

1.) I lived and worked in Mississippi for 14 years. I am now retired and I plan to return to Mississippi to settle down when my spouse retires. What is being done, or is in the plans to encourage folk to return, or move to Mississippi? Specifics please.

a. We are glad to know that you will be moving back to Mississippi. Our Hometown Retirement program recruits people to Mississippi for retirement living. Our state has twenty certified retirement cities, which fit the needs of seniors. They are evaluated on criteria including affordable cost of living, low taxes, low crime rate, quality medical care, recreation, educational and cultural opportunities. Please visit the Hometown Retirement web site at [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org).

2.) Why can't the Legislature find a compromise to the flag issue? The Magnolia Flag of 1861 is the perfect compromise. Mississippi needs leadership!

The solution the flag issue is a compromise where all sides can claim a moral victory. First, reinstate the Magnolia Flag as the official flag of Mississippi. The flag of 1894 should then be designated a state historical banner and proudly flown over Mississippi Historical sites.

a. It is at the Legislature's discretion to decide whether or not the fate of the state flag will be determined by the people of Mississippi. We have urged the members of both the House and the Senate to listen to the voice of the people, put the issue on the ballot and let us move forward.

3.) I would like for the Governor to explain to us what happened to all the casino revenue we were supposed to be rolling in. These casinos were supposed to be the cure for our money woes: Where's the money???

a. The revenue from the casinos goes directly into the State's general fund. Money from the general fund are used to support services in areas including Kindergarten through twelfth grade education, community and junior colleges, institutions of higher learning, economic development, health care and public safety.

4.) What is your position on the creation of a voucher program for Mississippi's public schools or perhaps a law making charter schools legal? (Buck Cooper: Jbc929@aol.com)

a. I am opposed to a voucher program for Mississippi's public schools.

5.) It seems the State of MS is in a crisis. It appears we are on a strict budget. There is talk of no money for state employee pay raises. There appears to be concern as to where the money will come from for the teachers' pay raise. We are cutting state government to the bone while many of the state agencies are suffering. It

was not long ago that there was talk of surplus. What happened to the money? What is the real deal of the State of MS financially?

- a. Mississippi has \$3.7 Billion dollars. We have a choice to make when it comes to where we spend that money. I believe we should choose to invest that money in our people, in areas like education. Education is the cornerstone of our successes in economic development, health care and others. We have to put our people first. Investing in our people is our priority.

6.) Is Jackson in a competition for the title of “Pothole Capital of the World?” Having occasion to visit Jackson three times in the year 2000, I was shocked and dismayed at the condition of streets throughout your state capital. Even I-20 and I-55 have ruts and potholes. I suggest your state government designate some of that gambling money for road construction. (Mary Bedell: [sissy@alltel.net](mailto:sissy@alltel.net))

- a. Money from gaming revenue goes directly into the State’s general fund. Money in the general fund is used to support services in areas including education, transportation, economic development, health care and public safety. I hope that you will also forward your question to the City of Jackson and to the Mississippi Department of Transportation.

7.) What is our most serious problem in Mississippi? What has caused you the most problems since you took office? (Thomas Toney: [rene@panola.com](mailto:rene@panola.com))

- a. As a state, we face challenges, and we are working together to find solutions that work for the people of our state. We have set our priorities, and they are our people’s priorities: Educating our children in strong public schools, targeting new and better jobs for our working men and women and building communities by enhancing our people’s quality of life.

8.) What is your position on Mississippi’s participation in the Streamlined Sales Tax Project (SSTP)? Does the agreement with other states jeopardize our standards (such as the taxation of food items)? Do you feel that this project could endanger online commerce from customers in MS, as many online retailers may not readily adopt such standards? Would retailers in the SSTP-covered states be at a disadvantage to those who are not? How does SSTP get around the federal online sales tax moratorium? (Mark Lyon: [mark@marklyon.org](mailto:mark@marklyon.org))

- a. I encouraged our involvement in the Streamlined Sales Tax Project to review our state tax structure in the light of the New Economy. This is a very complex issue and will require Congressional action. We will continue to work with our Congressional delegation.

a. I commend and thank the members of the commission for their diligent and thorough work. We have urged the members of the legislature to take the recommendation of the commission, and let our people determine the destiny of the Mississippi state flag.