

Premier Gordon Campbell
Address to the B.C. Technology Industry Association Awards Dinner
Vancouver
June 12, 2002

Check Against Delivery

It's important to recognize exceptional successes, and the TIA has certainly been an exceptional success – not just for its members, but for British Columbia.

Fully 80 per cent of the people who live in this province – in the North, in the Kootenays, in the South, on Vancouver Island – say that a critical part of our economic and social future is a vital and vibrant technology industry. That is in no small part because of the contribution each and every one of you has made, and I thank you for that.

It has been a busy first year as we started to put building blocks in place to allow our industry here to flourish. I'm proud of the steps we've taken to date with regard to personal income tax. We have the lowest base rate of tax for the bottom two tax brackets – and the second-lowest marginal income tax.

We're pleased with the progress, but the members of our caucus don't like being number 2. We're looking to be number 1, and we're going to work our way there, with your help, over the years ahead.

Your leadership has helped us craft a course. I want to say how appreciative I am of the work George Hunter has done on your behalf with us in government. I want to pay special tribute to Paul Lee, who dedicates a huge amount of his time to the Premier's Technology Council, and to Gerri Sinclair.

At a time when we face significant economic challenges, our government has invested \$150 million over the next five years to double the number of computer science, electrical and computer engineering students in 10 institutions across this province.

The most valuable natural resource we have is the human resource, and we want to provide you with the raw materials you need to accomplish your goals. We want you to set your sights as high as you can set them and know that your government is working to help you accomplish them.

We have committed \$45 million to the Leading Edge Endowment Fund for additional research in British Columbia. It will help create 20 B.C. leadership chairs.

In concert and partnership with the private sector, we believe we can start sending the message across our province that our intellectual capital is one of the critical components of a bright, strong and vibrant economic future.

We know today that every region of this province is looking to technology as part of their economic strategy. We hope by the end of next year that 80 per cent of our province will be online. We are committed to dedicating resources and time and effort to closing the last, 20 per cent gap so every British Columbian has an opportunity to plug in to the marvels and the excitement of the world of technology in the days and the years ahead.

We intend to brag about our industry. July 1st we'll be in Los Angeles for a Canada Day celebration. Part of that celebration will be talking about the exceptional successes we've had in the technology industry, and the talent and creativity of the people who live here.

In the fall, we're going down to California on a Leading Edge Marketing Tour to talk about your product, your services, your expertise and your excellence to build people's understanding of what we have to offer in British Columbia.

As I close tonight, I have a request for all of you.

Open, frank, honest no-holds-barred communication between your industry and government is going to be critical to our success.

On my first trip to the Silicon Valley, one of the things I noticed is that people there are not afraid of failure. They are not afraid of trying something and checking and seeing if they are getting the results they want. Then they say, "If we're not, let's change it: let's do something different that allows us to get where we want to go."

We have a government that is committed to delivering results to this industry. I ask you all this: Don't hesitate to tell us in constructive, open and honest dialogue about what we're failing to deliver – how we're failing to reach the full potential of this industry, what we can do to remove barriers and to encourage and entice entrepreneurship and creativity and innovation and the strength and the imagination of the risk-takers in this province.

It is a critical component of our long-term success. Tonight let me say thank you for including me once again in your association awards dinner. It's important for us to celebrate success, and I want you all to remember that this government knows your success is critical to our success – and to the success and future hope and prosperity of every British Columbian. Thank you for your contribution.