

GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
Friday, March 30, 2007

This is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

Michigan's favorite rite of spring is just around the corner – yup, opening day for our beloved Detroit Tigers is Monday. Last season was so great – the Tigers reminded us how great it feels to have hope and big dreams; they made summer and fall so much more thrilling, and we're all rooting for them to have another terrific run this year.

In this season of renewal and hope, Michigan continues to grapple with tough economic times. But we're pushing forward with our comprehensive economic plan every day, and we are beginning to see results.

In March alone, companies prepared to invest over half a billion dollars in Michigan, creating and retaining nearly 15,000 jobs. This includes Netlink Group, a software company; Lycera Corporation, a start-up pharmaceutical business; and the Hybrid Development Center, which is a joint venture between GM, Daimler Chrysler, and BMW.

As we take this stubborn economy head-on and try to succeed on the same remarkable scale that we did last century, we draw inspiration and hope from our heritage. But we must be mindful that globalization and an evolving world make it critical for us to find a new route to success in this new economy.

The kids who grow up today dreaming of making the big leagues aren't just competing against other kids from the U.S. They're competing against kids from South Korea and Japan and the Dominican Republic. Frankly, it's a whole new ball game.

And, the same is true economically. In the global marketplace, we have to adapt and adjust and improve our economic development strategies to stay competitive with countries in Asia and Central America and other places.

When we succeed in attracting cutting-edge industries – technology companies, life sciences businesses, and alternative energy ventures – we are once again leading the nation and the world.

And there are other signs of good things to come. A recent survey by the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation ranked Michigan fourth in the country in industry research and development, a great indicator of future economic growth. They also placed Michigan among the top 10 states in foreign investments – businesses from other countries see that Michigan is a smart place to build and grow.

And the Center on Education Policy reported that two-thirds of Michigan schools that were not meeting minimum standards hit their achievement targets last year. That means we are doing a better job of preparing our kids to succeed in the new economy and in life.

So with spring in the air and opening day right around the corner, we have plenty to be hopeful about in Michigan's future. This spring, let's be believers in the Tigers and in our great state.

Thank you for listening.