

*Remarks for the
First Friday, CDF, Tupelo
September 5, 2003*

- Thank you Michael

- Recognize David Rumbarger, President and
Barbara Smith, Vice President and others

- It is great to be with you here today

- Mississippi has its priorities straight
 - Education and jobs.
 - Improving quality of life for all of our 2.8
million citizens

- As Governor these are the priorities I have
focused on.
 - Also the priorities that this Foundation has
focused over the last 50 years

- I have enjoyed working with you. By working together, we have accomplished a lot, but it hasn't been easy.
 - Every state impacted by national recession
 - More than \$7 million lost in stock market
 - June 2003 report from Bureau of Labor Statistics: 9.4 million Americans out of work
 - Alabama is raising taxes and Arkansas is cutting services. Mississippi has refused to follow.

- When times are tough, you must set priorities. That's why we are investing in education and jobs.

- Image of MS in 2003 far different than the image most know
 - Moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century
 - Competing and leading in the global marketplace

- Setting new standards for education and economic development

- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Computers in the Classroom
 - Accountability
 - Princeton Review: 12th best testing system in nation
 - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind”
 - Our test scores are improving
 - 6th in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers
 - Historic action of funding education first

- **Good schools = good jobs.**

- The leaders here in Tupelo have always recognized that public schools are the cornerstones of our communities and key to a successful economy

- We are giving our children more opportunity than they've ever had before

- Mississippi has experienced significant growth over the past three years

- We are aggressive about creating good paying, quality jobs for all Mississippians
 - Over 2,200 new and expanded facilities
 - More than 56,000 new jobs
 - Total investment in Mississippi nearly \$15 billion

- The best thing for a child to see everyday on their way to school is their parents on the way to a good job

- Opening of Nissan in May sends another strong signal
 - Only auto plant opening in America this year
 - \$1.4 billion investment by Nissan
 - hiring over 5,000 people over the next two years
 - already hired people from 77 of our 82 counties
 - over 30,000 direct jobs and indirect jobs

- Companies are coming to Mississippi because the word is out about what we can do

- Last year, Site Selection magazine ranked us as a top 10 location for new companies and said “If your firm needs to fast-track a new facility in the South, don’t overlook Mississippi. State officials will act quickly to get your operation up and running ahead of the competition.”

- Companies across the world are taking notice

- Top 10 states for small business survival

- Expansion magazine: 4 Mississippi cities ranked in latest survey of 50 hottest American cities for expansion or location of facilities

- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
 - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs
 - It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk
 - It's an image of global companies looking for a place to do business in the state

- It's an image you're building every day through your work

- I am proud to say that we are right there with you as you provide leadership to this area of Mississippi.

- When you “shifted into high gear” in July, as the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal reported, we did the same

- You asked for our help and we delivered.

- We were able to commit \$250,000 from our Rural Impact Authority to your PUL Alliance – Pontotoc, Union and Lee counties – to pay for pre-engineering costs necessary to develop your super-site

- With the help of my team, Bill Renick and Steve Hale, we were able to deliver the commitment to you in one day. I would say that’s shifting into high gear

- The PUL alliance is much like the bold leadership we undertook when we crossed state lines and party lines with Governor Riley and the State of Alabama for the East Mississippi/West Alabama Alliance.

- It takes bold steps like these to provide the future we want for our children

- And, we will be successful

- We have also worked together with ARC and Dr. Mabel Murphree to provide much needed infrastructure funds to NE Mississippi

- Together, we are accomplishing our priorities.

- On thing I learned when I was first elected as a state senator – It does matter who’s governor. Mississippians need to have a governor who’s accessible to the people

- We will continue to work hard to be your partner, to create opportunities and to listen to your needs

- Throughout my career, I’ve put the people of Mississippi first and I plan to continue

- Thank you for working with us and for your commitment and dedication to building a better Mississippi.