

Speaker Brancel, President Risser, Members of the Legislature, Constitutional Officers, Honorable Justices of the Supreme Court, tribal leaders, members of the Cabinet, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

The state of the state is euphoric.

We are the champions.

Record-breaking economic growth

A quality of life that is second to none

Safe and vibrant communities

And, home of the World Champion Green Bay Packers

The Lombardi Trophy is back home.....where it belongs....Titletown USA

And let there be no doubt: Not only are the Packers the Super Bowl Champions, they are indeed America's Team.

The Packers have earned this title not only because they are heroes on the field, but because they are heroes off the field. From the Lambeau Leap to Reggie White's Urban Hope to Brett Favre's work with ill children, the Packers show time and again that their hearts are bigger than their egos.

They work hard. They help each other. They achieve great heights. And they are guided by a higher vision.

Some even create their own Wisconsin delicacies. Right Gilbert?

(Gilbert comes out from behind. Applause.)

Gilbert is a man of great strength and humility...A man who dedicated his pursuit of the Super Bowl to his veteran teammates -- men like Reggie White, Sean Jones and Eugene Robinson. Players who contributed greatly throughout their careers but had never reached the pinnacle.

Thank you Gilbert for being such a great ambassador for our state. We are proud to call you our friend and neighbor. And we don't want you to leave. Come back for another Super season, Gilbert.

(Shake his hand; Gilbert is escorted off stage and to his seat.)

Gilbert asked me where he should sit. I said, Anywhere you want Gilbert.

Just as the Packers represent what is right and good in professional sports, Wisconsin represents what is right and good in a people and a state.

We are a people who know we are strongest when we are united....When a neighbor -- or a even stranger -- is in need of help, we respond with speed and compassion.

When a fiery train wreck forced Weyauwega residents to evacuate their homes for weeks, it was the people of Wisconsin who came to their rescue. They took families into their homes; paid for them to stay in hotels; offered food, clothing and money. And we worked together to diffuse a potentially explosive situation.

Joining us tonight is Weyauwega Mayor Judith Wiesman and her husband, Ron. Nice to see you under better circumstances Judith. (Point to her.)

Nothing can derail the Spirit of Wisconsin.

Not even the devastating tornado that swept through the village of Oakfield. It was the most horrific sight in my time as governor. A path of destruction through the center of the village.

As I walked through the rubble of a community, I saw a lot of tears and a great deal of shock. But soon, the grief was drowned out by the sounds of chain saws....dump trucks....rakes and shovels.

The population of Oakfield seemed to quadruple that next day, as strangers came from miles around to lend a hand -- and a hug -- to those who had just lost a home or a family treasure.

I would like to welcome Oakfield Village President Tony O'Malley, Oakfield residents Allen Searl (SIRL) and Gary Collien (COLLEEN), and Fond du Lac County Executive Al Buechel. You have a special community gentlemen. (point to them.)

**I continue to be amazed by the ability of
Wisconsinites to turn tragedy into triumph.**

But that's the spirit of Wisconsin.

**We're builders with a bold vision for a better
tomorrow.**

**We have built Wisconsin into a championship
state.**

**And in doing so, we have helped transform a
nation through our bold innovations and brilliant
successes.**

We are America's State.

(Huge applause)

Whenever I come to address you in this chamber, it brings a rush of memories.

As a freshman legislator 30 years ago, I sat right there -- in Representative Owens' seat. And I eventually worked my way up to Representative Foti's seat in the front row.

I still remember the first bill I authored and the excitement that brought. It was a landmark bill, of course. Setting a standard for how much butter fat a product must contain before it can be called butter. You might call it the butter means butter bill.

And, I might add, it did pass.

I also know of the passion, conviction and the vigor that fills this chamber. I can even remember fighting with a few governors -- although I would never condone such action now.

A democracy calls for us to disagree at times. But we don't have to be disagreeable in the process.

Just as we lead this nation in so many arenas, we must also lead in civility and bipartisanship. We must reform the campaign finance system so it breeds civility. And we must discuss our differences face-to-face -- seeking compromise.

So again, I will be reserving my schedule every Tuesday while you are in session to meet with lawmakers -- Democrats and Republicans. And you know I'm always just a phone call away.

Vince Lombardi said it well: "People who work together will win, whether it be against complex football defenses or the problems of society."

So as we look to the future, we will remain America's State by daring to do even more. We will lead a nation into a new millenium.

