President Anderson then presented Governor Branstad who delivered the following Condition of the State address:

MR. PRESIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, MR. CHIEF JUSTICE, JUSTICES AND JUDGES, STATE OFFICIALS, SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AND FRIENDS:

This occasion marks my first opportunity to report on the Condition of our State. Thirty-eight previous Iowa governors have delivered such reports to seventy general assemblies.

Each address had been different — tailored to the circumstances of a particular year. Some state of the state messages have been bold, to match the robust mood of Iowans. Other messages have been cautious, in deference to our deliberate way of solving problems.

For those who might want to quickly characterize my speech today, let me simply say that I intend to blend boldness and caution. For I believe that is what Iowa’s condition warrants as we begin the New Year.

Just like the concentric circles on the trunk of a tree, 1984 follows 1983, which was a year full of turbulence and testing.

First, came the devastating drought of summer. Last month, came the bitter blast of winter. Both tested our strength, our endurance, our patience and, some would say, our love of this place we call home.

Many Iowans were tested severely by the lingering national recession in 1983. Some struggled to get by.

A new governor and a new legislature were tested, too. We had to cope with conditions caused by that recession.

How did we fare in 1983? Were we up to those tests? We were—because, fortunately, there is more to being an Iowan than merely residing within our borders.

Stubborn Iowa backbone helped our farmers endure the drought.

Steadfast Iowa compassion, expressed by churches, families and friends, helped the unemployed through months with no paychecks.

Steady Iowa discipline helped state government through the trauma of budget cutting.

Few Americans were tested as much in 1983 as were Iowans. And, few people anywhere met those tests as well as Iowans.

When I travel to the meetings of America’s governors, I am proud to say that I represent the state of Iowa, where our greatest source of strength is each other.

A recent television documentary portrayed what is good about this state. Listen to the words of the narrator, Hal Holbrook, “Iowa is the way America is supposed to be — People here feel connected to one another.”

That kind of closeness provides a natural bond for partnerships—between neighbor and neighbor, between citizen and government, between private resources and public interests.

These kinds of partnerships were the hallmark of my Inaugural Message just one year ago. Let me highlight some of them.

In 1983, Iowans concerned about each other made Project HELPER a tremendous success. Private contributions have weatherized nearly 500 homes in 93 Iowa counties. One of those homes belongs to a widow in Mason City. Recently, she wrote me to express her thanks for “making this old house comfortable again.” Through programs like HELPER, we are trying to reach out to people in need. For instance, we also started a program for widowed Iowans who require special advice or emotional support during their time of stress.

In 1983, I committed my administration to quality for all Iowans. I’m pleased to report that Kathryn Graf of my staff, and members of the 50 States Committee, are completing their review of the Iowa Code. They have identified laws that discriminate — both in language and in application. We will deliver their findings to you very soon.

In 1983, Iowa government pledged pay equity for state employees. And, I look forward to receiving the Comparable Worth Steering Committee’s report next month.

In 1983, I charged a citizen task force with finding practical, cost-effective and efficient suggestions for operating state government. They identified changes that could save at least $32 million. Some will be implemented by Executive Order. Others require legislative action, and are specified in the written addendum to this message.

In addition to all of those initiatives, we began others during 1983.

A Public Records Task Force has been meeting since July to define the proper balance between the public’s right to know and individual privacy. Their report will be on your desks shortly.

Last fall, we held the first Iowa Human Services Forum, where over 400 state leaders discussed a full spectrum of concerns and plans for partnership problem-solving.

These are just a few examples of what was accomplished in Iowa last year. There were many more. Here in the Statehouse, we overcame partisan differences. And in so doing, we did what was right for the people.

This legislative session demands the same kind of cooperation and teamwork.

Though this is an election year, we should avoid political games. Iowans expect more from us. They expect us to work together. They expect us to prepare Iowa for a secure future.

