

*Remarks for the  
AKA 71<sup>st</sup> Southeastern Regional Conference  
March 28, 2003*

- Recognize Juanita Doty / Rep. Coleman /  
Mayor Johnson / Councilman Crisler
  
- Recognize AKA's on staff
  - Armerita Tell / Felicia Gavin
  - Kimberly Liddell / interned in my office,  
still working with us
  
- Others in administration
  - Rica Lewis Payton and Sharon Reed at  
Medicaid
  
- Gettysburg story

- Image of MS in 2003 far different than the image most know
  - Moving faster than anyone else into the 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - Competing and leading in the global marketplace
  - Setting new standards for education and economic development
  
- In today's economy, Mississippi is like many other states
  - Every state impacted by national recession
  - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
  - More than 2 million Americans out of work
  - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Have to protect people in the short term while preparing for the long term
  - Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs
  
- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
  - Teacher pay / 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> when fully implemented
  - Princeton Review: 6<sup>th</sup> best testing system in nation
  - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind” / USA Today article
  - 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers

- We're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education
  - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow
  
- When it comes to education, we mean business
  - Business means jobs
  
- Time to change another image of Mississippi
  - No longer a state that depends on agriculture / low wage jobs
  - We are aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people

- We gained the attention of companies around the world when we landed Nissan
  - Now more than ever, Mississippi is being visited by companies
  - In the middle of national recession, we've had several companies just this week visiting sites across the state
  
- They are coming to Mississippi because the word is out about what we can do
  - Site Selection magazine: Mississippi ranked as Top 10 location for new companies
  - One of top 10 states for small business survival

- Expansion magazine: 4 Mississippi cities ranked in latest survey of 50 hottest American cities for expansion or location of facilities
  
- When businesses read these industry publications, they see that Mississippi has something to offer
  - They realize the image has changed
  
- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
  - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs
  - It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk

- It's an image of global companies looking for a place to do business in the state
  
- Take that image home with you
  - Image of good schools, good jobs, good communities
  
- Best wishes for a successful conference