

One Thousand Days of Progress: The 2002 State of the State Address

Governor Michael O. Leavitt

Good evening President Mansell, Speaker Stephens, members of the Legislature, Chief Justice Howe, Lieutenant Governor Walker and my fellow Utahns.

I'd like to begin tonight with special recognition of a man whose career in public service is unequaled. When Hill Air Force Base needed a fighter, Jim Hansen was a warrior. When our state's forests and range lands needed safeguarding, Jim Hansen built a fortress. And when the people of the First Congressional District asked for a dedicated representative, Jim Hansen gave them integrity, tenacity and seniority. There is no adequate postscript to his 22 years in Washington, but a passage from the cowboy novel *Shane* comes close: "One day a great man passed this way. He rode out of the West." It's been an incredible ride, Jim. Ladies and gentlemen ... Congressman Jim Hansen.

On September 11, the civilized world was upended by a group of men who struck a deadly blow at America. The toll still cannot be finalized: at least 3,000 lives lost, the Twin Towers in ruins, our economy reeling, our nation at war.

It forced us to make changes and rearrange priorities. It also reminded us who we are. From the rubble of collapsed buildings rose a wall of unity and resolve. From heartbreak came a new breed of hero. The character of America often maligned and doubted was no longer an abstract. It could be seen: seen in the faces of firefighters; seen in the precision of our military; seen in flag after flag after flag.

Let anyone who judged our society too soft or too contented visit that field in Pennsylvania where a group of passengers ordinary Americans summoned all that is best in the human spirit and forced Flight 93 down.

Let those who questioned our bravery trade places for a moment with American ground troops in Tora Bora as they crawled through bin Laden's caves to deliver justice.

And let us all remember those days when a diverse nation of 282 million stood proudly together, raised the colors and with our hands on our hearts, declared ourselves "one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Michael O. Leavitt (R) is Utah's fourteenth governor. He is the second governor in the state's history to be elected to a third term in office. Gov. Leavitt was born in Cedar City, Utah, and earned a Bachelors degree in Business and Economics from Southern Utah University.

This speech was presented at the Utah State Capitol in January 2002.

This is the courage and the conviction of principle that won America's independence, defeated Nazism and Communism and now terrorism. This is strength of character, and like so many before us, this generation will not be found lacking. In the words of our president, "We will not tire. We will not falter, and we will not fail."

The immediate task is to repair and press on. In Utah, the focus is familiar. We have jobs to create, children to educate and an economy to revive.

THE 1000-DAY PLAN

The economic fallout from September 11th has not subsided. Financial downdrafts have pushed our nation into recession and forced far too many Utahns out of work. Our capacity to invest in schools and communities has been deferred, but not our aspirations.

Last November, in Olympia, Greece, near the site of the first Olympics in 776 B.C., I witnessed the lighting of the Olympic Flame in the ancient temple of Hera. Sunlight was magnified to create heat, then fire. The torch was lighted, and a global relay began. From there, the torch will have exchanged hands 11,500 times, traveling 14,000 miles through 46 states. And just one week from today, the sun will rise on an unforgettable sight: the Olympic Flame passing under Delicate Arch. A portrait for the ages.

This long-awaited day must signify more than the start of Olympic competition. Let that morning mark day one of a thousand-day march to reclaim our economic momentum. Tonight I propose the 1,000-Day Plan—a blueprint for turning our Olympic moment into our Olympic legacy. To turn 17 days of attention into a 1,000 days of progress toward a vibrant, strong economy with a 10,000-day horizon.

This is a singular opportunity because, used well, the Olympic experience can be a catapult to world economic prominence. Like the athletes, we have dreamed it, planned it and practiced it. Now we'll play it.

TECHNOLOGY CAPITAL

The first step will be to position Utah as a top-tier state for technology employment, investment and entrepreneurship because, in the information age, economic leadership starts with world-changing ideas.

Innovation is Utah's signature. The television and artificial heart, limb and kidney are all ideas conceived by Utah minds. The next time you buy a CD or download an MP3 file, remember that stereo sound and digital media were Utah ideas. When you see "Monsters Inc." or play a video game, remember that the computer graphics industry was born here. When you use word-processing software or log on to a computer network, that's right, Utah technologies.

Utah technologies have worldwide impact. But too often the innovation took place here and the jobs went someplace else. We will change that.

