

Former Michigan Governor James J. Blanchard (center), keynote speaker at the first annual CN Forum, participates in a conversation with MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon, Michigan Economic Development Corporation Senior Vice President for International Development Harry Whalen (right), and ISP Acting Dean Jeffrey Riedinger (left) during the postconference reception.



## Former Michigan Governor Addresses Forum on Canadian-U.S. Relations

Former Michigan Governor James J. Blanchard gave the keynote address at the first annual CN Forum, Strengthening Canadian-U.S. Relations, on October 6, 2005 in MSU's Kellogg Center Auditorium. Blanchard also served as the U.S. ambassador to Canada during U.S. President Clinton's administration. The Canadian Studies Centre and the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research organized and hosted the event.

Established and funded by a \$200,000 endowment grant from CN (the Canadian National Railway Company), the CN Forum is intended as a venue for researchers, government and business leaders, students, the media, and the general public to discuss important issues in U.S.-Canadian relations. (See article on the establishment of the endowment in the spring 2005 issue of this publication.) A further gift of \$50,000 from the government of Canada will raise the total endowment for the program to \$250,000.

In his address, Blanchard emphasized that the relationship between the United States and Canada is vitally important to both nations and affects "the air we breathe, the water we drink, and our very economic livelihood." An MSU graduate, Blanchard remarked that he was especially proud to see the large contingent of students present among the academics, business leaders from Detroit, mid Michigan, and Ontario, legislators, and members of the general public who filled the 300-plus-seat auditorium to capacity.

"The audience response to the MSU Canadian Studies Centre's CN Forum was amazing, especially with the large participation by students interested in nurturing relations between our two countries," said Gloria Combe, CN director of U.S. government affairs. "The future belongs to our young people, and we were very pleased to witness the intelligent and probing questions directed to the panel by the students participating in the forum."

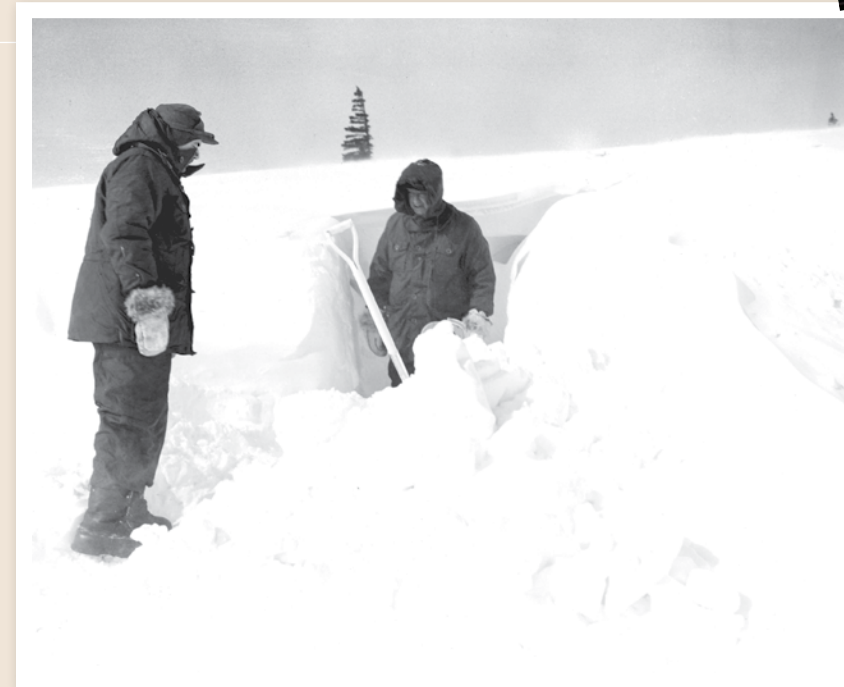
Following the former governor's address on the mutual importance of border security and border cooperation between the two great neighbors, Canada and the United States, Philip Handrick, director of the MSU Canadian Studies Centre, facilitated a lively and engaged discussion. The audience addressed questions to Blanchard and a distinguished group of panelists: Dennis Schornack, International Joint Commission U.S. section chair; Rocco Delvecchio, Canadian consul general; Eddie Francis, mayor of Windsor, Ontario; Tim Hoeffner, policy advisor, Michigan Department of Transportation; and Harry Whalen, senior vice president, Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

A dominant theme of the discussion was trade between the United States and Canada, with specific mention of the current dispute over Canadian softwood lumber exports. The reality of tightening border security between the two countries in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the potential negative impact of this on both countries' economies were also discussed.

"This year's forum highlighted both the interest in U.S.-Canadian relations and the need for a better understanding of that relationship," said Handrick. "MSU's Canadian Studies Centre has a long history of promoting that understanding on the MSU campus, throughout the state of Michigan, and beyond. Grants such as these from CN and the Canadian government greatly enhance our capabilities in this endeavor."

To learn more about the MSU Canadian Studies Centre, visit the website at [www.isp.msu.edu/canadianstudies](http://www.isp.msu.edu/canadianstudies)

This article is a revised version of one written by Alicia Healy for the fall 2005 issue of *Partners*, published by University Development. Additional content was provided by MSU English major Jennifer Kapp.



Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections.

## President Hannah's Canadian Connections

When MSU President John Hannah became the U.S. section chairman of the Canadian-American Permanent Joint Board of Defense (PJBD) in early 1954, he was no stranger to defense issues, having taken a leave of absence to serve as undersecretary of defense for manpower during World War II. The PJBD, established in 1940 as a means of bolstering hemispheric defense, served as a useful conduit between the two nations. While it officially was only an advisory body, the two governments adopted its recommendations since the PJBD was a forum where "the military and political viewpoints of both countries ... can be discussed openly and frankly in an atmosphere of informality and friendliness." It enjoyed "exceptional prestige in Canada and is regarded by Canadians as a symbol of their special relationship with the United States."<sup>1</sup>

Hannah was able easily to integrate his PJBD U.S. chairman tasks into his MSU presidential duties since the board only met quarterly and had a staff in the U.S. Defense Department. His duties as chairman were to advise the president on U.S.-Canadian defense matters, to act as U.S. spokesperson at board meetings, to preside when the board met on U.S. territory, and to conduct the U.S. section meetings. PJBD meetings alternated between Canada and the United States, with sum-

mer and fall meetings in Canada (e.g., Frobisher Bay, North West Territories, and Halifax, Nova Scotia) and winter and spring meetings at U.S. facilities (e.g., Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and the Panama Canal Zone). An exception to this sequence was the 1956 summer meeting convening at Michigan State University.

The PJBD during Hannah's leadership covered important Cold War activities: the formation of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), the building of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) radar line, establishment of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, the Niagara Diversion Treaty, and large purchases of Canadian De Havilland aircraft by the U.S. Army.

Hannah's activity with the board whetted his interest in things Canadian. He was active in the Canadian American Committee and fostered an informal Canadian-American Seminar on campus. The interest these activities generated and arguably Hannah's involvement resulted in the founding of the MSU Canadian Studies Centre.

In the above photograph, Hannah looks out from the doorway of a structure at Ft. Churchill in Manitoba, Canada. The photo was taken during a visit in March 1954.

—Michael Unsworth

<sup>1</sup> John Hannah papers, Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections.