

*Remarks for the
Mississippi Action for Community Education / Workforce Development Summit
June 21, 2003*

- Recognize Rep. Ed Blackmon
- Thank Cornelius Jones and MACE for hosting summits on workforce development
 - Strengthening workforce strengthens Mississippi
 - That's good for all of us
- Your good work is part of the reason that Mississippi is taking on a different image
 - Image of a state moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century
 - A state that's competing and leading in the global marketplace
 - A state that's setting new standards in education and economic development
- Impact of national recession
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - Bureau of Labor Statistics: 9 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 / Mississippi is recognized leader in education
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - "No Child Left Behind"
 - Computers in Classroom
- Increasing investment while others are cutting
 - That is significant in light of national recession
 - Demonstrates our priority / our commitment
- 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're always working to make these numbers climb even higher
- Investments in infrastructures of communities around the state
 - Companies want good transportation, energy, technical resources
- Workforce Investment Network / Job Centers
 - Offers employers and job-seekers one place to meet
 - Job training available to meet needs of businesses
- Passage of Mississippi Rural Economic Impact Authority
 - \$10 million to aid economic development in rural areas
 - Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges
- Late last month, awarded first grant under this program to City of Tylertown
 - \$245,300 grant to renovate a building housing two businesses
 - Grant will keep businesses in Tylertown and help them expand
- That's the type of result I wanted when I proposed this program
 - We're going to see more results like this around the state
- We've been creating, and will continue to create, quality, high-paying jobs
 - Our people have the talent and the skill
- Companies used to ask "why Mississippi?"
 - Not the case anymore
 - Asking "why not Mississippi?"
- I'm proud of the fact that the question has changed
 - More work to be done / appreciate your help in making it happen
 - Your input is valuable
- 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
- Thank you for the role you're playing in changing the image

