

Gov. Musgrove
Possible talking points for BellSouth presentation
June 26, 2003

>The Mississippi Broadband Technology Act is a prime example of the positives that can occur in our state when government and private business work hand in hand. The Legislature, and its leaders, should be commended for passing this key piece of legislation to provide the financial incentives to deploy high speed Internet access to the less populated areas of our state. And BellSouth should be recognized for stepping up to the plate and tripling its original planned investment of its DSL rollout.

>This is a win-win situation for everyone involved. Private telecommunication companies receive greater incentives for providing broadband to the more rural areas of our state. Our state benefits from having the latest and greatest technology available to more citizens. And most importantly, more Mississippi companies and residents will have faster access to the Internet and the information highway. **The digital divide has been narrowed**(or closed).

>The fact that the deployment will be completed by year end is especially impressive. Our communities – no matter the size of their population – will be able to compete in today’s global economy, and this truly represents an advantage for Mississippi companies and our state’s economic development efforts.

>Today’s announcement should come as no surprise. BellSouth historically has partnered with the state and its many communities in economic development efforts. Statewide their managers work with the Mississippi Development Authority and local economic development leaders to lure companies to our state, and it should be noted BellSouth was actively involved in helping the state pursue Nissan and the thousands of well-paying jobs that company and its suppliers has brought and will continue to bring. It should be noted that John McCullouch will serve as chairman of the Mississippi Economic Council in year ’04, and our administration looks forward to working with him in that position.

>A little background on BellSouth’s DSL rollout by year end to illustrate how important this will be to the more rural areas of our state.

--A total of 87 communities

--The LARGEST is Ruleville with a population of 3,234

--The smallest is Lena at 167

--Average population is 1,081

--That is based on 72 communities. Fifteen are so small not even listed in U.S.

Census Data.

