

*Remarks for the  
Duncan Road Dedication  
November 18, 2002*

(recognize dignitaries; this may be a good time to present the Certificate of Recognition to Charles Griffin)

(story of Jordan / 15-point buck / priorities)

We're here today because we've chosen to set priorities, priorities to help us do the things we need to do to move ahead.

Mississippi is being recognized as a leader in education by the rest of the country, because we've made education a priority.

And, we're being recognized as a competitor in business by the rest of the world, because we've made economic development a priority.

Today's dedication of Duncan Road is another indication that when we set a priority, we stick to it.

Two years ago, when we passed the Advantage Mississippi Initiative, the country and the world took notice. They realized just how serious we were about being able to compete in the global marketplace, to prove we were capable of supporting industry with the right infrastructure and the right people.

The commitment we made two years ago is just as strong, if not stronger, today as it was then.

We are growing Mississippi during a national recession, but that hasn't slowed us down.

We are growing Mississippi during a time of tight budgets, but that hasn't slowed us down.

We are growing Mississippi at a time of uncertainty in the markets because of the threat of war, but that hasn't slowed us down.

The numbers tell the story of our growth.

Since January 2000, we have seen the growth of more than 1,700 new and expanded facilities; over 47,000 new jobs; and \$12.9 billion invested in the state. More than 21,000 of the new jobs have come through the expansion of existing business.

The headlines focus on the big projects, like Nissan and the 5,300 jobs and \$1.5 billion investment. That's a great story about what we're doing; but the fact that we've been named as one of the top ten states in the nation for small business survival is equally important.

This work must continue. To support it, I've called for an increase in funding for our work in economic development – including \$20 million to be used for infrastructure. Our people and our industries demand and deserve safe roads and safe bridges. They want more Duncan Roads around the state.

We need to make it happen. We will make it happen.

There are lots of challenges ahead of us, but we're not backing down. We're going to take on those challenges and turn them into opportunities for the people of Duncan and the state of Mississippi.