

WELCOME TO MINNESOTA
Northeastern Forest Nursery Workshop
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Some of you that have been here had a welcome last night. We take some very special pride in being able to host the Northeastern Forest Nursery Workshop. I wanted to be here at least for a few minutes and share some thoughts with you. I wanted to tell you to be a little bit tolerant of our foresters. They are a little bit nervous. They are in the tree hatching business, or tree raising business, and with 30 million babies in their nurseries they are acting like concerned parents and I'm glad of that.

I work for a boss that gets nervous about a few ideas and jumps around a great deal and a lot of his ideas right now are about forestry and things that ought to be done. As a result of that I'm hopping around a lot and last week I was down in Georgia and looked at what they are doing. It's a good shot at any time to get to the Governor and tell him we have been into this for quite awhile. I couldn't wait to get back and talk to our Forestry people about something our Foresters have been a little reluctant to do. It has to do with a little bit of boasting and bragging. I think you're going to have to start doing some of that where ever you happen to be. You've done a good job, you've planted trees and reforested, and you have done your job in a way we have been proud of, but we've found that, most of the time, and in other States too, you put your light under a bushel and I'm here to encourage you, at least those of you who are in this business in our State, to get into the hard sell business. You're going to have to do a little bragging and you are going to have to get this story out to the public and mainly to the Legislators and those people who finance what you're doing. I find out more and more as I go along that they really don't know what's been happening. I've been in Georgia and I had a little chance there recently to point out our own Department on the subject of wood utilization. Everything we have, it was all there, very neatly filed and available for anyone who wanted to use it. The only problem was we weren't getting it to our Legislators and the people who are holding the purse strings. We found out very quickly that the National Energy Agency had borrowed our computer design program for the National Wood Energy application, at least eight States have purchased time on our Forestry computer and they use our program as a model for fuelwood as a home energy source. Many Minnesota facilities, schools, municipal buildings, forest industry are using wood residue as an energy source, and that includes our greenhouse at General Andrews Nursery. But those computer files can't talk, they just sit there and are very humble about what they do, they're silent, but they're just loaded with good bragging stuff. You are in a very dynamic industry, no question about it. Now, with our iron mines in the shape they are here in northern Minnesota, forestry and tourism tie in so closely as being the hope of the future of our State right now. Our economists think our Minnesota forest industries are going to be in full gear again before this year is over. There is also a direct correlation again to tourism, another one of the big four, and with iron mines the way they are, probably one of the big three right now. There are a lot of things going for us, we have multiple use in our State Forests, we have trails, campgrounds, places where people can camp in our State Forest

system. Some of the things that have happened to us, and maybe you folks that are from out of state know a little bit about this, we've had a great reduction in northeastern Minnesota in available lands. Land development that took place with the development of the Voyageur's National Park, and later on, about 1978 Congress put in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and made a pretty big dent in the commercial forest acreage that we have. These factors have reduced our commercial forest lands. An obvious implication of course is the urgent need for more intensified forest practices and fire control. We've been pretty proud of our responses in the last few years to forest fire situations. With the advent of the bombers that we've leased and the hotshot crews and the dedication of our people in the business of fighting forest fires we've now got the forest fires reduced to something like 30 acres which is a big improvement over what it was a few years ago. As a result of that 1973 Legislation that put in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, the Federal Government then agreed for a 3 million dollar per year matching funds grant to the State of Minnesota for a period of 11 years. Our involvement in that is about \$750,000. If we can keep that going we hope that somehow or other the State combination of Federal and State funds can do an awful lot. I think you're entitled to do some boasting in a lot of areas, and I think our technical staff, and we've increased this staff a considerable amount, we've doubled our reforestation on State and County lands, we have stimulated renewed interest in private land activity and this has almost doubled. Of special interest to this audience, our Department nurseries have provided Minnesota with the vast majority of stock seedlings for this revitalized forest industry. I think we've come a long way since the establishment of that first nursery over in Cass county in 1903, and then in 1931 the Badoura Nursery, and in 1939 the General Andrews Nursery opened. I think it was Miles Wiegand who keeps tabs on our nurseries, tells me we have a current nursery inventory of 100,000,000 growing stock. Production during this and the next two years will average between 28 to 30 million annually, and since that first nursery in 1903 we have produced approximately 668,000,000, and during the last three years accomplishments include the investment of over 1 million dollars in improved nurseries, installation of a new seed extractory, cold storage facilities, new wells, irrigations systems, seed bed expansion, and the beginnings of a nursery computer system. This is all good bragging stuff and that's what I'm here to tell you people to do - get out there and let people know what you're doing, and if I could get Miles Wiegand to do a little broadcasting about this kind of accomplishments I think it would be an encouragement to you and all of our guests to do the same thing when you get back to your own States. I know that you have similar accomplishments and similar problems with your Legislators and with people who have direct control of you, administrators, Governors, and those people in high places who have so much to say about what we do. I'm often asked about whether our Department has gotten rid of the political strings or not. Well, that's about the stupidist question anyone could ask. When every dime we get is through the Legislature, everything we do is controlled by what someone's vote may do over there, and when my direct boss is a person that is elected every four years, it's pretty hard to say we are not political. We have to view the political winds. In fact, some of our people that could, or should have been here today are going through the General Andrews Nursery today with a group of people from our appropriations committee and our State Senate. Part of what they see will have some influence on what they do next March when they start talking about funding. I hope that somehow or other while you are here you get a chance to look around a little bit at this countryside that we have here. We think we have one of the most beautiful states in the nation. I've been in quite a few of them and I've seen some beauties in other States, but it's always good, as you feel, to get back home. Right outside your window here is one of the promising fishing resources that we have in the State. The

