

## **IHL's Newsletter Digest**

January 2001

As Mississippi looks to the future, we must realize that our success in education greatly affects our success in all areas of our state. We are making Mississippi a leader across the nation in education. It will take everyone, public and private, to achieve this goal.

We have found the determination to succeed. Our children are pinning tomorrow's economic success on today's educational opportunities in Mississippi's public schools. Educating our children must be our first priority.

As you know, states across the nation are experiencing a slowdown in the economy, Mississippi included. Mississippi is taking a responsible approach to the slowdown in the economy by affecting a slowdown in budgeting and spending. We have taken a different approach to the budget process for Fiscal Year 2002 using a set of guiding principles that include: attention to priorities, quality of services, emphasis on efficiency, discipline and maximum use of federal funds.

Our budget has many similarities to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee's proposal. However, our budget reflects different priorities than theirs. Education is the perfect example of where we have a difference of philosophy.

Our budget recommendations for Institutions of Higher Learning for Fiscal Year 2002 is approximately \$23 million more than the JLBC is recommending. The JLBC budget recommendations for IHL are below the Fiscal Year 1999 funding levels. If the State of Mississippi expects to attract more business and industry to our state, then our universities must have the funds to train and educate our future workforce. A strong education is the cornerstone from which we build success in economic development and other areas that have a direct impact on the quality of life. Funding education is a must.

High-tech companies must have high-tech employees. Our universities and colleges can train our students for these jobs. They are providing our children the tools they need to get good, high-paying jobs right here in Mississippi. If we want this to continue, then we must continue to support these institutions. Our future depends on their education.

Mississippi is making progress in our effort to be number one in education. Mississippi can compete. Our children can achieve great things. Our quality of life can be the envy of the nation. Together, we can fortify Mississippi's position as America's State of Promise.