

April 15, 2003

Allen Smart
Vice President of Programs
Rapides Foundation
P.O. Box 11937
Alexandria, LA 71315-1937

Dear Mr. Smart:

On behalf of the governors of 13 states and Puerto Rico, I would like to invite you to speak at a pivotal conference on leadership and citizen engagement in the South. The conference, scheduled for June 1-3, 2003, in Biloxi, Mississippi, will attract some 400 of the South's top leaders from the worlds of business, academia and public service.

This conference will explore leadership issues that are critical in bringing about positive change in our states and communities. We would be honored if you could join us as a speaker on a panel that will discuss leadership development programs in the region. We are particularly interested in your regional leadership initiative. This panel is scheduled to take place from 11:00 am to 12:15 pm on Monday, June 2nd.

The conference is being organized by the Southern Growth Policies Board, for which I serve as chairman. Southern Growth, which was formed by the Southern governors in 1971, is a nonprofit, interstate compact composed of governors, legislators and citizen representatives from each of its member jurisdictions. Its mission is to help improve the economy and quality of life in the South through dialog and collaboration among a wide cross-section of the region's policy and program leaders. (See www.southern.org.)

For additional information on the conference, please contact Jim Clinton, Southern Growth's executive director, at (919) 941-5145 or jlinton@southern.org. I would be grateful if you would be part of this historic and exciting meeting on the future of the South and look forward to your response.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM:klr