

MEMORANDUM

December 31, 2001

TO: Governor

FROM: John

RE: WAPT "Year in Review" interview

CC: Lee Ann

You are scheduled to do a brief "year in review" interview at 2:45pm this afternoon with Kayla Thomas from WAPT. The finished interview, I understand, will run about 3 minutes. The focus is your views of the highlights of this past year.

Points to hit:

- Budget – Sluggish economy on a national scale affected Mississippi's economic growth. Budget estimates of nearly four percent were scaled back to less than one percent, and collections continue to fall far below the revised estimate. Much of this has been blamed on the September 11 attacks, but collections were low prior to that date. You showed fiscal responsibility by asking agencies to only appropriate 45% of their budget for the first half of the fiscal year, which helped soften the blow of recent cuts.

You have worked to reach a compromise agreement with the Legislature on the revenue estimates for Fiscal Year 2003. As of yet, agreement has not been reached but you are continuing to work for cooperation and resolution.

- Education – A special session in July removed the five percent revenue growth provision on teacher pay and ensured the state's commitment to pay teachers as the professionals they are. This pay package will carry Mississippi from 49th to 19th in the nation in terms of teacher salary.

You are also making progress in the "Computers in the Classroom" program to place an internet-accessible computer in every public school classroom in the state. Children from the most rural areas will have access to the same technology as children in more affluent or urban areas. This will help prepare them for the workplace of the 21st century – wireless, borderless, global.

- Economic Development – As the Nissan plant began construction and rapidly took shape, the first rounds of Tier 1 suppliers were announced to support the plant. The announcements mean additional investments of approximately \$230 million and 2,000 more jobs.

Bob Rohrlack is hired as the new executive director of the Mississippi Development Authority after J. C. Burns leaves in September.

Trip to Korea and trip to Japan planned for spring.

- September 11 – Following the attacks in New York and Washington, you took action to ensure the safety and security of the people of Mississippi. These actions included:
 - Issuing an executive order capping gasoline prices following reports of price gouging on September 11.
 - Increasing security at all state buildings, closing unmanned access points, and installing metal detectors.
 - Posting National Guard personnel at seven airports around the state in response to President Bush’s request.
 - Stationing National Guard personnel at Grand Gulf nuclear facility. Personnel were on site for three weeks until the White House confirmed a stand down of heightened awareness.
 - Appointing Adjutant General James H. Lipscomb III as the state’s point of contact with the White House Office of Homeland Security on October 25.

You also traveled to New York and Washington, D.C., with other governors and Mayor Anthony Williams of Washington to demonstrate your confidence in commercial air travel and encourage travel back to those cities.

- Redistricting – You stated on many occasions that the responsibility for redrawing congressional districts to reflect the loss of a House seat rested with the Legislature – the work needed to be done in the capitol, not in a courtroom. The Legislature abdicated this responsibility to the court system.
- State Flag – In April, 65 percent of voters chose to keep the current state flag flying, rather than switch to a new design proposed by a state flag commission. You stated at the time, “the people have spoken. It is important that we accept the majority vote and move forward with the business of bringing new jobs and better opportunities to all Mississippians.”

Other stories would include fatal storms in February and November; the Ayers case; the visit of King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia; and the deaths of Eudora Welty, Glen Deweese, Sam Wright and Clyde Woodfield.

