

Governor Gary R. Herbert Inaugural Address
Monday, Jan. 3, 2011
“Legacy of Leadership”

Good afternoon. Thank you, General Tarbet, for that kind introduction. As we begin today, I would like to recognize several people:

- President Waddoups,
- Speaker-elect Lockhart,
- Chief Justice Durham,
- First Lady Norma Matheson,
- Governor Bangerter,
- Governor Leavitt,
- Governor Walker,
- Governor, and now Ambassador, Huntsman,
- President Uchtdorf from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,
- Pastor Davis from the Calvary Baptist Church,
- My close associate and friend, Lt. Governor Greg Bell, and his wife, JoLynn,
- And especially my wife, our First Lady, Jeanette.
- To our congressional delegation, our state legislators and local elected officials,
- To all of those who lead us in our communities, in our businesses and in our civic affairs.

And to all Utahns, I extend my greetings and my best wishes at this time of inauguration.

I cannot listen to our national anthem, especially in a setting as spectacular as this rotunda of the Utah State Capitol, without a burning feeling of pride in being an American!

This song and symbol of our freedom serves to remind us that the price of liberty is steep, and the price is still being paid today. To those in the military who have and who continue to defend our nation abroad, to those who provide public safety for us here at home and to their families who sacrifice so much, on behalf of the entire state, I express a heartfelt “thank you.”

For me, it is indeed a special honor to have four former governors join us at this inauguration. There are but a few recorded instances in Utah history when there have been five governors gathered as they are here today.

I am humbled, inspired and I thank them for their presence.

I recognize – and appreciate much more fully today than ever before – the great *legacy of leadership* that we in Utah have historically enjoyed. We have been blessed with great governors who have provided extraordinary leadership through critical and often difficult times.

Every governor has faced important challenges: economic and energy crises; hosting the world at the Winter Olympics; natural disasters; the ever increasing encroachment of the federal government; and, of course, the perennial challenge of providing the very best education and career opportunities for the rising generation.

The challenges that confront Utah today, especially given the economic crisis that has impacted all Americans over the past few years, are as daunting and as serious as anything I can recall.

We have experienced the loss of jobs, the loss of homes, and the loss of retirement savings. Our students worry about finding employment once they finish their studies.

Yet, the citizens of this state have continued to show the “can do” spirit of our great heritage and are overcoming these challenges using the same determination, innovation and hard work that Utahns have shown throughout our state's history.

Lt. Governor Bell and I pledge to confront today’s challenges in the same way. We will work tirelessly and aggressively in a manner consistent with the heritage of our state and with the example demonstrated by the great leaders in attendance here today.

I am familiar with the challenges brought on by economic hardship. In the 1980s, I was a young real estate agent during some very tough times. Due to extremely high interest rates and a bad market, real estate was very difficult to buy or sell in Utah. For a time, there was very little income in the Herbert household. It was the Christmas season, and we realized that our traditional gift giving would not be possible.

Jeanette gathered our five children and told them that in lieu of shopping, each child would use their own creativity to make a homemade gift for each other. Our children were very young at the time, the oldest being nine and the youngest had just turned one. Their gifts ranged from treasure boxes made of scrap wood and paint to children’s handcrafted Christmas tree ornaments and T-shirts decorated with iron-on Crayon drawings.

We have never seen the kids so excited on Christmas morning. They could hardly wait to see the looks on their siblings’ faces when the gifts they had so carefully crafted could finally be exchanged and opened. This demonstration of selfless giving and ingenuity resulted in what is now remembered as one of our best Christmases ever.

We learned a great deal in our family during those tough times, as so many other families have learned while facing their own challenges. We learned to appreciate what we had, and we learned that happiness comes from serving each other.

We learned how to be innovative, we learned how to be industrious and we learned how to make do with what we had.

As a state government, Utah must do no less than what is expected of its people and its families. Let us be disciplined, let us be innovative, let us be industrious and let us live within our means.

Let us also be forward thinking, as Utah’s demographics are ever changing. Who would have ever believed that a state of cowboys and copper miners would grow into a state that now also includes world-renowned human genetic researchers and aerospace scientists?

