

Engineering Excellence Awards Banquet
Wednesday, February 21, 2001
7:00 p.m.
The University Club

(Message: Economic opportunities in Mississippi)

Opening

- Good Evening
- (Story about Nissan Supplier Conference, or a story about being the first in your family to graduate from college; you had the opportunity and did not pass it up.)

Main Points

1. Opportunities
 - a. Mississippians now, more than ever, have many opportunities from which to choose.
 - b. We are working to provide as many as possible.
 - c. Opportunities in:
 - i. Education
 - ii. Jobs
 - d. We have opportunities to invest:
 - i. Invest in education for our kids
 1. Teacher pay raise
 - a. 49th in nation to 19th
 2. Computers in the Classroom.

3. Accountability plans for teachers and schools.
 4. National Board Certified Teachers
- ii. Invest in good jobs for our people
 1. Incentives from AMI
 - a. Training and re-training
 - b. Tax credit incentives
 - c. Works for all 82 counties
 - d. A marketing tool for MS
 2. **Nissan** is proof that we can succeed and attract more companies to MS
 3. Supplier opportunities
 - a. Over 2,200 applications sent to Nissan
 - b. Over 1 million hits to the website
 - e. Give our people the opportunity for an even better Quality of Life
 - f. Invest – the money is there.
 - i. The key is prioritizing and investing that money in the right places.
 - ii. KEEP the vision of the state!
 - g. Don't look at budget as an obstacle
 - i. Look for opportunities
 - ii. I must keep the budget balanced in good times and in challenging times.

2. Budget recommendations to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee
 - a. We are taking a responsible approach to the slowdown in the economy by affecting a slowdown in budgeting and spending.
 - i. We must be fiscally responsible.
 - ii. Mississippi has more money now, than we ever have.
 - b. Mississippi is not broke.
 - i. Our economy has been up, so eventually it must slow down.
 - ii. 29 other states are experiencing this slow down in their economy.
 - c. Our budget reflects our people's priorities
 - i. Education
 - ii. Economic development
 - d. We must look for innovative ways to bridge our budget recommendations, whether we use:
 - i. AMS settlement funds
 1. For one time expenditures
 2. We have access to this money now
 - ii. Rainy Day funds to keep education on track.
 1. \$50 million is at Governor's discretion

2. Already used \$15 million

- Mississippi's colleges and universities are doing an excellent job.
- Our students excel, and they are competitors in the global market.
- We must continue to support our state's heart and soul, her people.

e. Education recommendations

- i. A strong education system is vital to all future successes for the people of our state.
 - ii. The Nissan deal did not affect the 3% budget cuts.
 - iii. **Engineering programs** at Jackson State Univ. and Mississippi State Univ.
 1. Preparing our students for future high-tech jobs in MS.
 2. These programs are a key to our success.
- Our success in economic development depends on our continued success and advancement in education.
 - High tech companies need high-tech employees.

- f. Economic development recommendations
 - i. In order for MS to remain competitive, we must continue to support programs that give our people the opportunity for more, new, high-paying jobs.
 - ii. (Explain difference in JLBC budget and your budget recommendations regarding MDCO = JLBC has \$24 million more) Focus on priorities.

- For years we have been quietly investing in economic development and education, and now we are beginning to reap the benefits.
- Rewards of this long-term investment are here.

3. **Nissan** is proof that we can succeed.
 - i. They have shown their faith in our state.
 - ii. Opportunities all over the state will be spinning-off from the Nissan plant.
 1. Supplier opportunities from Nissan
 2. Nissan Supplier Conference, Tuesday, Feb. 20
 - iii. We must target other companies that best suit specific areas of our state.

- iv. We must keep up the momentum!
 1. We are relentless in our pursuits for more jobs.
- v. We are happy to “land” Nissan, but we want more businesses to move to MS
- vi. We want more jobs, more economic development, more opportunities.
 1. We want to be in that “spotlight” again and again for the great things happening in Mississippi.

- Everyone plays a role in our state’s success. We all have to work together to succeed, make changes and create progress.
- We also have to concentrate on educating our children and training the current workforce
- The world is taking notice, and we must continue to spread the word about Mississippi.
- We must not hinder our progress in any way.
- If something has the potential to keep MS from new business or as a tourist destination, then we must work to remedy that problem.

Closing

- Mississippi’s Image: Important how our neighbors, our nation and the world view us.

- How Mississippi is perceived affects us in all aspects: economic development, education, tourism, etc.
- We have the opportunity to promote a positive image.
- Remove obstacle that hinder our success.
- We can make a difference on April 17th
- We put the spotlight on Mississippi throughout the nation and world with the Nissan announcement, but there are more opportunities waiting for us.
- A place where our children can live, work and raise their families.
- America's State of Promise