Iowa always has been a land of great opportunity. The earliest Iowans, the Sac and Fox tribes among them, lived well and prosperously from our soil’s great bounty. Pioneering Americans were drawn to our great rolling prairies, as they moved westward in the 19th century and settled here to make new lives for themselves. Later, newcomers came from Ireland, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Holland, and Czechoslovakia to this land of promise. They made Iowa their home, as did their children and their children’s children.

Opportunity has always been here for the taking, here for anyone with a sense of adventure and a spirit of exploration.

Today, more than at any time in the past, Iowa is a place of great potential. But in order to seize the limitless opportunities that lie ahead, we, too, must be willing to dare and to challenge the status quo.

For our future of promise does not depend on a continuation of the old ways and of the old economy built on low commodity prices and low-tech jobs. This path has led to below-average family incomes and stagnant population growth. Rather, our future of promise must be based on a new economy. A new economy that uses genetic codes, computer chips, and other science and technology marvels to create new frontiers.

A new economy that relies on well-educated and productive workers, is energized by dynamic, global markets, rewards innovation and creativity, and is driven by rapidly growing, technologically connected small businesses. Such a new economy will lead to higher incomes for working Iowans and their families and a better quality of life for all Iowans.

Iowans can, and Iowans should, lead this new economy.

But leadership will require courage—the courage to change. Working together, we’ve achieved much in the past. We’ve reduced class sizes in the early grades, improving opportunities for basic skills learning. We’ve begun to make our communities safer by reducing the supply of dangerous drugs like meth. We’ve enhanced our natural resources through aggressive private land conservation, helping to clean up our rivers and streams. We’ve expanded health care to thousands of children through an expansion and better outreach of the Hawk-I health insurance plan. Despite all that and more, there is still much work ahead of us.

As I reflect on our mission to lead the new economy, I am drawn to lessons learned in our history. Nearly 200 years ago, Thomas Jefferson understood that America’s promise was contained in a new, expanding economy. He was drawn to the possibilities and promise of the West. And in 1803, he won approval from Congress for his visionary project—what was to become one of America’s greatest adventure stories. He commissioned two men eager for knowledge, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, to explore new territory and to chart a course to new opportunity. Lewis and Clark planned and prepared. They put together a team of talented, innovative people. They relied on the expertise of their team members—a native American woman, Sacagawea, who welcomed these strangers to a new land and helped them communicate by translating the Native American languages and an African-American slave named York who helped to make critical decisions about routes to take which guaranteed their safe return. They took risks, and they used the latest technologies. And they were absolutely determined to, committed to, succeeding.

This brave group of adventurers had to rely on each other in order to succeed. For four years, Lewis and Clark and their team experienced the absolute wonder of discovery. Their explorations included Iowa: During their epic journey, Lewis and Clark traveled along Iowa’s western border—and even buried one of their own in our soil.

Because they found a way to work together toward a common goal, they were able to open new territories to a young nation. They opened paths to previously uncharted territories. Succeeding generations seized these new opportunities and built a nation, a strong great nation—an American nation—nothing less than the strongest and most bountiful nation in history.

Today, let us commit ourselves to the challenges of transforming to a new economy and leading it with the spirit of teamwork and dedication to a common goal that drove Lewis and Clark. Let us, through our work together here and now, help Iowans seize the limitless opportunities of the new economy.

Let us build an Iowa that, with each succeeding generation, will become only better and stronger.

There are over 500,000 children going to schools across the state in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Each child has their own dream, their own developing potential, and their own educational need. A quality education provided by quality teachers makes a dream come true, the potential realized and the need met. If we are to transition to a new economy and lead it, we must start by transforming our schools and continue the commitment to excellence and high student achievement.

Two Iowans who already have committed to Iowa’s leadership in the new economy are Marvin Pomerantz and John Forsyth. Each of these men understands the critical role that a high-quality education plays in the new economy. Last year, Marvin and John worked separately and jointly with educators, administrators, parents, school board members, and business leaders to develop a framework that will significantly improve student achievement by enabling Iowa schools to recruit and to retain quality teachers.

Their plan is driven by a simple principle: For our children to achieve their very best, they must be taught by the very best.

The single most important factor in a quality education—beyond involved parents—is a quality teacher. For years, Iowans have been blessed with many quality teachers. However, we can no longer take quality teachers for granted. In a world of opportunity, quality comes at a price.