And we will do it together, in these chambers and in communities throughout this great state.

Tonight, we begin laying out a bold blueprint for success in the 21st Century. We have so many new ideas that this speech would last longer than the Packers victory parade if we were to discuss them all right now.

So tonight, we will talk about where we have come and where we will go -- with special emphasis on the future of education in Wisconsin. Next week, I will outline an ambitious new plan for the environment. And in two weeks, I will present to you a biennial budget that will take us to the brink of a new millenium.

(education)

In these chambers, we helped spur an economic revolution that transformed Wisconsin from a hub in the Rust Belt into the Job Center of a nation.

Wisconsin's economy is as strong as it has ever been. If the numbers that tell the success of our economy are beginning to sound like a broken record it is because we keep breaking records. Our economy is a sweet tune of success that never grows old.

Three million people are working today -- the most ever. Four straight years of record employment.

We cut our unemployment rate in half -- to 3.5 percent. The sixth straight year it has dropped.

And we are creating the high skill jobs that pay high wages. Median family income is back above the national average, growing 14 percent compared to only 9 percent nationally. And per capita income has grown at double the national rate since 1990.

This means our families have more income to invest in their retirement.....to take that vacation.....to buy a home. And young families are buying homes in record numbers -- housing construction is at its highest level in two decades.

Areas of the state that were lagging behind our economic growth are now catching up. The Chippewa Valley is poised to become the Silicon Valley of the Midwest as the computer industry's high-tech jobs of the future replace the manufacturing jobs of the past. In the last 18 months, we've created 3,600 new jobs in the Chippewa Valley.

And the future is bright once again in Southwest Wisconsin. When a plant closing cost the region 560 jobs last February, we replaced them with 837 new ones by year's end. We thank Cabela's and Penda Corporation for moving into the area and thank Land's End for its continue faith in our workers by making yet another major expansion.

I would like to thank Platteville City Manager Al Probst for his partnership in attracting these new jobs.

And there are more jobs on the way for the state.

- **Weather Shield Manufacturing -- 200 new jobs in Ladysmith**
- **Snap-On -- 160 new jobs in Elkhorn**
- **Advanced Data-Comm -- 127 new jobs in Superior**
- **And Ameritech Communications and Ameritech Publishing -- 667 new full-time jobs in Milwaukee.**

Feel the Power of America's State at work!

(w-2)

We must continue investing in our greatest economic resource -- our people. That is why, in these chambers, we ended welfare.

Not just in Wisconsin, but in America. If it were not for the bold, visionary and courageous work done here, thousands of families across this country would be sentenced to life in a failed welfare system instead of capitalizing on the freedom to pursue their dreams.

When history looks back upon our work of the past decade, W-2 will stand as an American symbol of freedom...hope...and the American Dream.

We've already cut our welfare rolls by more than half. We started with 98,000 cases and are down to 45,000. That's more than 53,000 families who are better off because we cared enough to help them.

Now, we must begin putting W-2 to work ... forging new partnerships with our counties, businesses, community service groups, churches and private citizens. Working together to make Wisconsin work.

Tomorrow, my new Secretary of Workforce Development Linda Stewart will announce the agencies that will operate W-2 in our counties ... forging a strong partnership with Milwaukee County Executive Tom Ament to make W-2 work in our largest county.

One of those agencies in Milwaukee County is YW Works, and with us tonight is its CEO, Julia Taylor of the YWCA. Julia's child care program is helping people like Daun Lewis-Redmond leave welfare. A 26-year-old mother, Daun is now working at Allen Bradley earning \$17 an hour and supporting her family.

Julia and Daun are making welfare reform happen in their neighborhood. (point to them.)

This fall, every Wisconsinite capable of working will be working. Instead of cashing a welfare check, they will be cashing a paycheck.

An entire state at work.

Only in Wisconsin. Only in America's State.

(environment)

In these chambers, we have built an environmental heritage that is world-renowned. And we will do more.

Next week, I will be announcing the boldest environmental initiative in this state in a generation.

We're going to clean up contaminated urban sites called brownfields....make the nation's model clean water program even better and address the mining of our resources so our environment is not put at undue risk.

We will leave our environment to the next generation better than we found it.

(farmers)

In these chambers, we have created a better environment for our farmers as well.

We provided farmers the undeniable right to farm their land without fear of lawsuits as development moves their way. No need to worry about a costly lawsuit because a new neighbor doesn't like the smell of your cows. We made sure land is taxed on its current use, not its potential value....cut capital gains taxes....and made it easier to pass farms onto the next generation.

