

*Remarks for the  
MDA Symposium  
January 21, 2003*

- Good morning / recognize Bob Rohrlack,  
Sam Mozee
  
- Goal of this symposium to give you tools,  
knowledge and insight
  - Help create better economic  
opportunities for citizens
  
- Local communities need to form alliances  
and partnerships
  - Better utilize limited resources
  - Have greater economic impact

- All activities should be driven by vision of a better tomorrow
  - Difficult to hit what you can't see
  
- Many challenges to communities across MS right now
  
- Effect of national recession
  - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
  - More than a million American out of work
  - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Effects of national recession hit the just and the unjust
  - Recession has no respect for political parties
  - Every state affected
  
- Have to deal with the impact here in MS
  - Protect people in short term / prepare for long term
  
- Best way to do that is through education
  - Everybody benefits from good schools
  
- Comprehensive plan for education
  - Teacher pay
  - Test scores
  - Computers in Classroom

- Time to go to next level
  - Summer Start program / reduce drop-out rates and increase skills
  - Save the state millions
  
- \$200 million “brain trust”
  - Recruit best minds for research, development, workforce training
  
- Investments in education benefit every Mississippian, not just students
  - People want to live in good communities
  - Good schools, good jobs, good communities

- Have called on Legislature to fund education in one comprehensive bill
  - Fund it at 62 percent of general fund
  - Time to prove to you that when it comes to education, we mean business
  - Business means jobs
  
- Have continued to create quality jobs during national recession
  - Nearly 50,000 new jobs in past three years / \$13.5 billion invested
  
- Building jobs across the spectrum
  - Nissan = \$1.5 billion investment / more than 5,000 direct jobs
  - MS also one of top 10 states for small business survival

- We have the right policies and programs in place to attract business / grow MS
  - Economic development is economic development
  - 2 people in a truck or 5,000 building a truck
  
- Have to create opportunities across the board
  - Rural areas hit hardest by NAFTA
  - Have to be smart and aggressive in creating jobs
  
- Communities have valuable assets to build on
  - Key is to identify assets
  - Develop plans to take advantage of them

- Resources are available for communities
  - “Resource Roundtable” segment of this symposium will outline them
  - Working to develop another resource
  
- MS Rural Economic Impact Authority
  - Assistance to new and existing business
  - Training for people who have lost jobs
  
- As leaders in this area, encourage you to lead by action, not position
  - Encourage investment in education
  - Encourage investment in economic development
  - Prepare today for benefits tomorrow

- Preparation depends on cooperative action between states
  - Work together to benefit people / region
  
- So much potential for communities statewide
  - Need to invest now to realize full promise and potential
  - Good schools, good jobs, good communities
  
- Those are the results of good leadership
  - Those are the results our people demand and deserve



- Encourage each of you here today to take advantage of available resources
  - Build partnerships / bring prosperity
  - Build good schools, good jobs, good communities