

Mark Dayton

Why do you want to be the Governor?

I want to lead Minnesota to its future greatness. Our state's people – and its public employees – are much better, and deserve much better, than where their state leaders are leading them now. I will change that direction and, with your Members' help, create A Better Minnesota. That's my campaign's theme: "A Better Minnesota."

Minnesota needs a Governor with proven statewide leadership skills. We're in very hard times. I'm the only candidate for Governor who has ever headed a state agency, and I've led three of them. I'm the only candidate for Governor, who speaks out every time about the need for higher taxes on the rich to avoid more cuts in state and local government services.

What is your number one concern for the State of Minnesota?

My number one concern is adding new jobs for Minnesotans and creating new economic growth. Since 2003, when Tim Pawlenty became Governor, our state's population has grown by 200,000 people. Yet there are 20,000 fewer people working in Minnesota today than there were seven years ago.

Like Governor Rudy Perpich, under whom I served twice as Minnesota's Economic Development Commissioner, I will be a "Jobs Governor." I will put Minnesotans back to work immediately by:

- 1) Issuing Transportation Bonds, backed by federal transportation funds, to significantly increase the number of highway construction and transit projects throughout Minnesota;
- 2) Passing a bonding bill in 2011 that funds shovel-ready projects; and
- 3) Creating a Minnesota Energy Savings Fund to redesign and renovate public buildings and their heating and cooling systems to utilize alternative energy and for greater energy efficiency.

What do you feel is the role of a professional public employee? How will you demonstrate that you value to that state employee?

State employees have vitally important responsibilities to provide essential public services. Most of them do outstanding work!

I'm the only DFL candidate for Governor, who has headed a state agency. I've led three. I have great respect for state employees, because I worked closely with many of them during those nine years. I know almost all of them to be very dedicated and hard-working women and men. I know that the essential services of state agencies can only be performed through their efforts. That's why I'm so proud to have the endorsement of

AFSCME Council 5, which represents 43,000 public employees, almost half of whom are state employees.

Do you consider state employees an asset or a liability to Minnesota's economy?

State employees are HUGE assets to Minnesota's economy. By providing essential public services, which in turn attract businesses and create jobs, they provide the foundation of our high quality of life. Economic studies show that every \$1 invested in public services creates roughly \$1.41 in economic output.

State employees earn the same average amount as the average Minnesotan, and they (like everyone else) are facing frozen wages, rising costs of living, vanishing benefits, and the perpetual threat of layoffs or furloughs. In spite of those challenges, they provide incredible services as efficiently as possible.

I believe in Government. I strongly support its critical roles in our society: providing essential public services, helping those citizens who need help, and protecting the less powerful.

Who should be doing most of the state's engineering work, state employees or consultants? If both, should their pay be equal? What is your view on outsourcing state engineering work?

State employees. They should always be preferred over outside consultants, and they will be, if I'm Governor. They do better work, and they are far more cost-effective.

As Governor, I will reverse the Pawlenty administration's practice of outsourcing state engineering work to private contractors. By Executive Order, I will immediately require all state contracts to be reviewed and approved by my Chief of Staff before they are issued for bid or signed, until we get control of this epidemic of private outsourcing.

As proof of my commitment, please note that in each of the three state agencies I led, I successfully expanded their responsibilities and increased their numbers of employees. All three times, I successfully opposed attempts to reduce their responsibilities and eliminate positions.

When the state budget is in deficit, should that affect wages of state employees? If so, how?

Depending upon the severity of the state's budget deficit for the next biennium, I cannot promise that state employees' wage increases will not be affected. However, their wages should not be reduced. My priority for dealing with future deficits is to raise revenues by raising taxes on the wealthiest Minnesotans, who are now not paying their fair share of state and local taxes.

Are you in favor of state engineers, engineering specialists, and land surveyors getting cost of living wage increases?

Yes, I am in favor of cost of living wage adjustments so that public employees do not experience reductions in their incomes. With inflation, a wage freeze without cost of living adjustments is truly a wage cut.

What are your short-term and long-term priorities for the future of transportation in outstate Minnesota?

I am driving through every county in Minnesota, as I visit all 87 of them in 87 days. The deterioration of our highways in Greater Minnesota is appalling (as is the increased congestion on our metro highways).

That is why it is urgently important that we issue Transportation Bonds, to significantly increase immediately – and then sustain for many years – a major increase in the number of highway improvement projects throughout Minnesota. Some people say we can't afford to do it. I say we can't afford not to do it. Our highways are like the arteries of our bodies. If they constrict or deteriorate, our health, even our very existence, becomes seriously threatened. Similarly, our state's social and economic vitality depend upon good highways, as well as good public transit systems in the smaller urban areas in Greater Minnesota.

Longer-term, I would like to see the extension of the North Star commuter rail train; the construction of truly high-speed (by European and Chinese standards) rail connections between Duluth-Minneapolis-St. Paul-Rochester and Chicago; the development of better and more extensive regional public transit systems in Greater Minnesota; and the continued expansion and improvement of our state and local highways, roads, and streets.

In its recently released Statewide Transportation Policy Plan, the Minnesota Department of Transportation identified a \$50 billion shortfall between the actions needed to meet the Department's performance targets for the state trunk highway system in the next 20 years and the funding that the Department expects to receive. (Cite: Mn/DOT Statewide Transportation Plan, page 7.2- 11, and Mn/DOT's reporting on 2008 performance measures) If additional funding is unlikely, how will your administration prioritize between transportation system expansion versus repair or maintenance of existing infrastructure?