Today, I set forth a plan to accomplish this objective. This plan charts a course for that secure future. This plan capitalizes on our assets and improves our quality of life. This plan calls for:

— Promoting Iowa Exports and Creating Jobs

— Encouraging Educational Excellence

— Protecting Young Iowans

— Curbing Substance Abuse and Drunk Driving

— Toughening Criminal Procedures, and

— Improving Iowa Government

PROMOTING IOWA EXPORTS AND CREATING JOBS

Think about what we did together last year. We gave the Iowa Development Commission a new look, new leadership and new tools to do its job better. We relocated the IDC into a striking new building and started a small business division. We accelerated high technology research and began efforts to promote new Iowa products. We tripled our advertising budget and promoted Iowa as a good place for family vacations.

These steps are important because they enhance our ability to create more Iowa jobs. And, I want to personally thank you for working with me on this priority.

Now, in 1984, we can take yet another giant stride together. Only this time, we will not have to play catch-up. We will deal from a position of strength.

Iowa is already a leading export state — second in America in farm exports and tenth in total exports.

A lot of Iowans who wear blue collars in the factory or blue jeans on the farm owe their jobs to exports — 57,000 workers to be exact.

Those jobs are why we conduct Iowa trade missions and why we will open an Iowa office in Asia this year.

The key to Iowa’s economic future lies with more trade. We can sell more of our raw commodities overseas. We can sell more processed products. We can sell more manufactured goods. I submit that an Iowa World Trade Center would do just that. And it would create thousands of more jobs and prepare Iowa for the 1990s and the 21st century.

Envision, if you will, not just a building, but a gathering place for world buyers to see, taste, and learn about the best of Iowa. The Iowa exhibition area will showcase what we make here. And, a strong coalition of Iowa agricultural interests, linked through the World Trade Center, will increase our impact on federal farm policy.

More than anything else, the Iowa World Trade Center will project Iowa into a stronger position in the global marketplace.

Iowans may correctly ask, “Can we afford to have an Iowa World Trade Center?”

Having seen the trade center in Dallas and knowing what other states are now doing, I ask, “Can we afford not to have an Iowa World Trade Center?”

This complex will also have an educational component. But, we don’t have to wait for a trade center to do more with ag research. I recommend that we begin a Meat Export Technology and Policy Research Group to further develop value-added meat products.

To stimulate more jobs and commerce, we should authorize port authorities and increase the bonding authority of the Small Business Loan Program.

Further, tax abatement provided to new industrial real estate should extend to warehouse and distribution facilities—a way to bring about new Iowa jobs in this growing segment of the economy.

Today, I ask you to remove a major impediment to economic development. I ask again for a balance, reasonable approach to Iowa’s Unemployment Trust Fund.

Last June, I signed an unemployment bill which I didn’t like. The consequences of not signing it would have been too extreme. I acted because legislative leaders assured me they would do better next year. Well, next year is here, and I await your action.

If we continue the ambitious jobs agenda launched in 1983, if we invest in an Iowa World Trade Center, if we enact the other incentives I’ve just outlined, we will do much for the economic health of this state, for our future, and for our people.

ENCOURAGING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Few issues present us with as good an opportunity to measure our progress as does education.

My colleague, Lamar Alexander, the Governor of Tennessee and a real champion of quality education, stated at a public forum in Des Moines last fall that his goal is to see his state where Iowa is today in terms of education excellence.

All of us can take pride in Iowa’s educational system. But, we should always seek to improve that system. With other states following Iowa’s pace, we cannot be satisfied with the status quo. We must stay ahead of the curve, and we will.

That is why last year we passed inventives for math, science and foreign language education to help Iowa schools and Iowa students.

That is why, despite the need for major cuts in next year’s budget, I have spared state school aid. We will provide, for the first time, over $700 million in state aid to local school districts for the 1984-1985 school year.

This year, we should expand the curriculum available to Iowa students by increasing opportunities for shared education programs. We can allow schools to request additional money for staff development. And we have a quarter-million dollar budget item for a school computer software clearinghouse.

We intend to accomplish more. In coming years, we must improve teacher preparation and teacher salaries. The forthcoming findings of our ongoing education and taxation studies, to be completed later this year, will help design this next dimension of support for our schools.