If we are to emerge as a world technology player, people must know and understand the Utah brand. Our message to the world is that Utah has a young, growing workforce; well-educated, tech-savvy people; clean, safe communities; and stunning surroundings in which to work, play and raise families. We've already begun to market the phrase "Utah! Where ideas connect." Now we'll expand on that by showing the connection between our technological prowess and our natural, recreational wonders. Consider messages like these:

Mother Nature lives here ... along with a major, tech-savvy workforce

A deep snow base ... an even deeper technology base

Life enhancing genetics ... life enhancing experiences

Over a 1,000 days, we will organize more than a dozen economic ecosystems, a term we will make a Utah trademark. An economic ecosystem is essentially a cluster of related technologies where the elements necessary for prosperity; the ideas, research, capital, workforce and government support exist in one place.

One of those ecosystems is biotechnology and human genetics. Utah will solidify its leadership in this area by initiating a project to manage, enhance and develop a database that combines medical research and health information with the state's unique collection of genealogical records.

Entirely new industries will be created when two or more such economic ecosystems connect. In one recent example, Utah computer graphics technology met up with biomedical technology, and the result was magic.

John Wright had already founded a successful high-tech company in Orem and was in the process of starting another that would tap his knowledge of computer graphics to create three-dimensional holograms. But then a phone call changed his focus. It was a chilling message. Natalie, his two-and-a-half year old daughter, had a tumor on her brain. It would require dangerous surgery.

The most worrisome problem was that once a surgeon enters the human brain, it is difficult to know where the tumor stops and where vital brain cells begin. John asked himself, "What if I used the digital pictures taken by doctors of Natalie's brain to create one of my three-dimensional pictures of her tumor? Would it help?"

John turned to Dr. Chris Johnson at the University of Utah's Scientific Computing and Imaging Laboratory, and

together they created a computer simulation of Natalie's brain and tumor. The day before her operation, Dr. Jack Walker donned 3D glasses to view images in a way never before seen by a neurosurgeon. It was as if he stood inside Natalie Wright's brain.

The tumor was removed, Natalie's life was spared, and the beginnings of a new industry with potentially hundreds of jobs for Utah workers was born.

I would like to introduce Dr. Chris Johnson and John and Dana Wright. More importantly, I would like you to meet a very brave and beautiful Natalie Wright.

We need to expand the reach of these pioneering Utah technologies and products. Shortly after the Olympic Games, we will deploy regular trade missions throughout the world to leverage our Olympic network and attract venture capital.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

The foundation of our economic strategy is continuous improvement in education. Education is our economic fuel.

In a decade of prosperity, we have invested aggressively in public education. The payoff is smaller class sizes, better-paid teachers, classrooms wired for technology and a shift in emphasis to higher expectations, accountability and innovation.

This aim-high philosophy accelerates with our specific goal of doubling the number of engineers, computer scientists and technologists entering the job market. The 1,000-Day Plan starts the clock and provides the road map.

On Day One, we will announce four-year retention agreements with nearly 400 of our most skilled technology, math and science teachers. We will provide scholarships for 250 more teachers to earn advanced degrees in those subjects. And we will proceed with the enrollment of 225 principals, superintendents and administrators in the T-Plus certification program to help them create schools that are tech-smart.

And then we take an even bigger step forward. What I'm proposing is a system of high-tech charter high schools, each named after a Utah scientific entrepreneur, each designed to support one of our economic ecosystems. There will be six of these high-tech high schools, and within 1,000 days the first four will be operational.

One will be in Salt Lake City, focusing on biotechnology; another, in Weber County, will concentrate on engineering and medical devices. Utah County will have a school specializing in digital media; and a fourth in Logan will specialize in plant and animal genetics.

Once admitted, students will be able to move among the four schools. And their goal will be to earn both a competency-measured high school diploma and an Associate of Science degree while learning technology through work with industry and higher education mentors.

By Day 1,000, approximately 1,250 students will be fast tracking their way into careers that will lift our entire economy.

These are ambitious goals driven by need and numbers. But solutions don't always come by way of statistics or cost-analysis. Sometimes they come from the heart.

Such is the genesis of a new scholarship I want to announce tonight. The death of Senator Pete Suazo cut short a life of exemplary service and passionate advocacy that bettered this state and empowered the community he represented and dearly loved.