For the reasons stated above, I will not allow the continuing underfunding and resulting further deterioration of our highways. As I have said, I advocate the use of Transportation Bonds, backed by federal highway funds, to increase significantly the number of projects statewide. Of necessity, I would place a higher priority on the repair and maintenance of existing infrastructure. However, that alone will not be sufficient to

support our growing population or our expanding economy. Transportation system expansions will also be crucial to our future economic growth and social vitality.

What is your plan to address our on-going problem of congestion and deteriorating infrastructure?

The Transportation Bonds I have described before will provide the funding necessary to begin addressing these problems. Expanded transit and highway systems will reduce congestion, and new highway repair money will rebuild our crumbling infrastructure.

How are we going to fund road construction in the advent of higher costs and lower tax revenue?

Transportation Bonds.

Will you expand or cut back government spending? In what areas? How?

I will expand government spending on essential services. For example, I promise to increase funding for K-12 education every year that I am Governor. No excuses. No exceptions. Our children are Minnesota's future, and I will invest in them accordingly.

I will do so by raising taxes on the wealthiest Minnesotans, who are NOT paying their fair share of state and local taxes. Currently, the wealthiest 10% of Minnesotans pay only 3/4ths of their proportionate share in taxes as everyone else. For the wealthiest 1%, they pay only 2/3rds. That's wrong, and if I'm Governor, it will change.

Can you balance the state budget? If so, will you recommend raising revenue or cutting costs to do that?

YES. I will do so, as I explained above, by raising taxes on the wealthiest Minnesotans. If they paid just the same proportionate share as everyone else, it would produce over \$4 billion in the next biennium. That would constitute a "flat tax." I am committed to making our state taxes progressive, before I advocate any other steps.

I will also consider other revenue sources. For example, I have said that I would consider proposing one state-owned and operated casino, near the Mall of America, to provide the state with an estimated \$200 million in revenues and Mystic Lake with some much-needed competition.

I will then wait to see how the national and state economies recover during this year, and for a new revenue forecast in December, before making my final budget recommendations.

Would you support legislation that would allow state agencies to carry money from one biennium to the next?

Within certain defined limits, it's a good idea not to force state agencies to operate on a "spend it or lose it" spending mentality at the end of each fiscal year.

How do you intend to keep the state from experiencing a budget deficit every biennium?

Employment growth and progressive taxes are the two keys to preventing chronic budget deficits. During previous decades, Minnesota ranked among the top ten states, usually the top five, in employment growth. Under Governor Pawlenty, the state has averaged in the bottom ten states with lowest employment growth. Leading Minnesota to future greatness depends upon restoring us to the top states in employment and overall economic growth; then taxing that additional personal income at progressive tax rates.

Innovation. Science and technology have been responsible for half of the growth of the American economy since WWII. But several recent reports question America's continued leadership in these vital areas. What policies will you support to ensure that America remains the world leader in innovation?

1. Education. Education. Education. The best possible public education system, from early childhood, to all-day kindergarten, through K-12, and the state colleges and universities is essential to increased innovation and productivity. That world-class education system, which educated and trained so many of Minnesota's inventors, scientists, business entrepreneurs, and corporate leaders – plus the well-educated, hard-working, and productive people, who worked in those companies and made them successful – was the key to our former world leadership. Good infrastructure, especially good highways and transit to transport workers to and from their workplaces and the products they made to national and world markets; good state and local government services; good health care; and a good quality of life were the other key ingredients in our past success. All of those key ingredients have been damaged by the policies of the past decade. As Governor, I will work with your Members to reverse them.

2. Adopt an "Angel Investor Tax Credit" for High-tech Small Business Start-ups. This tax credit would drastically expand the amount of seed money available for high-tech small business start-ups in Minnesota. Some companies are relocating to Wisconsin because they have this credit and we do not. By adopting it, we can ensure that the 3M's and Medtronic's of tomorrow have enough money to get off the ground today.

Energy. Many policymakers and scientists say energy security and sustainability are major problems facing the United States this century. They are important to Minnesota. What policies would you support to meet demand for energy while ensuring an economically and environmentally sustainable future?

My first energy priority would be to establish a Minnesota Energy Savings Fund. It would invest initially in state government, college, and university buildings: renovate and

reinsulate them to require less energy, retrofit their heating and cooling systems, and utilize alternative energy, all to reduce energy costs. With those savings, the Fund would next invest in public school and local government buildings. Those projects would pay for themselves with energy savings in just 5-7 years, while putting thousands of Minnesotans to work. The program would pioneer Minnesota as a model of energy efficiency, showing the private sector and the rest of the nation how to save money by saving energy.

Education. A comparison of 15-year-olds in 30 wealthy nations found that average science scores among U.S. students ranked 17th, while average U.S. math scores ranked 24th. What role do you think the state government should play in preparing K-12 students for the science and technology driven 21st Century?

The State Government needs to be more proactive about ensuring that Minnesota's students are prepared for 21st century jobs. That requires the necessary funding to lower class sizes and truly engage students. Classrooms throughout our state are overcrowded, and some school districts have cut back to four day school weeks, due to lack of funds.

I would also develop partnerships with high-tech companies, and encourage them to develop mentorship programs with students. By showing those children the real-world value of studying science and math, the private sector can help train the next generation of technology workers.

By developing new initiatives to engage students with math and science while simultaneously increasing funding, Minnesota's students can and will succeed in the 21st century economy.