

Chairman's Welcome

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Mississippi and to *The Southern Leadership Summit*, Southern Growth Policies Board's 31st annual conference.

As chairman of Southern Growth Policies Board, I see the key role that leadership plays in ensuring the future prosperity of our region, our states, and our communities. It is evident in the tremendous progress that our region has made over the past several decades.

Today, we face many challenges, but also many opportunities. We cannot stand idly by and hope that things emerge for the best. Leadership must be the first priority in our campaign to promote our region's continued prosperity and quality of life.

The South has grown to be a globally competitive economy and our leaders must grow with us to embrace innovation, diversity and our region's evolving culture. We must provide opportunities for people from all walks of life to assume leadership roles to improve our schools, our communities, our neighborhoods and our governments.

During the next several days, regional and national speakers from both the public and private sectors will explore strategies for building diverse leadership, engaging youth and connecting leadership programs in our region. As you read through this program, you will see comments from some of the more than 600 hundred people in our region who participated in leadership surveys and focus groups. Their comments make it clear that everyone is concerned about developing responsible, knowledgeable and inclusive leaders for our region.

I believe *The Southern Leadership Summit* will provide the foundation for developing a collective vision for our region's leadership. I hope you will also take the time to enjoy the many treasures of the Mississippi Gulf Coast while you are here. Whether you are interested in sports, the great outdoors, history, restaurants or shopping, you will find it here.

Welcome to the beautiful and friendly City of Biloxi and the great State of Mississippi!

Very truly yours,



RONNIE MUSGROVE