELL, I DO! AND I'M NOT GOING TO!

This morning, former Governor Al Quie and Senator Roger Moe and a number of other people who worked in State Government nearly 20 years ago got together for a history lesson.

- They promised big tax cuts to the people.
- They promised new money to schools.
- And then the economy took a turn for the worse.

My generation's entire adult life was spent trying to turn around some situations that were caused back then.

How many of you shell out sales tax for a can of pop? Well, that's just one of the new taxes that was put in place way back then to help the state make ends meet.

I stand here today, in this beautiful school, full of great teachers and you successful students, and I tell you this:

I will not put your future in jeopardy.

I will not make your generation go down the same road.

Do you think this is a good decision?

I came into the job of being Governor pretty good at saying one simple word that is very hard for politicians to say: "NO!"

It's not very popular, but it's honest.

Your generation is too smart to get bought into a bunch of slick promises. So I'm not going to make any.

I want to leave this job with the state in better shape than when I took office.

Governor Carlson, who served eight years before me, worked very hard to get our state the equivalent of a straight "A" report card from the big-shot Wall Street companies in New York. It wasn't easy because our state's checkbook was in terrible shape.

How many of you have a checkbook? Anybody here have \$23 billion in theirs? Probably not!

But the "rules" are the same, whether you have \$50 or \$23 billion:

1. You have to keep it balanced – you can't spend more than you take in. You'd be surprised at how much trouble I'm having explaining this very basic thing to legislators who want to argue about the importance of this.
2. If you don't keep things balanced, you lose your credit rating. And that means no new car ... or no new roads to drive it on.
3. And finally, you need to know the difference between one-time money (like birthday money you can buy a new pair of jeans with) and on-going money (like paychecks from a job you can buy a car with).

How many of you would run out and buy a new car that you need to make \$300 a month payments on with a one-time gift from your Dad of \$100? Pretty stupid unless you have a good job that will keep gas in the tank and keep those payments made.

Well, that's the problem I'm up against right now with this huge, one-time tobacco settlement.

There are some people – like Senator Roger Moe – who shares my vision that we ought to set all that tobacco lawsuit money aside and make sure that YOUR generation lives healthier than our generation did. That money should make your life better – through health research, by providing education for doctors, and by setting up a foundation to help families who are in trouble get back on their feet.

There are others who want to take that one-time money and spend it. They want to give it back in tax cuts of one kind or another ... but the problem is that once the money's gone, the obligation keeps going. Just like a car payment.

Let me ask you – because you're all smart, and the future is yours.

Clap your hands if you think that the one-time tobacco money should be invested for your future!

Ladies and gentlemen...decisions like these are really in YOUR hands.

As you get to be voting age, I want you to take that responsibility very seriously. 70% goal in every election!

When you get to be 21, think very seriously about taking your turn as an elected official. I was a mayor, and now I'm the Governor. If I can do this...so can you.

I believe that there is nothing more important than getting you young people involved and keeping you involved.

There are so many decisions that we are making every day in St. Paul that affect your lives. Government is truly very exciting.

How many of you have a hemp necklace? Or a hemp t-shirt?

Have you ever thought about the fact that one day in the near future, if Minnesota passes a law this year to allow farmers to raise hemp, that we might be making paper out of hemp pulp instead of trees?

How many of you pay license tabs for your cars?

Does it hurt a little to write out that check? Wait until you buy your dream car and get nailed. And your neighbors over there in Wisconsin are paying \$35 while you're paying \$700! Unless we get the law changed this year.

How many of you drive to the Cities and hate getting jammed in traffic?

This is as good as it's going to get. We need transit and we need it NOW. I'm proposing Minnesota's first light rail track to get started, along with a total transportation plan. That way, when your generation is ready to take over, things will be moving along just fine...not stopped in its tracks.

That's the message I want to leave you with today.

I think about you young Minnesotans every day.

My dream for you is of inheriting a state that is in great shape.

Working real hard, together, we will not fail!