Higher education is equally vital to this state’s future. And, you can show your pride in Iowa, Iowa State, UNI and our merged area schools, by fully funding my recommendations. To support our independent college students, you should take another step to increase Iowa’s Tuition Grant Program.

We would like to do still more for education at all levels, but keep in mind that over one-half of this budget puts dollars into our classrooms — another sizeable investment in Iowa’s future.

PROTECTING YOUNG IOWANS

Our motive for achieving long-term economic security and educational excellence is the well-being of our children. Young Iowans will build on the foundation we lay for them today. So it is appropriate that this general assembly pay special attention to protecting Iowa’s children. Here are some thoughtful things we can do for them.

Strong parental support is key to the growth and development of our young Iowans. If a parent fails to meet court-ordered child support, we should automatically withhold money from that individual’s paycheck.

In addition, I recommend other changes for the sake of Iowa’s children, such as strengthening penalties for interfering with visitation rights.

Also, I believe sexual abuse laws should be expanded to include parents. And, penalties for this criminal act should be increased.

Whenever an Iowa child is missing, our hearts go out to the family. We share their anxiety and anguish. To help find these missing children, we should waive any waiting period that would prevent law enforcement from taking immediate action.

Let me add one other thought. All of us who are adults know that we should wear seat belts. In fact, our six-year old daughter, Allison, always reminds us to “buckle-up.” But what about small children who can’t protect themselves? Infant seats offer a measure of safety, and I believe it is time to require their use here in Iowa.

It is in our best interest to protect Iowa’s children. More importantly, it is in their best interest. We cannot guarantee our children a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. But we can guard them while they are growing up.

CURBING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND DRUNK DRIVING

If I were asked to identify a cause that seems to have captured the concern of both young and old Iowans, I would point to substance abuse and drunk driving.

Iowans are tired of irresponsible actions that result in the needless loss of life. Iowans are tired of fearing for the future of young people who haven’t learned to be responsible. Iowans are tired of the substance abuser who remains a chronic drain on our welfare programs.

Thanks to two gubernatorial task forces which studied the state’s liquor system and our drunk driving laws, we have a number of credible recommendations for attacking these problems.

My budget provides an additional $4.7 million for substance abuse programs. For these dollars we can:

1. Offer better rehabilitation, and clear up the backlog of people needing help at treatment centers.

2. Enhance our drug and alcohol education and prevention programs.

3. Relieve Iowa counties of financial responsibility for substance abuse treatment.

I believe a modest increase in the cost of buying beer and liquor is a small price to pay for improving our society’s health and well-being.

Over the course of the past year, many Iowans have expressed their concern about this state’s legal drinking age. It’s important, however, that we not penalize those young adults who are responsible citizens. So, I propose a provisional driver’s license for young Iowans from 16 to 21. After any alcohol related violation, the license would be lifted until they reach that age of 21.

As part of this crackdown, we should tighten up the availability of alcohol at certain times and places, which my program does.

Finally, penalties for drunk driving should be increased, and no offender should avoid punishment through a deferred or suspended sentence.

Some 241 people died in alcohol related accidents in our state last year. That is about equal to the number of you who are seated in front of me right now in this chamber. We cannot bring back those 241 lives. But we can heed the outcry of Iowa citizens over drunk driving. It is our duty as elected officials to act and to act now, to save lives in the years ahead.

TOUGHENING CRIMINAL PROCEDURES

Drunk driving isn’t the only crime that concerns me. And when it comes to thwarting crime, you will always know where I stand.

During the past year, some to the top people in state government worked to coordinate Iowa’s criminal justice planning. I have carefully scrutinized their ideas, and today I send you a series of timely ideas to toughen our handling of law breakers.

These are a logical follow-up to creating the Department of Corrections and adding bed-space at our institutions .

Specifically, I urge eliminating any reduction in mandatory minimum sentences by use of good and honor time.

In my program you will also find proposals to curtail computer crime, prohibit the sale of drug paraphernalia and establish a central file for juvenile records.

Crime cuts across every element of society. No person and no class of people is immune. Our state troopers, sheriffs and deputies, local police and prison guards expect us to help, not hinder their work. We owe them our serious consideration of these proposals. Our resolve to deal effectively with the perpetrators of crime is absolutely critical.

