

*Remarks for the  
Leadership Plenty Mississippi Luncheon  
April 14, 2003*

- Recognize Robin Robinson
  
- It's been said that the man who follows the crowd will never be followed by a crowd
  - Each of you is here today to take your place in front of the crowd
  - Each of you is a leader
  
- Have had an opportunity to learn about one of the projects from this class
  - Spreading good news of efforts to provide health coverage for Mississippi's children

- Mississippi leading in so many other ways as well
  - Leadership is action, not position
  
- Mississippi is taking on a different image
  - Image of a state moving faster than anyone else into the 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - A state that's competing and leading in the global marketplace
  - A state that's setting new standards in education and economic development

- In today's economy, Mississippi is like many other states / impacted by national recession
  - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
  - More than 2 million Americans out of work
  - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs
  
- Have to protect people in the short term while preparing for the long term
  - Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs

- Education is our first priority / has been since I've been in public office
  - Public schools are cornerstones of our communities and the key to the success of our economy
  
- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
  - Teacher pay / 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> when fully implemented
  - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind” / USA Today article
  - 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers

- One of the most exciting successes in education is in technology
  - Every public school classroom in the state has Internet-accessible computer
  - Mississippi first state in the nation to achieve this goal / confirmed by NGA
  
- Mississippi's investing in education
  - Increasing investment while others are cutting
  - That is significant in light of national recession
  - Demonstrates our priority / our commitment

- Efforts in education didn't just start this year
  - Have been working on this since I took office
  - We are making strong progress
  
- We're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education
  - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow
  
- When it comes to education, we mean business
  - Business means jobs

- Another image of Mississippi that's changing
  - No longer a state that depends solely on agriculture / low wage jobs
  - We are aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people
  
- Strong growth over past 3 years
  - 2,103 new and expanded facilities
  - More than 50,000 new jobs
  - Total business investment in Mississippi of \$14.1 billion

- We are putting our people to work in highly skilled jobs with good pay
  - Nissan plant opening in May / only auto plant opening in America this year
  - \$1.5 billion investment by Nissan / 5,000 direct jobs
    - Even more from suppliers
  
- We gained the attention of companies around the world when we landed Nissan
  - They're coming to Mississippi because the word is out about what we can do
  - Site Selection magazine: Mississippi ranked as Top 10 location for new companies
  - One of 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
  
- When businesses read these industry publications, they see that Mississippi has something to offer
  - They realize the image has changed
  
- We're looking to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
  - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- 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 of leadership, of action and not position
  - Each of you here is taking action, and I appreciate it
  - Important for the entire state for citizens to be a part of positive change