(DES MOINES) – Gov. Terry E. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds today congratulated Xi Jinping on becoming China's new president.

Branstad noted Iowa's long-standing history with President Xi, from his first visit to Iowa in 1985.

"Iowa is fortunate to have a strong, friendly relationship with China's new president," said Branstad. "When he was in Iowa last year, Xi Jinping told me he still remembers the families he stayed with in Iowa, and how much he appreciated the friendliness and hospitality that was shown to his entire delegation during their trip to Iowa. He has made a very good impression with the people he has met here in this state, both in 1985 during his initial visit, as well as his visit to our state for the reunion last year. We enjoyed hosting him at a state dinner here, and I was very impressed how he went off his script to describe his first visit to Iowa and the people he had met here. We are very impressed with his leadership. We think he will be someone who is very good to work with and it is an opportunity for us to build better relationships between the United States of America and China. I was honored to be hosted by Xi Jinping at a reunion with his Iowa friends in Beijing last spring. I look forward to visiting President Xi very soon, and continuing our great relationship."

Reynolds says she looks forward to the unlimited growth potential with the world's largest country.

"Whether it is our agricultural exports, or China's growing need for financial services, Iowa is poised for significant growth over the next decade thanks to our strong relationship with President Xi," said Reynolds. "The governor and I have both had the opportunity to meet with President Xi and other high ranking officials as we led trade missions throughout China. When you compare China with where it was just two decades ago, the change is substantial. The standard of living for people has improved exponentially. I think all of this is very positive and it is evident that as China improves economic opportunities for its people, Iowa will have even more customers on the world stage."

# # #