

Governor Mitch Daniels
Inaugural Remarks
January 12, 2009

A Springtime We Can Summon

As a matter of both good manners and necessity, second helpings should be smaller than first portions. Likewise with second pronouncements on accepting duty in the public's employ.

A moment of worldwide economic anxiety may seem an odd time for words of hope and visions of greatness. All are aware that the days immediately before us will not be traversed without much difficulty.

But we must believe, and resolve to see, that these present troubles are but a frost in April, a brief chill before the full flowering of the greener Indiana to come.

Not even the cold realities of a wintry world economy can obscure the signs of spring in our state. Out of economic erosion and indistinction, Indiana now excels in every assessment of appeal to new plantings of future jobs and prosperity. A blossoming culture of enterprise foretells the coming vigor of a youthful economy that regenerates new sprouts faster than its trusted old branches decay and fall away.

Best of all, a new mentality has taken root, a new boldness born of risks successfully run and change successfully delivered. In overwhelming numbers, Hoosiers have declared that we are unafraid to lead, to try the new before others do, and that we like the results of doing so.

No more will historians write that we are backward and out of step. That we are, at best, "gradualists"¹ who prefer to keep to "the more secure edge of the river."² The Indiana they depicted would never have led the nation in capturing international investment, cutting and reforming property taxes, or bringing peace of mind to those without health insurance. That Indiana would never have devised a way to build public infrastructure in record amounts without a penny of taxes or borrowing, or to liberate the new infrastructure of fiber and frequency in a nationally innovative way.

In dramatic contradiction of old stereotypes, Hoosiers have announced emphatically to a world that belongs to the creative and nimble, where fortune truly favors the bold³, that we not only accept change but are prepared to lead it, and invite the rest of America to follow us.

Early spring is a tentative and unpredictable time. Winter never loses its grip without a struggle. Indiana's new garden will need constant tending, and continual nurture, if it is to remain fertile and hospitable to more growth and opportunity. One of America's great innovators taught "When you're green, you grow. When you're ripe, you rot."⁴ Indiana in our day, with deep and lasting reverence for our ripe traditions, has chosen the green path

of change, with all its newness and uncertainty, with the awkwardness and discomfort that comes with youth. A commitment to rejuvenate our state, and ourselves, through the inevitable setbacks and mistakes, must be the enduring memory and legacy of these years of ours.

Spring's first flowers are always at risk. The frosts of fear can nip the most promising and beautiful of buds. If Hoosiers emerge from our winter's sleep only to see the shadows of our doubts and retreat from them, then winter will return, all the more frigid for the fragile hopes it cuts short. But, unlike the groundhog of fable, we have the outcome in our power. If we choose to face forward, into the sun, casting our shadows behind us, we can summon the springtime, and command it to come.

Today's world deals harshly with the slow, the timid, with those who retreat to the familiar but bleak confines of their hibernation caves. Whatever the perils of action and change, in our time there is far greater danger in hesitation, delay, and fearfulness. Like some recent movie protagonists, it is in swiftness we will find safety; disaster will strike only if we let the bus slow down.⁵

A philosopher of our time observed, "It's not easy being green"⁶, and most surely it is not. But it becomes easier with practice. Each new creative action adds spring to one's step and confidence to move even more boldly to the next challenge. "With firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in."⁷ And that is to leave a brighter, greener Indiana to the young people so soon to follow us.

1. Frick, Robert Greenleaf: A Life of Servant Leadership, p. 50.
2. Madison, The Indiana Way, p. xiii
3. Attributed to Juvenal, Roman historian
4. Attributed to Ray Kroc, founder of McDonald's
5. Speed, 20th Century Fox, 1994
6. Kermit the Frog, *The Muppet Show*, The Jim Henson Company
7. Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Speech, 1865