



January 10, 2008

An Open Letter to the Fans of the State of Hockey,

Twelve years ago a handful of us set out on a journey that would take us places we could not have dreamed of. It started with Saint Paul Mayor Norm Coleman's vision for a revitalized downtown Saint Paul. Norm discovered that the National Hockey League was considering expansion and he thought an NHL franchise playing in an arena in Saint Paul could be the centerpiece of that vision. My son, Bob, told me of the effort and also introduced me to a gentleman from Boulder, Colorado, Jac Sperling who had all the right skills to guide us through the maze that lay ahead. The City of Saint Paul, the state legislature, and Governor Arne Carlson were waiting in the wings, fully supportive of the pursuit of this dream. As a family we decided to become involved. If the NHL was going to return to Minnesota, we surely wanted to help in some small way.

One thing led to another – obstacles and setbacks followed by improbable solutions...an equal number of optimists and pessimists... a series of miracles, large and small, and, in a flash, there I stood on October 11th, 2000, at center ice of the beautiful, new Xcel Energy Center in downtown Saint Paul surrounded by you, the Team of 18,000 with the entire State of Hockey, The NHL and the world watching. We were about to drop the puck on the NHL's return to Minnesota. The dream had become a reality.

And, it just kept getting better -- from the start, our team, led by Doug Risebrough and Jacques Lemaire, made us proud. We shocked the hockey world by taking a serious run at the Stanley Cup in just our third season. In our fourth year, we hosted the most spectacular NHL All-Star Weekend in recent memory. With the Xcel Energy Center we built a reputation as one of the premier entertainment venues in North America. We even survived a year-long work stoppage and our game returned stronger than ever. Above all, we had the privilege to do all of this in partnership with you, the greatest hockey fans in the world.

Together, we have achieved what we set out to do. We returned NHL hockey to Minnesota and built a solid foundation to insure a promising future. With those in place, I have signed an agreement to sell controlling interest in the Wild and its affiliated entities to Craig Leipold. Coincidentally, Craig and I met on June 25th, 1997, the day the NHL awarded us the expansion franchises. Craig's ownership signifies committed leadership, hockey passion and Midwestern values, which have been the bedrock of our organization's progress to this point – and will serve as the foundation for the success of the future. I am pleased Craig has asked me to stay involved as a limited partner in the organization.

On behalf of the Naegele family and the entire Wild organization, I want to extend our sincere thanks to you, the citizens of the State of Hockey. We will be forever grateful for the support you have shown from the moment this dream was first whispered. Looking back, it's all so clear. The one sure thing we could always count on was the pride and passion of the fans in the State of Hockey. And, while we reflect fondly, we also look forward with anticipation to the many victories which lay ahead—especially that day when the State of Hockey celebrates the Stanley Cup Championship it so richly deserves.

With Warm Regards and Many Thanks,

Bob Naegele and Family