

THANK YOU, CHUCK (THOMPSON), FOR THAT KIND INTRODUCTION AND FOR DOING SUCH AN OUTSTANDING JOB LEADING THE STATE OF WISCONSIN INTO THE 21ST CENTURY WITH A SOUND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO RECOGNIZE SEVERAL OTHERS WHO HAVE DONE A GREAT DEAL OF WORK BEHIND THE SCENES TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE HIGHWAY 53 ROAD PROJECT:

- **CONGRESSMAN DAVE OBEY**
- **SENATOR BOB JAUCH**
- **REPRESENTATIVES FRANK BOYLE AND MARY HUBLER**
- **AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID MINOR**

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, I'D LIKE TO THANK THE MANY CONTRACTORS AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS WHO LABORED LONG AND HARD TO ENSURE THE FINAL PIECE OF THIS VITAL LINK OF ROADWAY WAS COMPLETED ON BUDGET AND *AHEAD* OF SCHEDULE.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT'S WITH GREAT PRIDE I
ANNOUNCE TO YOU TODAY...HIGHWAY 53 IS
COMPLETELY OPEN FOR BUSINESS.**

**IT WAS EXACTLY 13 YEARS AGO I TRAVELED TO
SUPERIOR, DROVE A GOLDEN STAKE IN THE
GROUND AND MADE A PROMISE TO YOU THAT WE
WOULD BUILD A NEW HIGHWAY 53. THE GOLDEN
STRIPE ON THE ROADWAY WHERE WE'LL BE
CUTTING THE RIBBON, SYMBOLIZES THAT I HAVE
KEPT MY WORD.**

**TODAY, WE CELEBRATE THE COMPLETION OF A
PROJECT THAT HAS BEEN YEARS IN THE MAKING.
WHAT WAS A MISSING LINK OF HIGHWAY 53, WILL
NOW SERVE AS THE VITAL LINK BETWEEN
SUPERIOR, EAU CLAIRE AND ALL POINTS SOUTH,
EAST AND WEST...AND THIS ENTIRE AREA WILL
REAP THE BENEFITS.**

THE NEW AND IMPROVED HIGHWAY 53 WILL MAKE DOING BUSINESS EASIER...ENCOURAGE MORE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT...AND BOOST THE TOURISM INDUSTRY OF NORTHERN WISCONSIN. A PLACE I CERTAINLY ENJOYING COMING BACK TO TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

WE CELEBRATE THIS TREMENDOUS ACCOMPLISHMENT TODAY BECAUSE OF A STRONG PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS...ALONG WITH THE ECONOMIC PULSE OF OUR NORTHERN WISCONSIN COMMUNITIES...OUR BUSINESS LEADERS.

TOGETHER, WE HAVE WORKED HARD TO ACCOMPLISH OUR GOALS AND TO MAKE WISCONSIN A SHINING EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW. AFTER ALL, WE LIVE IN THE GREATEST STATE IN AMERICA.

AND IT'S NO WONDER WHY WE THINK THAT WAY. JUST LOOK AT WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED.

OUR ECONOMY IS THRIVING...WE HAVE MORE PEOPLE WORKING THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME IN STATE HISTORY. BUSINESSES ARE GROWING AND RELOCATING TO OUR STATE. WE'VE DECREASED OUR WELFARE ROLLS TO RECORD LOW LEVELS AND OUR STUDENTS ARE OUTPERFORMING THEIR PEERS ACROSS AMERICA WITH THE HIGHEST A-C-T AND S-A-T SCORES.

WISCONSIN CLEARLY IS AMERICA'S STATE AND A STRONG, DEPENDABLE AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE LIFELINE BY WHICH IT WILL GROW AND PROSPER. AND THE NEWLY COMPLETED HIGHWAY 53 IS A DRIVING FORCE BEHIND OUR FUTURE SUCCESS IN THIS AREA OF THE STATE.

WE KNEW BACK IN 1987 THAT A FOUR-LANE HIGHWAY 53 WOULD SERVE AS AN ECONOMIC GENERATOR BRINGING NEW JOBS AND OPPORTUNITY TO NORTHWESTERN WISCONSIN.

