

*Remarks for the
Mid-South Delta Consortium 5th Annual Education and Rural Development Conference
February 11, 2003*

- Thank the following for sponsoring the conference:
 - W.K. Kellogg Foundation
 - University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

- Great to be here today for this conference

- Impact of national recession
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - More than two million Americans out of work
 - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Effects of national recession touches everyone
 - 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 creating jobs and investing in education
 - Everybody benefits from good schools

- Education must be first priority for MS
 - Making great progress
 - Teacher pay
 - Test scores
 - Computers in Classroom

- Keeping education a priority with a budget that puts Schools First / 62 percent
 - *HISTORIC ACTION THAT WAS TAKEN*
 - *UNPRECEDENTED COOPERATION*
 - *WAS A HISTORIC DAY WHEN SIGNED EDUCATION BILLS*

- Budget is key issue of legislative session
 - Must budget based on real numbers, not on hope
 - Funding education at 62%
 - Fully funding MAEP for the first time
 - Funds teacher pay raise

- Particular investment in higher education / \$200M “brain trust”
 - Recruit best minds for research, development, workforce training
 - Higher education has critical role in economic development

- Time to prove to people of MS we're serious about education
 - Make the investment now for dividends tomorrow

- When it comes to education, we mean business
 - Business means jobs

- MS Rural Economic Impact Authority
 - \$20M to help with economic development in rural areas
 - Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges

- Theme of conference is “From Poverty to Prosperity: Engaging the Total Community in a Seamless Network”
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- We have to look to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- Have to continue investing in education
 - More computers in classrooms
 - Higher test scores
 - Better funding for higher education

- Will Rogers quote: Even if on right track,
will get run over if you just sit there
 - MS is on the right track, and we're
moving