



Transcript of audio file excerpt: Governor Nelson Rockefeller's first State of the State address, January 1959

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Description: Governor Rockefeller talks about New York's need for leadership that can achieve advances such as the Erie Canal, the Thruway, the St. Lawrence Seaway, etc., and about addressing emerging issues before they become problems, to better shape tomorrow.

This excerpt (2:02) and the complete audio file (56:28) are available for order. Please contact our reference desk at ARCHREF@mail.nysed.gov or (518) 474-8955 for more information.

Governor Rockefeller: There lies before us a joint mission of the highest calling. That mission is to achieve a resurgence of human progress in New York State based on accelerated economic growth. The ultimate purpose of our effort is to ensure the opportunity of each individual to attain his fullest potential and achieve the maximum development of his own capacity.

The fulfillment of our mission will demand a high degree and quality of leadership. It must be the brand of leadership that brought the Erie Canal into being nearly a hundred and fifty years ago and helped put New York in the forefront of the nation's economy. This same kind of leadership led to the construction and development of the Thruway, the St. Lawrence Seaway and power project. This kind of leadership has, in the past, enabled New York to pioneer in social advances and to create great cultural and intellectual institutions. It must be the type of leadership that reaches ahead to seize the opportunities of the nuclear age.

To generate a new era of progress we need not only to focus sharply on the problems of our times, but to anticipate the problems of the future as well. We need to chart courses, which will achieve basic solutions. We need to act decisively to shape emerging forces and to avoid drifting into emergency and crisis. The time lag between planning and action has lengthened with the growing complexity of modern life. Basic planning is essential in attaining our long-range goals. What we plan and do today affects the shape of events for years to come.