AND WE WORKED HARD TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

AS YOU CAN SEE, HIGHWAY 53 IS A BEAUTIFUL AND SAFE NEW HIGHWAY. I ASSURE YOU, YOU WILL TRUST IN ITS CONVENIENCE AND SAFETY. AND SO WILL THE MANY PEOPLE IT WILL ATTRACT TO YOUR COMMUNITIES TO WORK, PLAY...AND OF COURSE SHOP. *I KNOW DAVID MINOR AND THE ENTIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE APPRECIATES THAT.*

TODAY'S CEREMONY AND THE OPENING OF THE NEWEST AND FINAL PIECE OF THE \$70 MILLION "VITAL LINK" PAVES THE WAY FOR IMPROVED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, JOB CREATION AND HIGHWAY SAFETY FOR NORTHWESTERN WISCONSIN.

HIGHWAY 53 IS ALREADY CARRYING TRAVELERS, TOURISTS, GOODS AND COMMERCE BETWEEN WISCONSIN'S NORTH COAST AT LAKE SUPERIOR AND EAU CLAIRE, WHERE IT LINKS WITH THE REST

OF THE CORRIDORS 2020 NETWORK AND THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM.

**EVEN BEFORE THE HIGHWAY WAS COMPLETED,
THIS AREA HAS BEEN ATTRACTING NEW
BUSINESSES.**

**WISCONSIN-BASED COMPANIES LIKE FOSTER
TRUCKING AND TIMBERLINE EXPRESS IN SUPERIOR
EXPANDED KNOWING THAT HIGHWAY 53 WOULD BE
FOUR LANES.**

**VOLTZ TRUCKING BROUGHT 55 NEW JOBS TO
SOLON SPRINGS BECAUSE OF A FOUR-LANE
HIGHWAY 53.**

**HUSKY RUSTIC SIDING IN SOLON SPRINGS WILL
HAVE UP TO 30 EMPLOYEES ON THE PAYROLL BY
EARLY NEXT YEAR.**

**AND THERE'S MORE ON THE HORIZON. THE STATE
HAS BEEN CONTACTED BY A COMPANY FROM
MINNESOTA SERIOUSLY THINKING OF RELOCATING**

**JUST SOUTH OF HERE IN SPOONER, CREATING UP
TO 50 JOBS OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS.**

***I WONDER WHAT JESSE VENTURA WILL HAVE TO
SAY ABOUT THAT.***

***IT SEEMS WE IN WISCONSIN HAVE RATTLED
JESSE'S CAGE, IN LURING MINNESOTA
BUSINESSES TO OUR STATE.***

***IN RETALIATION JESSE HAS BEEN PUTTING
TOGETHER TWO WORDS THAT CERTAINLY DON'T
BELONG TOGETHER...DULUTH AND PACKERS.***

***((WHAT DOESN'T IOWA HAVE A PROFESSIONAL
FOOTBALL TEAM? BECAUSE THEN ILLINOIS AND
MINNESOTA WOULD WANT ONE))).***

**MINNESOTA BUSINESSES AREN'T THE ONLY ONES
LOOKING TO WISCONSIN AS A NEW HOME. WHILE I
CAN'T DIVULGE THE DETAILS--SOLON SPRINGS IS
ALSO BEING EYED BY HOTEL AND RESTAURANT
FRANCHISES AS A PLACE TO DO BUSINESS--
BRINGING MORE NEW JOBS AND TOURISTS TO THE
AREA.**

**AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING. THIS STORY
WILL CONTINUE TO REPEAT ITSELF AS WORD
SPREADS ABOUT HIGHWAY 53 AND THE EASE AT
WHICH PRODUCTS CAN BE CARRIED FROM
BUSINESS TO BUSINESS. NOT TO MENTION THE
THOUSANDS OF TOURISTS THAT WILL BE ABLE TO
TRAVEL EASILY AND SAFELY INTO THIS BEAUTIFUL
REGION OF THE STATE...OR GOD'S COUNTRY AS I
LIKE TO CALL IT...TO SPEND TIME AND MONEY IN
THE MANY SHOPS, HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS.**

**AS WE PREPARE TO CUT THE RIBBON FOR THE
NEW AND IMPROVED HIGHWAY 53, WE DO SO WITH
THE EXPECTATIONS OF A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR
SOLON SPRINGS, MINONG, SUPERIOR AND ALL
POINTS IN BETWEEN. IT'S A FUTURE RIPE WITH
GROWTH AND EXPANSION AND BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT, AS WE MAKE THE NECESSARY
INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS LEADING US
BOLDLY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.**

THANK YOU.