And, we cut their property taxes. Farmers across this state are reporting gigantic reductions in their taxes.

**Lois Alcorn of Lancaster wrote me, saying:
“Thank you Gov. Thompson. Our property taxes were down \$3,152.18 -- 19.9%. Way to go.”**

Well, Lois. You’re welcome. And thanks for being her tonight.

We put thousands of dollars in the pockets of Wisconsin farmers through our actions last legislative session. But the federal government is taking that money out of farmers pockets.

Too many farmers are not doing well enough because Washington has refused to create a balanced and fair dairy system.

In setting the price of milk, the National Cheese Exchange just does not work.

We know this because my administration launched a study of the Cheese Exchange and its impact on fluctuating milk prices -- drawing national attention to the pricing issue.

We then developed strong alternatives for the USDA to consider, such as removing the Cheese Exchange from the milk pricing formula. And next week, I will lead a delegation of state farmers to Washington to meet with USDA Secretary Dan Glickman and demand action to stabilize milk prices.

I will speak to Secretary Glickman's boss as well. To President Clinton, I will say:

"Mr. President, you talk a lot about building bridges to the 21st century. But as things stand now, Wisconsin farmers are at risk of floating down the river instead of crossing the bridge."

Build a bridge our farmers can cross, Mr. President. Fix the milk pricing system.

We have the most productive and efficient farmers in the world. It's time for America to do right by them.

(crime)

In these chambers, we made Wisconsin one of America's safest states. Again, six of the 10 safest cities in America are in Wisconsin -- including the safest -- the Appleton-Oshkosh region.

In the budget I present in two weeks, a cornerstone will be a dramatic and comprehensive public safety package dealing with crime, sentencing and punishment.

America's state is about to get even safer.

(property taxes)

In these chambers, we showed America what it means to give a real property tax cut. Across this country, states are struggling to provide property tax relief. But only one has been able to cut its property taxes without raising other taxes. Wisconsin.

For the first time in history, property taxes went down without income or sales taxes going up in exchange.

A pure tax cut -- the largest in state history.

They said it couldn't be done. I said it could. And we did it.

And we're not going back.

Already, some are talking about walking away from the state's commitment to fund two-thirds the cost of local schools.

No way. Not on my watch.

(women's health)

And in these chambers, we have worked to make our families healthier.

We take great pride that 93 percent of our residents have health coverage -- the best in the nation.

As we look to the future, however, we must rededicate ourselves to addressing the unique health needs of the elderly, the long-term care population and, particularly, women.

A few years ago, my family received a scare when Sue Ann was diagnosed with breast cancer. We thank God that she caught her problem early and is now doing fine.

We must commit ourselves as a society to doing more for women's health -- from breast cancer and osteoporosis to domestic violence and abuse.

Tonight, I am unveiling a striking new multi-million dollar Women's Health Initiative.

The initiative creates an Office of Women's Health to coordinate our statewide effort. It also includes:

***2 million over two years to make sure the health needs of low-income women without insurance are being met.**

***A million dollars for a statewide campaign to educate women about health risks, prevention and treatment -- with emphasis on the groundbreaking research on women's health at the University of Wisconsin.**

***Money for a statewide Breast Cancer Campaign.**

***And money for a new mammogram van that will travel throughout regions of our state screening women for breast cancer.**

Every woman in this state will have access to a mammogram and other early detection efforts. The key to beating breast cancer is to catch it early.

Sue Ann knows from experience.

And I couldn't be more proud that my wife will help lead this initiative in Wisconsin. (introduce her)

(education)

Over these past ten years we have joined together in these chambers to help lead the nation in economic renewal, abolishment of the welfare state and sound fiscal management.

But I stand before you this evening with a keen awareness that in spite of all our achievements, we have unfinished business to attend to before welcoming in the new century.

While Wisconsin should be proud of having one of the highest quality public education systems of the 20th Century, it is my profound conviction that we have not laid the foundation for making the same boast in the new century.

You saw the headline in the recent Education Week evaluation of the nation's schools. They described Wisconsin as, quote: "Satisfied with the status quo." There are no more disturbing words for the future of our way of life than "status quo."

This is our unfinished business... to prepare Wisconsin's schools to meet the challenges of a new millennium. America's State should accept nothing less.

And I intend to stay at the helm until the business is done.