IMPROVING IOWA GOVERNMENT

We have a tradition here in Iowa of quality government. We try not to let day-to-day problems cloud our focus on long-term challenges. Moreover, we are a good partner with local governments. To improve that partnership, I again ask that you allow cities and counties to enact local option taxes, provided they are approved by a majority of local voters.

It is not wise to shove state financial responsibilities onto cities and counties. In fact, despite our budget dilemma, I am proposing we pick up some of the burdens from local taxpayers.

In addition, I suggest authorizing local government investment pools to help hold down property taxes.

-O-

Property tax relief was one of my priorities in shaping this budget.

Last year, we were forced to impose a one-cent sales tax increase, cut budgets, and then later, come back and cut again.

We were not alone. Thirty-one other states passed tax increases last year, and forty-one states reduced spending.

Just because our problems are shared does not make them easier. We were aided by state employees who agreed to accept a pay freeze and by administrators who worked overtime to provide good service with fewer staff.

This year, we must budget without raising major taxes. We must avoid the temptation of quick-fix, money-making gimmicks. For the most part, we must solve our problems on the spending side of the ledger.

To achieve the necessary reduction, I have carried forward the 2.8 percent cut from this year’s budget. This means I have reduced the increase previously recommended. But, I have exempted school aid and property tax credits from cuts in next year’s budget. Most programs, especially human services, will receive more money to keep pace with demands, enrollments and caseloads.

This budget reflects Iowa’s needs and directs dollars to meet those needs. Let me cite a few, in addition to those already mentioned.

During this, our “State Year of the Soil,” we are adding another one-half million dollars for soil conservation cost-sharing. This brings us to over $9 million for saving our soil, double what we were spending just four years ago.

I also call for comprehensive changes in the Road Use Tax Fund to improve Iowa’s infrastructure. And, at the same time, we c.an make logical changes in what is funded from gas tax money.

There are dollars to continue weatherizing state buildings, which will hold down energy costs and save millions in tax dollars. Also, I recommend a tax credit for installing energy-efficient solar hot water heating systems.

I believe we should establish an income tax check-off to speed-up restoration of the State Capitol and construction of the new Historical Building. Both are high priorities for which funds are included in this budget.

One week from today, we will Celebrate the Centennial of this beautiful building. One hundred years from now, when Iowans commemorate the Capitol Bicentennial, they will thank us for this restoration.

Then are other priorities in this budget and in my program. I hope you will carefully review the documents we are sending you, so you can appreciate the full scope of our planning and hard work. I am presenting you a balanced budget, and I believe a balanced program. I especially want you to consider the larger issues outlined this morning.

We must support economic development and jobs by marketing more Iowa exports.

We must ensure that young Iowans receive the very best educational opportunities.

We must look to the needs of younger Iowans who deserve our special protection.

We must take aggressive action to curb substance abuse and crackdown on drunk driving.

We must toughen our criminal procedures and promote public safety.

And, we must further improve government efficiency to guarantee taxpayers a fair return on their dollars.

Iowans want good service and good value from government, and they deserve both. Our challenge is to fulfill those expectations.

In the days, weeks and months ahead, I will work with you. So will the competent people employed in the executive branch.

-O-

All of us come to this seat of government with a passion to serve Iowa. Some of us have family ties dating back to when Governor Ansel Briggs addressed the first legislative session. We are proud of those family histories and of this state’s heritage.

We are a part of the fabric of this state—a tapestry richly woven with the character and caring of three million fiercely independent men, women and children.

This colorful tapestry is not a finished piece. Everyday, in Iowa’s communities and classrooms, in our factories, and on our farms—wherever there are challenges, choices and decisions, there is also action, growth and progress. New threads are being woven into that Iowa tapestry.

This year, this session, public priorities will be debated and public funds allocated. But what really counts is what we contribute to Iowa’s condition and how we better that condition.

The process will work if we allow it to. It can work well if we want it to.

I want it to work, and work well. And I trust you do too.

Thank you.

Governor Branstad was escorted from the House chamber by the committee previously appointed.