

*Remarks for the  
Governor's Conference on High Technology  
November 1, 2001*

Mississippi is dealing with a new economy. We aren't just an agricultural economy anymore. The economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is borderless, wireless and global.

Mississippi is ready to compete in that economy.

We are making a transition in how we do business. We are doing what needs to be done to prepare our workforce for the new economy.

I was at a Tennessee-LSU game in Knoxville a few weeks ago, and my son commented on the color of the crowd. There must be 10,000 different ways to wear orange, he said.

I thought more about that statement in the following days, and it struck me that there must be 10,000 different ways to do business today.

What does that mean?

It means Mississippi needs to be prepared for whatever may come in its economy. We need to be ready to create our own opportunities. We have to think outside the box.

Here's how we're doing it.

In partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission, we are expanding internet access in rural areas around the state. By giving the people in these areas this access, we are opening up the world to them.

In addition to this access come efforts to provide education and job training for a workforce eager to participate in the new economy. We are providing the tools for them to succeed.

And by providing access to the internet and improving the technological infrastructure in these rural areas, we are building a foundation for economic development.

Companies want, need and demand the technological infrastructure necessary for doing business in the new economy. We're going to make sure they have it.

We're not just providing this technology and this training to our current workforce.

We're making sure the workforce of tomorrow is ready as well.

Through the "Computers in the Classroom" initiative, the students in the schools today will be prepared for the demands of the labor market tomorrow.

We are in the process of placing an internet-accessible computer in every public school classroom in the state. We will have this done by the end of next year.

And we will be the first state in the nation to do it.

We're doing it through a public-private partnership, demonstrating how government and industry can work together to help shape the needed skills of the workforce.

I want to thank Blake Wilson and the Mississippi Economic Council for their tremendous support of this program.

The face of the Mississippi economy is definitely changing. We are attracting jobs that demand skills, a strong infrastructure, and a change in the ways we do business.

We aren't trying to attract jobs. We are attracting them. And it's because we are recognizing the role of technology in the new economy and putting it to work.

Will Rogers once said, “even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”

Mississippi’s on the right track, and we’re moving fast. We will compete with anyone, anytime, anywhere. That’s a promise.

We are keeping this promise with the help of people like our next speaker. Dr. Michael Porter of the Harvard Business School has an international reputation as a leader in developing competitive strategies and analyzing industry.



As a member of the Harvard business school faculty since 1973, Professor Porter has taught CEO's of billion-dollar corporations and lectured extensively on competitive strategy around the world.

He has shared his skills with us here in Mississippi, and I appreciate the work he has done to help develop the technological potential for our state.

I'm pleased to introduce to you, Dr. Michael Porter.