Our goal must be no less ambitious than creating the highest skilled, most productive workforce in the world, with businesses flocking to Wisconsin for our greatest asset – our people.

It is my goal as we march toward the year 2000 to make education so compelling and relevant to the lives of our youth that someday we put the Department of Corrections out of business.

There are four principles that must be at the heart of this education reformation:

- ◆ **Parents must be empowered with more choices;**
- ◆ **Education must be relevant to workplace;**
- ◆ **Schools must be held accountable for their performance; and**
- ◆ **Technology must pervade every facet of education.**

There is no greater need for parental empowerment than in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Every year, 7,000 students enter MPS and 3,300 graduate. We are wasting too many lives and so much potential.

Now, I want to be clear – I do not mean this as an attack on the educators in Milwaukee. There are hundreds of educators who have devoted their lives – sometimes even risked their lives – to help the children of Milwaukee learn.

And Superintendent Bob Jasna has been a pioneer in implementing a graduation math test that has dramatically elevated math performance in the Milwaukee schools. He is a bold reformer and I'm sad that he is retiring.

But we must do more to reach Milwaukee's students and make school relevant to the 3,700 students who walk away from the opportunity for an education.

Dr. Howard Fuller has helped me develop a proposal for a new form of charter schools. He and I are proposing that we empower the Milwaukee Area Technical College, the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, and the City of Milwaukee to establish charter schools to find new ways for children to learn.

These are all public bodies, equally accountable to the taxpayers as you and I are. We should give them the freedom to help teach children and to give parents more options for who is educating their children.

And let me say this about options for parents in Milwaukee: I will not give up the fight for the Milwaukee School Choice program.

I will take this case to the highest court in the land. It is right and it will prevail.

Parents must also have choices within our public school system. The people who are paying the bills should have a say in where their child goes to school.

So let's pass public school choice. Let's give parents the choices they need to ensure their child gets the best education possible.

And let's make sure what they are learning is relevant to the workplace. Last year, I asked former Superintendent of Schools Bert Grover to assist me in improving our nationally acclaimed school-to-work and youth apprenticeship programs.

And he has delivered a stunning new vision for connecting learning to work. At its foundation is a consolidated school-to-work effort at the state level with new options for students to pursue applied learning.

Dr. Grover and I propose consolidating the state school-to-work program into the Department of Workforce Development. Right now it is disjointed and split between three agencies.

I will appoint Dr. Grover as a leader on the Governor's Council on Workforce Excellence to help us continue to develop new ways of connecting work and learning.

And to give students and parents more options for technical education, I am proposing a statewide initiative to allow high school students unprecedented access to our top-rated technical college system.

The average age of students on our technical college campuses is 28. Often students leave high school with no career in mind, only to realize 10 years later they need more education in order to succeed.

We should help our students reach that conclusion earlier in life.

If Johnnie decides his junior year he would like to become a carpenter and join his father's construction business, let's get him ready.

I want to give students in every school district the option of attending a technical college their junior and senior year of high school, actually earning their high school diploma from the technical college if they choose.

From there, the student could go on for a technical college degree, transfer to a four-year degree program or enter the workforce as a well-trained worker.

Dr. Grover and I envision the creation of a Kindergarten-through-Grade 14 public school system... where work and learning are fully connected... where education is more relevant to both the workplace and the student...and where technical education is a natural next step for our students.

Essential to making education relevant is making our schools accountable for their performance. We must set concrete, rigorous academic standards for our schools and measure our students' learning.

Tonight I am proposing model academic standards in math, science, English and language arts, geography and history. I'm bringing these standards forward as the starting point in a process that will lead to a first-ever set of state model standards.

These are not squishy cultural or social standards. I'm talking about strict academic standards in core subject areas. For example:

Our math standards require each student to calculate with efficiency and accuracy; selecting appropriate methods and procedures.

In history, each student must be able to identify, cite and discuss important historical documents that have influenced government in the United States and explain the nature of their influence.

And we even have an English standard I know everyone in this chamber will like -- a standard for our aspiring journalists. It requires that each student distinguish fact from opinion in an article, identify propaganda techniques and fallacious reasoning, and integrate knowledge from the article into prior knowledge about the topic.

These standards represent the fundamental knowledge and skills our students must have to succeed in the workplace.

And these standards should be tested in a high-stakes graduation test. You don't pass, you don't graduate.

If you can't do basic math.....If you can't read a job application...if until this past Sunday you thought the French Quarter was in France, you have not earned the honor of being a high school graduate in America's State.

