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REMARKS: AMERICAN SUCCESS AWARDS  
THE ROSE GARDEN  
SEPTEMBER 11, 1989  
11:15 A.M.

THANK YOU, SECRETARY CAVAZOS, FOR YOUR  
INTRODUCTION. IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AND  
PEGGY HERE AT THE WHITE HOUSE. ((WELCOME TO SENATORS  
NANCY KASSEBAUM AND ORRIN HATCH.))

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ALSO, MY THANKS TO MICHAEL FARLEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE  
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, FOR ALL HIS  
HARD WORK.

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING: THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE  
MORE THINGS STAY THE SAME. WELL, TODAY I'M GOING TO  
TALK ABOUT OUR RAPIDLY CHANGING WORKFORCE, AND THE  
SIMPLE, PROVEN WAYS AMERICA IS PREPARING FOR THE  
FUTURE.

DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE GOVERNMENT MADE A STRONG COMMITMENT TO WHAT MOST PEOPLE NOW CONSIDER A CURRENT IDEA: VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION. BY ESTABLISHING THE LAND-GRANT COLLEGES -- THE AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL, OR "A & M" SCHOOLS -- LINCOLN ENSURED THAT AMERICANS WORKERS WERE ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES. SOUND FAMILIAR?

SINCE THE DAYS OF LINCOLN, AMERICA HAS BEEN CONCERNED WITH COMPETITIVENESS IN THE WORLD MARKETPLACE OF TECHNOLOGY.

LATELY, THERE'S BEEN A BAD RUMOR GOING AROUND THAT THE WORK ETHIC IS DEAD. IT SURE ISN'T -- NOT WHEN SO MANY OF THE BEST NEW JOBS IN THE NATION ARE GOING TO AMERICANS EDUCATED IN VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS. SOUNDS TO ME LIKE THE WORK ETHIC IS ALIVE AND WELL.

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AND IT'S GOING TO STAY THAT WAY: EIGHTEEN OF THE 20 FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS WITHIN THE NEXT DECADE REQUIRE VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION, AND JOBS FOR TECHNICIANS WILL GROW 38 PERCENT BY THE YEAR 2000 -- THE FASTEST OF ANY MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUP.

YOU KNOW, THERE ARE DRAMATIC CHANGES IN OUR NATION'S WORKFORCE -- CHANGES THAT POINT TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

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TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE FACT THAT OUR POPULATION IS GROWING MUCH MORE SLOWLY NOW THAT THE BABY BOOM IS OVER -- AT THE SAME TIME THAT WE'RE CREATING RECORD NUMBERS OF NEW JOBS. THE BOTTOM LINE? IN THE YEAR 2000, EVERY PERSON WHO WANTS A JOB, WILL HAVE ONE -- IF THEY HAVE THE SKILLS.

THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN.

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**ALL ACROSS AMERICA, SOME 26,000 VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PROVIDE 16 MILLION AMERICANS WITH MARKETABLE SKILLS IN OVER 150 OCCUPATIONS.**

**THESE STUDENTS WILL BE THE HIGH-TECH COMPUTER PROGRAMMERS AND OPERATORS, EQUIPMENT ASSEMBLERS AND COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS WHO STAND AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF OUR ECONOMY.**

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**AS WE RELY MORE AND MORE ON AUTOMATION IN OUR INDUSTRIES, EMPLOYERS WILL BE LOOKING FOR SMART WORKERS WHO CAN COMMUNICATE AND SOLVE PROBLEMS, FROM MONITORING PRODUCTION RATES TO REPAIRING ROBOTS. PEOPLE WHO ARE SKILLED ON THE PRODUCTION LINE AND WHO KNOW HOW TO GET THINGS DONE -- AND CRAFTSMEN SUCH AS COMPUTER PROGRAMERS, ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS, AND PRACTICAL NURSES WHO KEEP OUR ECONOMY GOING STRONG.**

**LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF VO-TECH EDUCATION: MARKETABLE GRADUATES AND LOWER UNEMPLOYMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, ONE STUDY FOUND THAT GRADUATES OF OHIO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS EARN 21 PERCENT MORE MONEY FOUR YEARS AFTER GRADUATION THAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WITHOUT SUCH TRAINING. AND UNEMPLOYMENT IS LOWER FOR VO-TECH GRADUATES THAN FOR THOSE IN THE GENERAL WORK FORCE WHO ARE THE SAME AGE AND HAVE THE SAME NUMBER OF YEARS OF SCHOOLING.**

**BUT EVEN BEYOND THE NUMBERS -- WHEN VO-TECH EDUCATION CAN HELP YOUNG AMERICANS GET A BETTER START IN LIFE, THEN THE WHOLE COUNTRY BENEFITS.**

**HERE'S ANOTHER BENEFIT: IMPROVED LEARNING SKILLS. JOB TRAINING AND ACADEMICS ARE NOT CONTRADICTORY. ACTUALLY, MANY PEOPLE LEARN ACADEMIC SUBJECTS BETTER IN THE CONTEXT OF HOW TO USE THEM ON THE JOB.**

STUDENTS IN A VO-TECH SCHOOL TAKING A "PRINCIPLES OF TECHNOLOGY" COURSE WILL LEARN ABOUT THERMAL RESISTANCE NOT FROM A LAB EXPERIMENT WITH BEAKERS AND TEST TUBES, BUT FROM WORKING WITH THE INSULATION IN A HOUSE. VO-TECH SCHOOLS ARE LEADING THE WAY IN EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND "APPLIED ACADEMICS."

THE PARTNERSHIPS THAT COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND VO-TECH INSTITUTES HAVE FORMED WITH BUSINESSES TO PROVIDE RETRAINING AND SKILLS FOR EMPLOYEES ARE ESSENTIAL.

THERE ARE NOW 23 MILLION ADULTS WHO RECEIVE RE-TRAINING THROUGH VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL PROGRAMS WHICH ALLOW THEM TO GET NEW OR BETTER JOBS. THE REALITY OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING HAS ARRIVED.

WE CALL IT "CAREER LADDER OPPORTUNITIES" -- THE KIND OF EDUCATION THAT BUILDS BRIDGES BETWEEN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION. IT'S THE KIND OF EDUCATION THAT PUTS MORE AND MORE AMERICANS ON THE LADDER TO SUCCESS.

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**BUILDING A WORLDCLASS WORKFORCE IS A NATIONAL PRIORITY. IMPROVING AMERICA'S CAPACITY TO EDUCATE AND TRAIN WORKERS IS CRITICAL TO THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY. THAT'S WHY TODAY WE'RE PRESENTING TO YOU THE AMERICAN SUCCESS AWARDS. YOU HAVE BECOME AMERICAN SUCCESS STORIES THROUGH YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION. AND YOU'RE BUILDING A BETTER AMERICA EVERY DAY.**

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**EACH OF YOU HAS TRULY LIVED THE AMERICAN DREAM, AND EACH ONE OF YOU DESERVES OUR CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS FOR YOUR WORK IN VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION. GOD BLESS YOU ALL. THANK YOU.**

**AND NOW, LET'S PRESENT THESE AMERICAN SUCCESS AWARDS . . .**

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