Pete was succeeded in the Legislature by his wife, Senator Alicia Suazo, whose presence guarantees continuity for Utah's Hispanic community and demonstrates that death can neither extinguish an ennobling idea nor silence a powerful voice.

I'll ask Alicia to stand and be recognized. It is my great pleasure to announce that ten privately-funded scholarships will be provided for minority educators to obtain master's degrees in learning technology at Western Governors University in the name of Senator Pete Suazo.

HIGHER EDUCATION

These are hard budget times. The people of Utah all of us here tonight have felt it. But we cannot back down from our commitment to higher education. When I say education is economic fuel, let me back it up.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Utah family incomes ranked near the national average. By the end of the decade, we were in the top ten. We rose from the bottom half to the top ten by doubling our investment in education and increasing the number of adults with college degrees by 20 percent.

Education is economic fuel and our college campuses are the pipeline. And part of my optimism about Utah's future is that the pipeline is full. Over the past six months, 9,000 additional students have entered our colleges and universities. Nine-thousand! That's roughly the equivalent of the combined student bodies of Southern Utah University and Snow College. Utah Valley State College has grown by ten percent this year. And we can also factor in the Utah College of Applied Technology which is now operational, providing market-fast training to Utah workers.

This is growth exactly where we want it. This is how we recalibrate the economy for liftoff. And we cannot slow that trajectory, even in hard times. To the contrary, hard times are the ultimate test of our commitment. We can simply coast, or we can soar. I say in Utah, let's soar.

TRANSPORTATION, ENERGY AND WATER

Our thousand-day march must also advance and protect Utah's quality of life. Five years ago during the state's centennial, we committed ourselves to 41 highway projects throughout the state. This year we saw the completion of the single largest of those the I-15 renovation. I never get tired of saying, "ahead of schedule and under budget."

Now another ambitious project is looming. Just days ago, a \$185 million deal was approved to provide 175 miles of railroad rights-of-way and track corridor for future light rail and commuter rail from Brigham City to Payson.

The state's transportation policy has always contemplat-

ed a mix of trails, roads, highways and railways. We need all of it. And we are working to get it.

To our critics, who hold hostage our long-range transportation plan after five years of environmental work and compromise, the railway investment stands as irrefutable evidence that this state will meet the transportation needs of its communities through both highways and transit. It is through balance that we guarantee the heritage we receive will also be our legacy.

Speaking of legacies, the Legacy Parkway and wetlands preserve need to be built along with every other Centennial Highway project. And it's time also to begin planning the next phases of I-15 reconstruction both north and south.

During the past year, we worked through an energy crisis and a water shortage. They have subsided for now, but neither problem is solved. Over the next 1,000 days, we must actively pursue conservation, development and better transmission of gas and electricity.

Our state is moving with predictability over the next ten years toward a financial collision between the legitimate need to educate 100,000 more students and our capacity to pay for it.

We must begin to wrestle with these realities by examining our underlying tax policies. For example, it is hard to justify the extent we subsidize municipal and industrial water rates with tax dollars, given that Utah has among the lowest rates and the highest per-person use in America. Our state over-subsidizes water rates and under-supports education. This seems irrational to me in a place with a shortage of water and an abundance of children.

PUBLIC LANDS

Public lands are another precious resource that will require attention and our best efforts in the days ahead. For rural Utahns, land issues means livelihoods. And from livelihoods comes the connection to life quality, tourism, recreation and the economic well-being of our entire state.

In the next 1,000 days, we are going to end the 30-year struggle for control and access to Utah roads that cross federal lands. Thousands of hours are being spent by citizens to map and document our rights of way. In the end we will win. They are our roads and our rights.

There are other triumphs ahead. In just a few days, 3.5 billion Olympic viewers will see the full panorama of Utah's incredible landscapes. And it's time for one place in particular to stand out.

I'm speaking, of course, of the historic San Rafael Swell. These 620,000 acres of canyons, pinnacles, and rock formations were placed in our backyard by generous providence, and we will now show ourselves worthy of that gift.

I'm proud to announce that local and state officials will formally request that the President of the United States use his executive powers to create the San Rafael National Monument. We will release details of the proposal tomorrow. But I can tell you this now.

