

**Message delivered by the Governor of Puerto Rico, Rafael Hernández Colón, at the Western
Digital Inauguration**

**Ponce, P.R.
November 1st. 1985**

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**Western Digital Inauguration
November 1, 1985**

Dear Friends, Compueblanos:

It's a real pleasure to be here today. As you all know for the past month, I have been coming to Ponce very frequently. On those occasions it has been under painful circumstances. Today is a joyous occasion.

At the beginning of my administration I announced a Plan of Rehabilitation and accelerate promotional activity which I lamed "Ponce en Marcha". Today we are here to inaugurate one of the achievements of this plan. As of August 1985 Ponce's labor force was estimated at 47, 800 persons of which 13,200 were unemployed and seeking a job. An unemployment rate of 27.6 % defines the area, according to the employment security bureau, as one of substantial unemployment with and urgent need for new employment opportunities.

Since January of this year seven new plants had been attracted to this municipality. They have an employment commitment of 849 when operating at full capacity, to date 377 "Ponceños" have been hired by these firms, which represents 45% of the total employment commitment. During that same period only two plants discontinued operations with an average employment of 25 workers at closing date.

To date, nine additional projects are pending establishment in Ponce, with commitment to hire 823 additional workers. These projects will require an investment of \$4.0 million and the payment of an annual payroll of \$5.7 million.

These achievements have been possible, through a special promotional effort directed to Ponce and complemented by a series of Industrial Incentives, and appropriate infrastructure that has transformed the municipality as one of the most attractive location sites in Puerto Rico.

Today we are celebrating the opening of Western Digital Caribe, a subsidiary of Western Digital Corp. of California. Western Digital is expanding its operations of assembling and testing of printed circuit boards in Ponce. This product will be used as raw material by Westinghouse, Inc., thus contributing to the linkage of the production process that our manufacturing sector needs to develop.

Western Digital is helping to decrease the unemployment rate of Ponce. Today, 238 workers are employed at the new plant we formally inaugurate today, and when operating at full capacity, it will employ a total of 500 workers.

We cordially welcome Western Digital Caribe , trough it's Vice President, Mr. Joseph Baia, his local representative, Mr. John Porcelli and all the employees that make this firm a vital, on-going concern. To all of you, my very best wishes. This plant opening is an accomplishment we are all very prou of. It was made possible, in part, by the new 20 year tax exemption, Iapproved for Ponce. We want Ponce, and all of Puerto Rico to regains its economic vitality and strength. The trust placed on us by manufactures like Western Digital brings us closer to our goal.

Thank you for establishing your plant in Ponce and thank you for sharing with me this joyous occasion.