Today, fewer young people are going into teaching. Beginning teaching salaries are thousands of dollars less than the starting salaries of most jobs available to high-achieving college graduates.

Many young people who make the choice to teach soon leave the profession. In Iowa, 28% of our teachers leave the classroom after the first three years for better opportunities. We lose 17% of our teachers in the first year alone, and that’s about twice the national average. School officials are faced with the fact that up to 40% of Iowa’s classroom teachers will be retiring within the next ten years.

As Iowa tries to recruit and retain talented teachers, so does the rest of the nation. The nation will need 2.2 million teachers over the next ten years but is equipped to educate and prepare only 1.4 million. That means there will be a shortage of 800,000 teachers. And as Iowa seeks to compete for that shrinking supply, our teacher salaries rank 35th in the nation.

If Iowa is to lead the new economy, our children must be high achievers, taught by the best teachers. Thanks to the work of Marvin Pomerantz and John Forsyth and their teams, work supported by legislative leaders from both chambers and from both sides of the aisle, we have a plan to do just that.

Recognizing that quality is about more than dollars and cents, this plan outlines how we can better develop and support quality teachers. The plan challenges all involved with student learning to aim high and to constantly improve.

The plan to improve student achievement has four basic elements.

First, it requires a rigorous course of study to become a teacher and participation in a multiyear induction or mentoring program in the first two years of teaching, which will guarantee teachers who are better-prepared for the classroom and better-supported once they’ve begun teaching.

Second, it establishes a research-based program of continuing education designed to improve student learning.

Third, it proposes to strategically increase teacher pay by fixing base pay at levels linked to the national labor market for teachers that will allow Iowa to remain competitive for talent.

Finally, it creates a variable pay program that rewards teachers, administrators, and certified staff for annual improvements in student achievement.

All of these simply reflect one of Iowa’s oldest and most deeply held values—excellence in education.

Joining John Forsyth are the Iowans who worked in the development of this framework, as well as a number of Iowa’s board-certified teachers and Milken Foundation grantees. These are teachers who have reached the pinnacle of their careers through hard work and continuing education. These are the teachers who have helped our students to excel. They model the career development, the commitment to quality, and the love of the calling reflected in the plan presented for your consideration. Please join me in thanking each of them for their contribution to our children, our future, and the future of Iowa.

The success of this plan depends in part on adequate funding. The framework will take several years to fully implement. During that time, some of the resources should and must come from dollars already allocated to our K-12 programs. But new funds also will be required.

Discussion of new funding often is a discussion of choices. But ensuring higher student achievement is no longer a choice. It is a requirement if we wish to transition to a new economy and lead it.

To reflect the priority that I believe we should place on this effort, I propose in the budget presented to you an initial first-year investment of $40 million in new state dollars. I propose that we make this significant investment now, in the form of a supplemental appropriation, before any other budget decisions are made.

We must all work together, in a bipartisan way, to transform our system. But this level of first-year funding will show real commitment. Appropriating first-year funding now shows the depth of that commitment—a commitment to change and to leadership in the new economy.

Last year, a team of talented Iowans showed their own commitment to change and to leadership with a blueprint for Iowa’s future in the next ten years. Led by David Oman, a Republican, and Betsy Brandsgard, a Democrat, these bold thinkers made many recommendations for action. One of the principal recommendations revolved around their conclusion that by the year 2010, Iowans should be electronically connected to each other and to the world. They predicted that our access to emerging technologies would move Iowa to the forefront in education, e-commerce, medicine, and e-government. They predicted a revitalized new economy for Iowa, built on technology.

Creating a new economy and leading it will require affordable access to the Internet and other advanced telecommunications services—for all Iowans.

During my walk across Iowa, I visited many great small communities like Turin, Iowa, population 75. Sixty years ago, the leaders of that community made the decision not to invest in the new technology of that era—sanitary sewers. That decision has impact yet today, for the community cannot attract a convenience store that would make access to basic groceries more convenient. We have a chance to bring the world to the people of Turin, and hundreds of similar-sized communities, and help make Iowa a leader in the new economy. But we must move now to bring emerging technologies everywhere in Iowa at a price we can afford. In order for all Iowans to have that affordable access, there must be a strong, collaborative partnership between the public and private sectors.

