

To the Members of the Legislature and the Citizens of Mississippi:

It is our pleasure to submit to you Mississippi's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the year ended June 30, 2001. This detailed overview of the state's work for the past fiscal year offers insight into the workings of your government .

Our state and our nation have been faced with many challenges over the past year, with the greatest being the attacks on September 11. Like we have done with such challenges before, we will focus our efforts and overcome them.

The foundation of everything we do is the education of our people. We are committed to strengthening this foundation in every way possible. Teachers are going to be paid as the professionals they are. Students in every public school classroom in the state will have access to the internet. Worker training and retraining is a focal point in our economic development.

The health of our people is equally important. Healthy children go to school ready to learn, and healthy adults are ready to work. I have unveiled a proposal to address the urgent health care needs facing us statewide and look forward to putting this proposal to work.

Our economic development efforts continue to garner attention around the world. Mississippi is now looked to as a leader in this area, due to our aggressive efforts to recruit and retain businesses. The Advantage Mississippi initiative is still seen as a model for other states.

Mississippi is also a safer place to live. Efforts by the Department of Public Safety have dramatically lowered the number of fatalities on our roads, and more people are wearing seatbelts as a result of safety campaigns to raise awareness.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century offers such promise for our great state. We will be working hard to ensure that promise becomes reality for every Mississippian.

Very truly yours,

Ronnie Musgrove

## **Major Initiatives**

Mississippi is a state rich in history and culture. We are known around the world for the writings of Eudora Welty and Richard Wright, for the music of Elvis Presley and B.B. King. Now, we are earning a reputation for our work in areas such as education and economic development.

This past July, we sent a strong message to teachers and educators around the nation when we removed the five percent provision on the teacher pay plan passed in the 2000 session of the Legislature. With the removal of the provision, we set in stone our commitment to those who help shape the course of our children's learning.

The "Computers in the Classroom" project, overseen by the Task Force on Classroom Technology, is moving forward. With strong support from the private sector and its unique partnership with state government, we are giving our students the tools to learn and eventually compete in an economy that is global, borderless and wireless.

We captured the attention of the national and the world by landing one of the top economic development projects in the world last year with the Nissan plant. In addition to the \$930 million investment by Nissan and 4,000 new jobs, suppliers are now coming to Mississippi in support of the plant. Investments from the Tier One suppliers locating in the state currently stand at more than \$250 million, along with 2,000 new jobs.

Our efforts with this project have led to Mississippi being highlighted in the automotive industry and considered as one of the major players in the recruitment of new facilities. This is good news for our workforce and our economy.

In addition to the Nissan project, we cannot overlook what has been accomplished in other areas of economic development. Beyond the investment by Nissan, nearly two hundred new facilities were announced in Fiscal Year 2001, bringing an investment of more than \$2.5 billion and almost 12,000 jobs.

The health care needs of the people of Mississippi are another area that demands our immediate attention. I have proposed a measure by which we can address those needs, those “worst firsts” where we lead the nation in diabetes, heart disease and cancer. By acting aggressively and creatively, we can make a difference in so many lives.

The State of Mississippi is part of the historic settlement against the tobacco industry, a settlement designed to recoup monies for health care needs. It’s time to put that money to use. By diverting a portion of the annual payment and placing the rest in the Health Care Trust Fund, it is possible to improve health care for all Mississippian while growing the Health Care Trust Fund for future earnings.

We all know of and share in the promise of Mississippi. Fulfilling that promise will require cooperation, communication and dedication to every man, woman and child in our state. They deserve our best efforts, and they will get them.