MPS is proof that standards drive excellence. When the first students took their graduation math test, only 21 percent passed.

But instead of making the test easier and lowering the bar of excellence, MPS and its math teachers made sure their students crossed the bar. Last time out, 96 percent of the students passed the test.

Tonight, I would like to applaud Bob Jasna and the MPS math teachers for setting the bar high for Wisconsin when it comes to educational standards.

Please welcome Bob, Josietana (JOSE-tana) Hill, a math teacher from Madison University High School; and Donnie Wallace, a Vincent High School student.

And let me be clear: The standards we are creating are model standards. A bar set by the state. But I want communities to have the flexibility to set their own standards -- taking into account the unique needs and the priorities of the community.

Therefore, I'm asking local school districts to adopt their own standards by the 1998 school year, with a graduation test in place by the 1999 school year.

And I'm asking the Department of Public Instruction to develop the graduation test, based on the five core subject areas. Local school districts will have the flexibility to work with parents, employers and local teachers to refine the test to meet the needs of their communities.

School districts will have to answer to their parents and taxpayers if their test is less rigorous than those of a neighboring school district.

In these chambers, and across Wisconsin, we must demand excellence in our schools.

To coordinate this endeavor, I am proposing the creation a Standards Development Council, chaired by the Lt. Governor, with a representative from the Department of Public Instruction, and the chairpersons and ranking minority members of the education committees of the Senate and Assembly.

The council will be charged with conducting a statewide public process to approve or modify the standards I'm proposing tonight. I'm asking the council to report its recommendations by September of this year.

Tonight is the culmination of a year and a half of work in bringing the issue of academic achievement to the forefront of public debate. A year ago, I convened a National Education Summit with IBM's Lou Gerstner. There, the nation's governors and business leaders reached an agreement on the need for standards.

And tonight I'm asking you to join me in taking this to the next level -- developing a consensus on what our children should be learning in school.

I would like to speak for a moment to the parents of Wisconsin. What we're talking about tonight is what will be taught to your children. What I'm proposing is no less than a blueprint for what will go into the heads of your children.

It is critical that you review every line -- every word -- of these standards. Your voice, not just the voices of the education experts, is what we need to hear as we define what academic standards our students should meet.

Let me know what you think.

As you review these standards, you'll notice every one of them includes a technology component. Technology must be an integral part of every facet of education.

Tonight I'm announcing one of the most exciting and far-reaching initiatives I've ever undertaken as Governor. It will revolutionize how and what our students learn... how our schools teach... and, in some cases, even what a school is.

Let me introduce you to Technology Education Achievement in Wisconsin. Or simply, TEACH Wisconsin. A \$200 million investment in the future of our classrooms over the next two years...And a \$500 million investment over the next five years.

TEACH Wisconsin is my commitment to ensuring every school, every student and every teacher has the hardware, the software and the knowledge to open new education worlds through the use of technology.

TEACH Wisconsin will put the world at the fingertips of every student. It will liberate teachers and students from the bounds of classroom walls.

TEACH Wisconsin will break down the barriers between educational institutions, making the University and Technical College Systems relevant to students years before they hear their first Pomp and Circumstance.

The only tether in education will be the size of our imaginations and our willingness to apply the resources at our disposal.

My budget will contain \$65 million over the biennium in ongoing block grants to school districts for educational technology. \$50 million in annual bonding will be available as loans to school districts to upgrade electrical and network wiring. And these grants and loans will be apart from the revenue limits on schools to avoid painful local spending decisions.

We are building a Sonet Ring around Wisconsin. A fiber optic highway connecting the schools of our state. No other state will have anything like it. (Refer to map on monitors)

And I'm ensuring all school districts have access to this Sonet Ring and a high-speed data link for no more than \$250 per month -- that compares to the \$2,500 monthly fee many schools pay now.

Our Cooperative Educational Service Agencies will receive \$8 million over the biennium to provide training programs for teachers to learn better use of technology. If teachers can't teach students to navigate the Sonet Ring, our investment is wasted.

I've set aside a combined \$15.2 million for the University of Wisconsin System and Technical College System for continued development and expansion of the student information system, distance education, classroom technology, and teacher training.

I'd like to thank University of Wisconsin System President Katherine Lyall and Wisconsin Technical College System President Ed Chin for their vision and partnership in making technology come alive for our students.