Today, I ask for your support for the development of an Advanced Telecommunications Alliance. This alliance would bring public and private sector leaders in telecommunications together in a formal structure to design an advanced telecommunications service plan for Iowa. At this inception, we should challenge this new alliance to electronically link all Iowans with each other and with the world by 2005—a full five years before the prediction of the Strategic Planning Council.

I am confident that those telecommunications leaders will get the job done, if Iowans understand the enormous opportunities that such connections allow. Achieving that understanding will be easier if technical planning and assistance, identifying the benefits of being connected, is available.

To help communities access that planning and technical assistance, we should create a fund—a Digital Communities Account. Making resources available to communities through the account will accelerate the understanding of the importance and the potential of being connected. Such an understanding will create the demand for services to which the private sector will respond. When that occurs, every Iowan, from grandparents wishing to e-mail their grandchildren to large business owners or small business owners needing access to global markets, will have access to advanced telecommunication services—a prerequisite to leadership in the new economy.

Today, Iowans lead busy, and at times, complicated lives. We balance family and friends, work, community and church responsibilities. We need a government that helps us deal with these responsibilities and reflects our values.

When we need information or services from state government, we have a right to expect accuracy, efficiency and quality. E-government, information, and services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, will help meet our expectations and make things a little easier and a lot more convenient.

Working together, we can create E-government so that every Iowan who seeks information, applies for a license or permit, or files a tax return or other document, will be able to do so whenever and however is most convenient for them.

Let us accept the challenge of 100% E by 2003. Iowans need it. Leadership of a new economy requires it.

In the same vein, we need a more accountable government. Accountability is a core Iowa value. We can and we should reflect that value in our statutory law defining how we govern and decide. That is why we ask for your support of the Accountable Government Act. Under the Act, the executive branch would strategically plan, develop performance measurements to gauge progress, and budget according to the desired results. We would be required to annually report to citizens and welcome regular performance reviews. We would be equipped to make decisions on data when limited resources require choices.

Working together, let us adopt the Accountable Government Act. When coupled with the mandate for fiscal responsibility and saving contained in our Constitution and prior budget reform acts, the Accountable Government Act will complete the effort to have a government with the values of the people it serves. A government well suited to help us lead the new economy.

Recently, I had the privilege of welcoming to the Governor’s office two of Iowa’s top, young scholars—Colin Holtze and Dana Hansen. These two young people are in their first year of college—Colin at Duke and Dana at Iowa State. What must we do today to maximize our chances of having these two bright, young people, and thousands like them, shape Iowa’s future?

I believe the answer lies in transforming our economy and leading the new economy—particularly in areas where Iowa has a competitive advantage. Younger Iowans may know that Iowa boasts some of the richest, most productive soil in the world—land that has fed a nation and has helped to feed a world. But do they also understand the power of the research and development taking place on our university campuses or at businesses located across the state? Work that will expand the uses of our crops from food and fiber to cures for cystic fibrosis and other illness, to renewable, cleaner burning fuels, and to biodegradable materials suitable for manufacturing a wide variety of products.

Imagine a world where rosemary is used for more than adding flavor to food. Imagine a day when it will produce an antioxidant that wards off illness or disease. Imagine a world where pharmaceutical drugs are no longer needed to treat illness and disease because gene therapy has prevented the illness or disease in the first place. Imagine a world where the effects of weather on crops can be managed by applying a substance to plants already planted, that will enable the plants to adjust to unexpected weather patterns. Iowans do not have to imagine such a world. We live in it—right here in Iowa—just ask the folks at Kemin Industries in Des Moines, the Plant Science Center at Iowa State University or the Biomedical Centers at the University of Iowa.

Iowa’s formulae for keeping and attracting the talent of tomorrow requires a change in economic development philosophy to promote industry clusters of the life sciences, advanced manufacturing, information solutions, continued investment in research and development, and additional support for entrepreneurs.

Let us invite young people to Iowa’s exciting future through the use of traditional economic development tools in new ways to develop the industry clusters of life sciences for companies like Kemin and Trans Ova, for advanced manufacturers like Rockwell Collins and Maytag, and information solutions for companies like ABC Virtual Communications and Diversified Software Industries. Let us invite young people to Iowa’s exciting future through increased investment in the cutting-edge research and development taking place at our regents universities. Let us invite young people to Iowa’s future through increased investment in entrepreneurship with a tax credit for investors, providing the venture capital for new start-ups.