Unlike the scenario involving the Grand Staircase National Monument in September 1996, this is no stealth proposal. While both regions contain spectacular land deserving of protection, the Grand Staircase was created by a different president who developed his executive order in complete secrecy, with no notice and no collaboration.

By contrast, the San Rafael proposal is the product of seven years of intense negotiations involving many stakeholders. We will ask President Bush to allow sufficient notice and additional discussion before acting. And you want my guess? The president is going to like this.

We are protectors of the land, but respecters of process. Members of the Emery County Commission and Public Land Council are with us tonight to formalize this request. Please stand. I salute your boldness.

One other thing. I can pretty safely guarantee that if President Bush decides to make the Monument declaration in person, he'll do it in Utah, not Arizona.

A second announcement I want to make involves this administration's support for Envision Utah and the 21st Century Communities program. As an Olympic legacy, I propose the creation of the Utah Olympic Trails and Streams System. The objective is 715 miles of premier trails, open to hiking, off-roading, horseback riding and biking and within a 15-minute drive of every Utah citizen. In conjunction with the new trails system, the name of our blue ribbon fly-fishing initiative will be changed and those waterways added to the Olympic legacy piece.

These initiatives are worthwhile in their own right, but as always, there is the economic tie-in. It's about quality of life. It's about jobs being drawn to a beautiful, exceptional state.

HEALTH CARE

Our economy must also offer quality health care. Over the past six years, we have done well on that front, especially with Utah's children. Thanks to the efforts of the first lady and many others, our immunization rates have dramatically improved, and 220,000 more Utahns have health insurance. But we can do more. Because there's one group that's been left out.

Over the next 1,000 days, I propose we make health insurance available to 25,000 people who have full-time jobs but can't afford the coverage. This can be done with no additional state cost by changing our strategy to provide basic health care to many rather than unlimited care to a few and by asking these workers to pay their fair share. I have requested federal waivers to implement this piece of common sense. It's the kind of common sense that will bring health care to tens of thousands of Utahns who need it and currently do not have it.

There are a few other points of interest on the thousand-day trek that I want to mention:

First, those who are unemployed and hurting will not be

left behind. We put money aside in the unemployment compensation fund to take care of people when booms went bust. That fund will pay off.

We also are making state government increasingly accessible. Through the Utah.gov website, government services are now available 24 hours a day, seven days a week—online, not in line.

I have to note also that another year has passed and not a single spent nuclear fuel rod has been moved to Utah. Not now, not later, not ever.

Earlier this evening I spoke of the moment in Olympia, Greece, when the flame was lighted. I close tonight with a final reflection. On that day there were no banners, no sponsors, no crowds; just the quiet tap of a drum and a Greek priestess.

From the trees emerged a runner dressed in the white and blue uniform of the 2002 Winter Games. The runner's torch met the Olympic Flame. It lit. At that moment, I understood the connection between 776 B.C. and 2002 A.D. and the importance of preserving peace, kindness, and dignity. The Greek priestess lifted the torch and an olive branch to the sky and cried, "Good man, go to the world and tell them our message."

Slowly the runner disappeared into the woods, winding his way toward Utah. The priestess released a pure white dove. There was a flutter of wings as the bird took flight. When it passed over our heads, a feather fell from its tail and held our gaze as it drifted to the ground, landing at Utah's feet as if to say, "Faster, higher, stronger."

I keep the feather as a reminder of the moment that fate fell upon Utah at a historic time. As a remembrance of the days when a nation under attack stood indivisible. When Utah took the international stage as the worst attributes of humanity were trumped by the finest.

Every generation of Utahns must feel this moment. I propose we create a monument on the Capitol grounds commemorating the turning point in state history that was the Olympics. Arrangement has been made for one of the cauldrons that held the Olympic flame to be the centerpiece, a distinctly Utah beacon of fire and ice.

I can envision special occasions when we will light the flame again. It could be in times of grief or times of triumph. We can light it to proclaim an event of great significance or to simply remind that Utah had a dream, that we reached for it and made it ours.

Because when the applause fades and the stands are silent, we will remember what mattered most: the ability to inspire a child; the unity of purpose for a greater good; and the opportunity to excel, not just for 17 days, but for a lifetime. The Olympic Games are about athletes and competition. The flame is about people and the promise of future dreams in a place where hope burns eternal.

May God bless us in this task and our every endeavor. The fire is lit. Bring on the world. It's game time.