The financial commitment I'm making to educational technology is not one-time phantom money. Even though this will be a tight budget, we must make a long-term investment in future of our children.

And I'm challenging each legislator and leader in this chamber today to adopt a school and help get it wired. That means joining the Wiring Wisconsin team this spring, rolling up your sleeves and helping your adopted school pull wires into classrooms. I will be adopting a school from my home district.

When it comes to investing in technology for tomorrow's classrooms, no other state comes close to America's State.

Now, for those of us who went to school with Laura Ingalls Wilder and thought technology was indoor plumbing, it is sometimes hard to picture exactly how this technology can dramatically transform your children's classroom.

So I would like to show you the backpack of the future.

One day, your child will be carrying home schoolwork on this notebook instead of a spiral notebook. (Take laptop from backpack.)

They will study and get their information from CD Roms instead of textbooks. (Take CD roms from backpack)

And instead of needing a pencil case, they will need a holder for their floppy disks and CDs. (Take case from backpack)

But one thing will never change. They'll still need an apple for the teacher.

To show you the classroom of the future, I would like to bring in some friends of mine from Washburn and Milwaukee. They will show you that we're not exaggerating when we say this new technology is awesome.

(DO DEMONSTRATION)

Let's go to High Mount Elementary School in Milwaukee and meet Wisconsin Johnson, a paleontologist from the Milwaukee Public Museum. Wisconsin Johnson is our Indiana Jones.

Q. Hello, Dr. Johnson and kids. Can you tell us what you're doing?

A. (Rolf Johnson will explain how he teaches students across the state about dinosaurs.)

Q. (To High-Mount) That's great. Could the students tell me what they think about this program and distance education?

A. (Josh and Charday will each give two answers.)

Q. How has this technology helped you learn?

A. (Natasha will answer briefly.)

Let's bring in our friends from Washburn in Northern Wisconsin, who shared the dinosaur project with Hi Mount.

Q. Can you tell me what you thought about taking a class on dinosaurs from a teacher in Milwaukee?

A. (Anna will respond)

Q. How did the class work?

A. (Elsa will answer, then Anna)

Thanks kids. To wrap up, could Wisconsin Johnson tell us how the Internet was used in conjunction with the project?

(A. Wisconsin Johnson.)

What a great way to learn. Students from opposite ends of the state learning together.

The technology we just used is the Fiber Optic Video Network. This is the classroom of tomorrow.

Technology is the great equalizer.

It gives every student, whether poor or wealthy, rural or urban, access to the best teachers, best information and best education possible. The student from Elroy will have the same opportunities as the student from Brookfield.

This is the challenge that lies before us. To create the classroom of the future where every student can achieve at a high level and graduate with the skills to contribute.

In these chambers, let us make sure our children are able to lead this state to even greater heights well into the next century.

(conclusion)

**Ladies and Gentlemen of the Legislature,
Constitutional officers, people of Wisconsin: This
week has been euphoric.**

**This week the world watched as our
ambassadors, the Green Bay Packers, the pride of
Wisconsin, ascended to the pinnacle of athletic
achievement.**

But it strikes me that what we witnessed this week was not merely a sporting victory. The Green Bay Packers have come to symbolize our entire state and our way of life. A hometown team, still owned lock stock and barrel by a community, winning it all.

America's team in America's state.

And this team is built on more than athletic prowess. After the NFC championship game, I was invited to the locker room to celebrate with the players and coaches.

Of course I expected the type of party we've seen on TV when other teams win a championship – loud voices, champagne flowing, confident predictions of future victories.

But what I witnessed stood in stark contrast to the self-adulation common to professional sports.

I walked into the locker room to see an entire team on bended knee, being led in the Lord's prayer by our 300-pound Minister of Defense.

And there wasn't a dry eye among the warriors of the gridiron.

In that moment – even more than on the playing field of Lambeau – the Packers represented who we are in Wisconsin.

We know from where our strength comes. We are humbled by our victories. We are thankful for what has been entrusted to us.

And as I continue to travel this Great State of Wisconsin...

- ◆ **I am awed by the never-ending chorus of optimism that rings from every community.**
- ◆ **Inspired by the deep and abiding faith that characterizes our people.**
- ◆ **Invigorated by our sheer determination to succeed.**
- ◆ **And humbled by the deep honor of being your Governor.**

We are America's State. And together we will make tomorrow even better than today.

From Sue Ann and me, God bless you...and God Bless the Great State of Wisconsin.