

The President's Weekly Address

January 29, 2011

I'm speaking to you today from Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where I'm at an innovative company called Orion Energy Systems.

Just a few years ago, this was an empty warehouse. A major employer had shut down this factory, moved its operations abroad, and took a lot of jobs away from this town.

Today, this is a thriving enterprise once more. You're looking at part of a factory where 250 workers are building advanced clean energy systems, state-of-the-art technologies that use solar power and energy efficiency, to save farms and businesses thousands of dollars on their utility bills.

I'm here because this business and others like it are showing us the way forward. And in the coming days, I'll be shining a spotlight on innovators across America who are relying on new technologies to create new jobs and opportunities in new industries.

That's what companies like Orion are doing, and that's how America will win the future—by out-innovating, out-educating, and out-building our competitors. We'll win the future by being the best place on Earth to do business. That's what we're called to do at this moment. And in my State of the Union, I talked about how we get there.

It starts by making sure that every single child can get a good education and every American can afford college or career training, because that's what will help light the spark in the minds of innovators and ensure that our people have the skills to work for innovative companies.

We also need to make sure that America can move goods and information as fast as any of our competitors, whether on the road or online, because good infrastructure helps our businesses sell their products and services faster and cheaper.

We have to reform our Government and cut wasteful spending so that we eliminate what we don't need to pay for the investments we need to grow, like education and medical research.

As we can see here in Manitowoc, we need to ensure that we're promoting innovation, especially in promising areas like clean energy. This is going to be key to growing our economy and helping businesses create jobs. Orion, for example, was able to open with the help of small-business loans and incentives that are creating demand for clean energy technologies like wind power and solar panels.

That's why I've proposed a bigger tax credit for the research that companies do. And to give these companies the certainty of knowing there will be a market for what they sell, I set this goal for America: By 2035, 80 percent of electricity should come from clean energy.

This is going to help spark innovation at businesses across America. This is going to spur new products and technologies. This is going to lead to good, new jobs. And that's how we win the future, by unleashing the talent and ingenuity of American businesses and American workers in every corner of this country.

So, to those who say that America's best days are behind them, let them come here, to Manitowoc. Let them come to this once-shuttered factory that is now bustling with workers building new technologies for the world. Let them come here to see the incredible promise of our country. This is the future, and it is bright.

Thanks.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 12:10 p.m. on January 26 at Orion Energy Systems, Inc., in Manitowoc, WI, for broadcast on January 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 28, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on January 29.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

Locations: Manitowoc, WI.

Subjects: Budget, Federal : Government programs, spending reductions; Business and industry : Banks and financial institutions :: Loans to small businesses, increase; Business and industry : Global competitiveness; Communications : Broadband technology; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : Postsecondary education :: Career training and continuing education; Education : Standards and school accountability; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Outsourcing to foreign countries; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technology :: U.S. production; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Energy : Solar and wind energy; Taxation : Research and experimentation tax credit; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts; Wisconsin : Orion Energy Systems, Inc. in Manitowoc; Wisconsin : President's visit.

DCPD Number: DCPD201100058.