

Louisiana-Mississippi APME Annual Convention  
Saturday, May 20, 2000  
Crowne Plaza  
12:00 p.m.

Length of speech is 15-20 min. with a question and answer period of 10 min.  
Remember to stand up straight and speak in low tones.

## **Opening**

- 1.) Thanks for the introduction
- 2.) Appreciate the invitation to attend
- 3.) My Communications Director and I discussed today's event and she asked me what I wanted to talk with you about – my reply was, I wanted to discuss with you why you put negative headlines on articles dealing with me.

## **Introductory Remarks**

It has been a pretty fast and furious 121 days of my administration.

We have worked diligently with the leadership and members of the House and Senate to pass some historic legislation during this first legislative session.

During my Inaugural Address and my State of the State Address, I highlighted education, economic

development and healthcare as three issues that needed our immediate attention.

## **Main Points**

- 1.) Raising teacher pay to the southeastern average is the most critical issue facing the people of the State of Mississippi
  - i. We must remain committed to giving our children the best educational opportunities available, and we must remain committed to finding ways to keep quality teachers in the classroom and to bring new teachers into the field of teaching.
  - ii. Passing the teacher pay raise plan that will raise teacher pay to the southeastern average within 6 years was an effort that took the hard work of many.
  - iii. Giving those raises is a matter of priority, and education must be on the top of our priority list.
  - iv. We can do it, and we will do it.
  
- 2.) Bridging the digital divide for our students

- i. World of technology is changing daily, and our students must be able to keep up.
- ii. Classroom Technology Task Force – Internet-accessible computer in every classroom by the end of 2002.
- iii. We are putting information at the fingertips of our students
- iv. Businesses support strong education because it produces a better workforce
- v. Better education = Better jobs

3.) Economic opportunities

a. New Economic Development Plan

- i. Old plan is stale
- ii. New incentives
- iii. Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development-Dwight Evans – Mississippi Power
- iv. Special Session

b. Attention to all regions of the state

- i. We are not successful as a state if any region is not on an equal level.
- ii. Many Delta communities have not participated fully in our newly found prosperity

- iii. Mississippi Delta Regional Authority
  - 1. encouraging our Mississippi Congressional Delegation and US Senators to take a lead in passing legislation to create MS Delta Regional Authority.
  - 2. based on Appalachian Regional Commission
- iv. We must be strong and prepared for economic development

- 4.) Our Economy grows faster when our people are healthy
  - a. We are facing a healthcare crisis in Mississippi because we have a need for health care professionals in rural areas of our state.
    - i. There are no quick fixes, but we have started to find responsible approaches.
      - 1. Physicians scholarship program
    - ii. Mississippi Health Benefits Program
      - 1. New Action Plan
      - 2. New Advertising Campaign
      - 3. We have 85,000 eligible children and only 6,500 enrolled.

## **Closing Comments**

We know that there are no easy answers, but we are committed to find solutions that work for the people of Mississippi.

Our vision for the state is one of great growth and prosperity, and it will take a collective effort of private business, educators, government and industry to reach new heights of success.

Thank you.

## **Questions?**

(Watch your ums and uhs when you start answering questions, just breathe.)