

*Remarks for the
National Association of County Engineers Annual Meeting
March 24, 2003*

■ Recognize Pete Sullivan

- Glad to have the opportunity to welcome you all to Mississippi and the beautiful Gulf Coast
- You'll hear a lot during your time here about what we're doing in Mississippi

■ It's an exciting time for us to be taking on challenges

- Daunting obstacles in national economy / war situation

- Every state impacted by national recession
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - More than two million Americans out of work
 - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Have to protect people in short term / prepare for long term

- Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs
 - Everybody benefits from good schools

- Education must be first priority for MS
 - Making great progress
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Test scores up / accountability standards stronger than “No Child Left Behind”
 - Princeton Review: MS has 6th best testing system in nation
 - MS 6th in nation in National Board Certified Teachers
 - Computers in Classroom

- We’re proving to the people of MS that we’re serious about education
 - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow

- When it comes to education, we mean business
 - Business means jobs

- Job creation from January 2000 to February 2003
 - 2,103 new and expanded facilities
 - 50,253 new jobs
 - Total investment of \$14.1 billion

- MS Rural Economic Impact Authority
 - \$20M to help with economic development in rural areas
 - Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges

- MS's potential not exclusive to metropolitan areas
 - Promise of our people is just as strong in rural areas
 - Fighting to bring quality jobs to every Mississippian

- Role of engineers in our growth is vital
 - Roads for Nissan / suppliers key to landing the project
 - Strong infrastructure is key component in attracting industry

- We have to look to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities
 - Good roads are foundation in reaching these goals

- Again, glad to welcome you to Mississippi / enjoy stay here