

Friends to the End

Proud Canadians are often inclined to see the differences between their country and the “mighty giant” to the south. Indeed, there are some key and notable differences, but in the indelible words of American founding father John Adams, “Whatever may be our wishes, our inclination, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.”

The facts are these: Canada and the United States share a rich and vibrant history characterized by democratic governance, economic partnerships and cultural ties. Friendly neighbours for more than two centuries, they share the longest unmilitarized border in the world and are the world’s largest trading partners. These special ties run wide and deep and set an example of positive relations for the entire international community.

In celebration of the Canada-U.S. relationship, *Our World* is pleased to feature a series of events and initiatives supported by our department that have served to strengthen the already stalwart bond between two great nations.



Consul General Martin Loken acknowledges the warm welcome from the North Dakota House of Representatives.
photo: DFAIT

CANADA DAY AT THE CAPITOL

From 2010 to 2011, legislatures in five states in the U.S. Midwest passed resolutions designating day-long celebrations of their economic and social ties with Canada. Through these events, the Consulate General of Canada in Minneapolis seized the opportunity to highlight the importance of the Canada-U.S. relationship to elected officials and other leaders in an unprecedented way.

Spearheading “Canada Day at the Capitol” activities in each state in its territory—Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, North and South Dakota—the consulate general communicated facts that often get overlooked because of the familiarity and friendliness between the two countries.

“Canada is by far the biggest customer for what you sell to the world,” said Consul General Martin Loken, Canada’s top diplomat in the Upper Midwest, while speaking to a joint meeting of the Minnesota House of Representatives and Senate. “In fact, Minnesota is one of 36 states in the Union that can point to Canada as their biggest international market.”

Three other states offered Loken the rare privilege of delivering formal addresses to their legislatures. Receiving warm welcomes and standing ovations in every chamber, Loken recalled President John F. Kennedy’s address to the Canadian Parliament in 1961:

“Geography has made us neighbours. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. And necessity has made us allies. Those whom nature hath so joined together, let no man put asunder.”

Across the United States, other consulates general have successfully partnered with additional states on similar “Canada Day” initiatives to raise awareness, generate goodwill and strengthen the vital Canada-U.S. partnership.