

*Remarks for
MED WEEK Kickoff Breakfast
September 15, 2003*

■ Recognize

- Cedric Morgan – Thank you for having me here / thank you for the job that you do
- Fred Williams, US Department of Commerce
- Steve Hale, Executive Director of the Mississippi Development Authority
- Carol Todd Robinson, President of MS MED Week Steering Committee
- Alice Doss, United States Small Business Administration
- Dr. Dolphus Weary, Executive Director of Mission Mississippi

- delighted to be here / kick off a very special week of activities for minority business community / in Jackson, across the state, and the nation.

- many people / hard at work / to make this event and other activities planned this week come to fruition
 - commend the MED Week Steering Committee and their partners for their efforts

- Minority Enterprise Development Week or MED Week is a time of celebration and recognition
 - proud to celebrate enormous impact that minority and women-owned business have on our economy

- same time / come together and recognize the challenges that face minority businesses / share resources and solutions to address those challenges

- Through the ongoing efforts of entities such as the Mississippi Development Authority / we are creating opportunities that positively affect every region of the state and every sector of the business community

- Last year, the Mississippi Development Authority awarded over \$2 million to minority businesses through its Minority Business Enterprise Loan Program

- numbers demonstrate / our state is on the move
 - willing to allocate the necessary resources to ensure prosperity
 - We will not leave anyone behind as we move into the future

- As Governor, these are the priorities we have focused on

- Investing for the people of Mississippi today, for dividends tomorrow

- By working together, we have accomplished a lot, but it hasn't been easy:
 - ✓ Every state impacted by national recession
 - ✓ More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - ✓ June 2003 report from Bureau of Labor
Statistics: 9.4 million Americans out of work –
NAFTA 41,000 to Mexico
 - ✓ Alabama, Texas and Florida are raising taxes and Arkansas is cutting services. Mississippi has refused to follow

- Image of MS in 2003 far different than the image most know
 - ✓ Moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century
 - ✓ Competing and leading in the global marketplace

- Setting new standards for education and economic development

- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
 - ✓ Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - ✓ Computers in the Classroom
 - ✓ Accountability
 - Princeton Review: 12th best testing system in nation
 - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind”
 - Our test scores are improving
 - We announced Friday that with our State Accountability system, more than 80% of Mississippi public schools have

achieved a rating of Level 3/Successful or higher.

- Under the federal NCLB accountability system, 50% of MS schools met the Adequate Yearly Progress requirements for reading/language arts and math.
 - NCLB score: Alabama – 33%, Delaware – 43%, Tennessee – 53%, and Florida 13%
 - ✓ 6th in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers
 - ✓ Historic action of funding education first
 - ✓ The youth of Mississippi are 1/3 of the population, yet all of our future
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- Mississippi has experienced significant growth over the past three years

- We are aggressive about creating good paying, quality jobs for all Mississippians
 - ✓ Over 2,200 new and expanded facilities
 - ✓ More than 56,000 new jobs
 - ✓ Total investment in Mississippi nearly \$15 billion

- The best thing for a child to see everyday on their way to school is their parents on the way to a good job

- The state of Mississippi understands that while we are recruiting new business and industry, we cannot lose sight of the importance of supporting existing industry and those entrepreneurs just starting out.

- We recognize that minority and other disadvantaged business owners are the backbone of our state

- MED Week is
 - perfect venue to explore issues,
 - to renew the spirit of inclusion and
 - our commitment to diversity for the benefit of everyone throughout the business community

- I would like to personally thank each minority business owner for their commitment to improving the lives of our citizens through job creation.