Atlantic Salmon is coming that we've been planting. Lake trout are coming back, we have the lamprey under control, and through the efforts of one of the leading Legislators in our State, Willard Munger, who heads our Natural Resources Committee, a movement that he started a few years ago, the St. Louis effusion, the river that dumps into Lake Superior, one of the top wildlife producing areas and top fishing areas in the entire country. That was kept a pretty good secret. I was up here on a harbor tour, that's just standard - everytime you bring Legislators up here you have to go on a harbor tour. This particular day I saw a lot of little boats bobbing around out there. I asked the guys then, "what are those guys doing out there", and he said "fishing for walleyes". I said "do they ever get any?" He said, "we'll see", so he pulled the boat up to one and yelled over and asked "how are you doing?" This old gentlemen held up a stringer and he had about four walleyes on it. Another one had a similar stringer. I said, "How long has this been going on?" He said it started last year. I said, "How come somebody didn't tell me?" He said, "We kind of wanted to keep it up here awhile." It has been good, and when you get over just a little farther west and somewhat north, a beautiful area, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, we won't get much chance to get there. We're proud of it. We try to attract tourists, contrary to what you hear about all the fish busts. We think it's about time they slowed up on taking so many fish and started enjoying the act of fishing rather than the meat aspect of it. We do welcome them and we are getting there in a lot of ways, and I hope you do get a chance. We certainly welcome you and it has been a pleasure for me to be a part of this, and I hope you do go back home and do a little bit of bragging. It helps us any time Forestry gets a plus anywhere it helps us in this State. We've come a long way. In fact, I don't know how many of you in other States have had to go through this, and I hope some of our people will bear with me, but I became Commissioner about five years ago and Forestry was under a lot of fire about that time and we were having a lot of public meetings throughout the State - Bemidji, Deer River, and various places and 300 - 400 people would show up, fire in their eyes, everything was wrong, selling procedures were wrong, everything we did, and when you get into Government and criticism sparks there's not much you are going to do right during that period of criticism, so everything we were doing at that time was wrong. We started out on this procedure, and we have a Director who I think is one of the top anywhere, Ray Hitchcock, Ray worked closely with me trying to get to those people and we did, and our Forestry people were instrumental in getting the message out, how they fit into the State's economy and tourism. We worked hard at industry and everything else and gradually we saw that change. I don't think I've been to a hot meeting in three years and believe me I can do without them. I don't like them. It proved to me that it can be done. We have an excellent Department, we have an excellent Division of Forestry, one of the tops in the country and I hope they will make your stay here pleasant. It's pleasant for me to be here with you and I thank you for the invitation.