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A foreign investment that is sure to pay off

As the year draws to a close, the business community remains focused on taxes and the health of the economy. The governor's privatization of the Indiana Toll Road generated a windfall of \$3 billion. If managed properly, that money should fund Indiana's road and bridge repair work. However, perhaps we should consider investing some of the interest to radically change our stature in the global economy.



**BRIAN
WILLIAMS**

Commentary

Canada possesses coastlines along the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans; has abundant natural resources, including oil and gas; harbors productive farmland; and has some of the continent's highest mountains and best snow skiing.

The major metropolitan areas of Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton, Ottawa and Vancouver have rich histories, ethnically diverse populations with high incomes and educational attainment, professional sports, active artist communities and, in Toronto, the third-largest stock exchange in North America. Canada also has institutions of higher learning that are respected across the globe.

Hoosiers have invested in amateur sports, NFL stadiums and the biotech industry, all of which have generated

returns for the state. Perhaps it is time for Indiana to make a strategic investment in Canada. Indiana has a rich history of cultural and sporting exchanges and is Indiana's largest export market. Because of these relationships, Canadians might view favorably a proposal from the governor to purchase Canada for \$100 million.

With miles of coastline and fabulous skiing, the topographical allures that historically took bright young graduates from Purdue University and Indiana University to California, would instead find better values and more options in Indiana.

With the third-largest stock exchange in North America, Indiana entrepreneurs would have ready access to global financial markets. A population of nearly 40 million inhabitants would place Indiana at the top of all states in terms of population.

Indiana's agri- and environmental tourism industry would be second to none, with top-tier mountain resorts, pristine forests and impressive fly-fishing destinations. Finally, Indiana's running debate about time zones would be moot as we would now have four time zones, allowing every Hoosier and every cow the option to live in the time zone that best suits his preferred dawn and sunset.

The fossil-fuel reserves of Canada should make Indiana virtually energy-independent. The abundant Canadian forest preserves would allow Indiana to

create viable market-based mechanisms to encourage and manage emissions, including carbon dioxide credits and exchanges.

In addition to our geographic and topographic resources and diverse economy, Indiana's governor would be able to trump any other state's economic development team by sending in his prime minister. No other state could host a real "state dinner."

Fortunately, Indiana would not be the only beneficiary from this transaction. In one fell swoop, Canadians would be able to erase the stain of the Canadian Football League and be able to cheer for the Super Bowl-winning Indianapolis Colts. Canadians longing for championship-caliber basketball would be abetted, we hope by a resurgent Indiana Pacers team and strong programs at IU, Purdue and Notre Dame. Erstwhile Canadians would also be proud to have the most important motorsports race in the world in their home state. The Indiana Ice would gain millions of Hoosiers who already have an affinity for hockey.

The lasting benefit would be that, once completed, every politician and weather forecaster could state unequivocally that, in Indiana, there will be snow for the holidays. •

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