Let us begin today to extend the invitation to higher incomes, better quality of life, and leadership in the new economy.

The new economy will not help everyone. The over 100,000 workers in Iowa earning the minimum wage likely will not be helped. A majority of them are women, and many are raising families. The purchasing power of the minimum wage today is much less than it was in 1982. If we are to restore the purchasing power of the minimum wage and provide a better chance for women and their children in particular, we should raise the minimum wage by $1.00 over the next two years. Currently, a person making minimum wage, working 40 hours a week, makes a little over $10,500 a year. With two wage earners at that level, a family of four would still qualify for some levels of assistance. Let us restore some measure of dignity for a hard day’s work. Let us raise the minimum wage so that many Iowans working full time don’t need assistance, but can have the satisfaction of doing it all on their own.

My time with you today is limited and does not allow a full discussion of all the proposals designed to help Iowa move forward. Rest assured that a continued and expanded effort at protecting and enhancing our natural resources and expanding cultural and recreational opportunities remain a priority. More resources for Vision Iowa, Enrich Iowa, REAP, Destination Parks, the Clean Water Initiative, and private land conservation are proposed. We will persist in our efforts for more local control over the location of large livestock facilities, and we will support an expansion of Iowa’s successful Bottle Bill called for by an ever-growing grassroots environmental effort.

Jarren Ozburn, Trevor Boldra, and Joel Vasquez. Who are these Iowans? They were Iowans with compelling, untold, and tragic stories. They were Iowans who never experienced the joy of learning something new. They will not experience the joy of falling in love, of welcoming new life into the world. They were children in Iowa who, along with Shelby Duis and seven more children, died recently as a result of child abuse. These 11 children join seven adults who died from domestic abuse last year. They join the 65 children and adults who have died from abuse in the last five years—a number that would grow if we had accurate figures of elder abuse. A number that would grow by tens of thousands if we added those physically and psychologically hurt by abuse.

Shelby Duis’ bruised and battered body put a name, a face, and a story to abuse in Iowa. Tragically, before her death and after her death, there were many others.

How many have to be injured or die before we get serious about abuse? How many have to be injured or die before we increase the protection services and improve training? How many have to be injured or die before we recognize the link between substance abuse, mental illness, and violence, and support strategies that work to break the cycle—like insurance parity and treatment?

Leadership in a new economy will mean little if our hearts are hardened to the cries of the most vulnerable. We will honor and bring meaning to all those who have lost their lives to senseless violence by fully and comprehensively dealing with abuse in this state. Today, let us pledge not with our words, but our actions to do what is required to protect the most vulnerable among us. Let us not be satisfied with half measures. Let us commit the full measure of devotion to the task of stopping abuse—of stopping abuse in Iowa, now.

I began this morning by talking about our state’s history. It was built by hard work and with a strong sense of community. And it was built by people who came here from all over the world. From the beginning, immigrants have come to our state and helped it to prosper. As they became new Iowans, and added to our economic wealth, their diversity also brought strength and cultural richness to our state.

Historian Stephen Ambrose has said that the story of Lewis and Clark is America’s story. It is the story of a diverse group of people, working for a common goal, who came together. They could not have succeeded in or survived their journey of exploration had they not done so. They proved that there is nothing that men and women cannot do if they act as a team dedicated to a common purpose.

The challenges that lie ahead of us are large and many. The opportunities that lie ahead are greater and more numerous. And if we can come together, work together toward a common purpose, we will create an Iowa high tech enough to lead a new economy and high touch enough to protect its most vulnerable.

The Iowa of today, like the America of 200 years ago, is a land of unlimited potential. Two centuries ago, our nation turned to two men to chart the course to new opportunities. Iowa today will turn to literally thousands of well-educated, productive citizens to chart new territory. With our collective work here, now we will decide if children’s dreams will come true in Iowa, if a small-business owner in the smallest of our communities can have access to the world here in Iowa, if the bio-revolution will find a home in Iowa, or if our compassion is strong enough to break a cycle of violence and abuse or stop prejudice.

In 1805, a couple of years into their journey, Meriwether Lewis wrote in his journal, “The party are in excellent health and spirits, zealously attached to the enterprise, and anxious to proceed, not a whisper of murmur or discontent to be heard among them, but all act in unison, and with the most perfect harmony.”

As we embark on our journey, let it be said of us as well.

Thank you, and God bless you and our great state.