Remarks for the
"Computer Blitz Build" Press Conference
March 28, 2002

Thank you, Andrew. Speaker Pro Tem Clark, Mr. Boliek, Ms. Burts, Robin Costa – thank you all for being here today.

Today, 100 computers will be built in this room. At the end of the day, those 100 computers will be taken for delivery to classrooms around Mississippi.

What an amazing sight – these young people actually building computers that will help teach a new generation.   Their work and their talents will be put to good use today for the benefit of their generation and generations to follow.

We're not just putting computers in our classrooms; we're giving our children the keys to a brighter future. We're giving our teachers better tools for teaching. We're demonstrating to the world that Mississippi means business and we're going to challenge our competition like never before.

I spoke about four priorities in my State of the State address – jobs, education, health care and public safety. Today, we're working on two of them at the same time.

Much has been said recently about investing in workforce training for Mississippi. Our investment in "Computers in the Classroom" is an early commitment to workforce training. By giving students the tools and the technology to begin learning now, we can produce a more highly-skilled workforce for the future.

The relationship between economic development and education is obvious. Our job is to make sure the relationship stays strong.

With the cooperation of organizations like ExplorNet, with the support of groups like the Maddox Foundation for the "Computers in the Classroom" initiative, and with the leadership of legislators like Speaker Pro Tem Clark, I have no doubt we will realize our true promise and potential.

We're living in an age of technology. My generation would never have dreamed of the power and incredible information available through the touch of a single button. We would never have dreamed of compact discs or DVD's. And, we certainly would never have dreamed of getting together in a room and building 100 computers in a single day.

Mississippi's going to be the first state in the nation to place an Internet-accessible computer in every public school classroom, and we're going to do it by the end of the year.

Today, these students are getting us closer to that goal. I want to thank them for sharing our commitment to the future, and I ask them to continue working with us to build a better Mississippi.

At the end of the day, we'll come back to see the finished computers – and help see them off to their new place in Mississippi's classrooms.

Mississippi's future is looking good – and the focus on our future is found here today. Thank you.