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Subject: Musgrove administration wrapping up projects as term comes to end By Jason Niblett, Staff Reporter

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JACKSON < They may be leaving, but they're not gone yet.

Gov. Ronnie Musgrove and his staff are tying up loose ends and trying to get their projects completed before Gov.-elect Haley Barbour's administration takes office in January.

While there have been times of great excitement and joy, there were also experiences they now gladly leave behind for the history books. Last week, the governor and staff members reflected on their accomplishments and challenges of the past four years.

Favorite? Or, expendable?

Michael Bentley, Musgrove's Citizen and Community Services coordinator, remembered traveling with the governor to Bosnia to visit Mississippi National Guardsmen on the front line.

<sup>3</sup>There was debate of whether I was his favorite staff member or the most expendable staff member, because I was the one chosen to go with him to Bosnia,<sup>2</sup> Bentley said. <sup>3</sup>Our pilot had to land by instruments alone because it was snowing so bad.<sup>2</sup>

Bentley said it was one of his most memorable moments. He saw how normal everyday Mississippians were working in combat zones and in the middle of tough military duties.

<sup>3</sup>They were performing front-line duties,<sup>2</sup> Bentley said. <sup>3</sup>It was a very eye-opening trip.<sup>2</sup>

Education policy liaison Kelly Riley said her experiences with Computers in the Classroom, No Child Left Behind, and other programs changed her life.

<sup>3</sup>It's in my blood,<sup>2</sup> Riley said. <sup>3</sup>There is still a lot to do in education.<sup>2</sup>

Riley pointed to the Solar Race Team in the Houston school district, which directly benefited from the Computers in the Classroom program. These students were able to build a solar car and compete in races across the United States and Australia. Danny Lantrip, the Houston Vocational Center director, described the project in a letter.

<sup>3</sup>We have shown the nation and foreign countries that Mississippi has a future in technology and the young people with the educational background to use it,<sup>2</sup> Lantrip wrote.

Riley said that her every action taken during working hours had the possibility of affecting people. Riley added that Chief of Staff Bill Renick constantly reminded staff members of that fact.

<sup>3</sup>He told us that 20 years from now, we may see something and know we had a hand in it. I consider myself lucky to have been a part of it. If we'd made a difference for one child, then it's all been worth it,<sup>2</sup> Riley said.

Policy and Planning director Michael Boyd said one of his most exciting times came when Nissan announced it was building a plant to Mississippi.

<sup>3</sup>There was a new attitude that we really could compete, we really can be successful. We had the No. 1 economic development project in the nation and that was Nissan North America,<sup>2</sup> Boyd said.

The future

Musgrove said that the next few weeks will be busy. After he leaves office, he plans to remain in Mississippi and work for the state's<sup>1</sup> advancement.

<sup>3</sup>We're working with Governor-elect Barbour on a smooth transition,<sup>2</sup> Musgrove said. <sup>3</sup>I will continue to work side-by-side with Mississippians to improve our schools and to bring more jobs for the people of Mississippi.<sup>2</sup>

He said that the advancements in education are one of the things that he is most proud of during his administration.

<sup>3</sup>Because of our investment in education, we have been able to attract companies like Nissan, to expand Howard Industries, and to attract thousands of other jobs, high paying jobs,<sup>2</sup> Musgrove said. <sup>3</sup>More than 10,000 people will be employed at the Howard Technology Park in the next 10 years. That is a major accomplishment of which I am very proud.<sup>2</sup>

Musgrove added that he was grateful for his opportunity to serve as Mississippi's governor.

<sup>3</sup>I'm the most fortunate person in America,<sup>2</sup> he said. <sup>3</sup>I'm living the American Dream and getting to help people. God has blessed me richly.<sup>2</sup>