Utah's strength always has been, and always will be, its people.

This state is filled with wonderful, caring people who are dedicated to serving others. People who work side by side, committed to the common good. There is no place in the world where there is more volunteerism and community service than there is here in Utah.

True charity comes from each of us reaching out a hand to help our neighbor, not from the overreaching hand of government.

Utah's people are ambitious, hard-working and we strive for excellence. We pride ourselves in our self-reliance. We are, after all, the Beehive State! Our motto is "industry."

Our business community has rallied and is doing everything possible to grow and to expand, to protect jobs and to create new jobs. The state's small business activity is rated the best in America, and the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well right here in Utah.

Utah's labor force is growing. It is vibrant, it is high-tech savvy and it is extremely productive. I am committed to doing everything I can to ensure our workforce is provided with continued educational opportunities that will enable these workers to compete in the global marketplace. And not just to compete, but to win!

We are fortunate in Utah to have people who are willing to stand up, who work together and who create success through teamwork and collaboration. With the daunting challenges we face today, this truly is the time for unprecedented partnerships!

A few months ago, Jeanette and I watched proudly as our son-in-law, Ben Cahoon, broke the record for the most receptions by any player in Canadian Football League history. It was a proud moment for the CFL and for Ben, and it was a great moment for our family.

And while the feat itself was impressive, what impressed me the most was what took place after Ben broke the record. In a follow-up interview, Ben was asked about the secret of his success.

Instead of pointing to himself, he gave credit to his coaches – both past and present.

He gave credit to the efforts of his teammates in all phases – the defensive players that allowed the offense to get on the field and the offensive linemen who blocked opposing tacklers so that the quarterback had time to throw.

He gave credit to fellow receivers for blocking downfield and drawing off potential defenders.

Ben acknowledged that none of his success would have been possible without a quarterback who threw him the ball and the unselfish effort of his teammates, who executed their assignments and put themselves on the line time after time.

As a state, our work moving forward requires this same kind of approach.

As one member of Team Utah, this story serves as a reminder to me that good governance, good leadership and good citizenship are truly collaborative efforts. It requires the commitment and skills of all people if we are going to continue to move the football down the field.

We are a state that celebrates its diversity, and we are known as a place of warm welcome and great compassion. Our people are as diverse as our red rock desert is from our snow-capped mountains. This is a wonderful part of Utah's heritage, and we will continue with that legacy.

And as we move forward and face the challenges of today, we must adhere to the time-proven principles of good government.

As a state, we will continue to make government more responsive, more efficient and more taxpayer friendly.

As a state, we will continue to make education our top priority, knowing that education is a key component to a vibrant and growing state economy.

As a state, we will do all that we can to support and keep our focus on the private sector to promote economic expansion and job creation. And let me underscore: America's traditional system of free enterprise is the only means to long-term job security and economic prosperity.

As a state, we will preserve individual liberties and rights, while at the same time promoting individual responsibility and self-reliance.

As a state, we will advocate states' rights and we will vigorously resist the increasing burden of federal intrusion into our lives.

Utah has demonstrated the innovation, the fiscal restraint and the problem-solving skills that can play an important role in providing solutions to the problems that confront America.

And, as we lead by example, we will continue to exercise fiscal responsibility and budget discipline while maintaining the highest standards of openness and transparency.

We are making progress, and we are doing it in a disciplined and a thoughtful way that will achieve both immediate and long-term success.

I see in the people of this state a unique character, a spirit of determination and a pioneer heritage that makes all things possible.

Yes, I am an optimist. And for good reason. I honor and respect our past and I am filled with confidence and hope for our future because I believe in the people of Utah!

As you look upward into this spectacular Capitol dome, you see seagulls taking flight. It is symbolic of this day, for the phrase "to inaugurate" is derived from the Latin phrase, meaning, "to learn ... from the flight of birds."

To take flight, to soar to new heights, to enhance the legacy of leadership that has been bestowed upon me and Lt. Governor Bell ... that is our promise to you.

It is our mission, it is our passion and it is our honor to serve.

May God bless us all in our efforts as we move forward together. And may God continue to bless the Great State of Utah.