

Mississippi Hospitality Workers Training Center Graduation
Wednesday, May 16, 2001
6:00 p.m.
Little Rock Missionary Baptist Church – Gulfport

(Message: 15 minutes, providing workforce-training opportunities for a better quality of life)

Opening

- Good Evening
- (Bill Chandler, Board President, will introduce you.)
- I am excited to be a part of tonight's graduation ceremony, the first of many to come.
- (Boy Singing in Choir story – today's ceremony proves that you are ready for change, ready for the future.)

Main Points

1. Opportunities to Prioritize
 - a. Mississippians now, more than ever, have many opportunities from which to choose.
 - b. We must be ready for the future – ready for changes – ready for the “new economy.”
 - c. Workforce development and training is critical to our continued advancement and growth as a state.
 - d. We want more opportunities in:

- i. Education
 - 1. The cornerstone of our success.
 - ii. Economic Development
 - 1. More job opportunities for Mississippians.
- e. We must use these as guidelines to become more competitive in the global marketplace.
 - 1. These are the priorities of the people.
- f. Education and economic development go hand in hand.
- g. A state must have trained employees for potential new businesses.
 - i. High-tech companies must have high-tech employees.
 - ii. We are investing in good jobs for our people
 - 1. Nissan Motor Company
 - 2. Hallmark Flowers Distribution Center
- h. Give our people the opportunity for an even **better** Quality of Life
 - i. Our students and our adult learners must have the proper skills and training for the global economy.
 - ii. We are no longer an assembly line workforce in Mississippi.

1. We are a skilled workforce.
 - i. Mississippi must continue to invest.
 - i. The key is prioritizing and investing our money in the right places.
 - ii. We want to be more competitive.
 - iii. We want positive changes for our state.
 - j. The Mississippi Hospitality Workers Training Center is making a positive change in the lives of Mississippians.
 - i. This is a prime example of a successful partnership working for the betterment of Mississippi.
 - ii. (Thank everyone involved.)
 - iii. You, today's graduates, are taking a huge leap in improving your life and your family's quality of life.
 - iv. I commend you for taking the initiative and preparing yourself for a better future.

2. Promoting a more Positive Image of our State
 - a. Mississippi's Image: Important how our neighbors, our nation and the world view us.
 - b. How Mississippi is perceived affects us in all aspects:
 - i. Economic development
 - ii. Education

- c. We must also alter the way we, as Mississippians, perceive ourselves.
 - i. We must be confident in our abilities.
 - ii. We must know “who we are.”
- d. We have opportunities to promote a positive image.
- e. We must join together and concentrate on making Mississippi an even better place to live, work and raise a family.
- f. Companies are placing their faith in our state.
 - i. They have recognized the “untapped potential” in Mississippi.
 - ii. They are beginning to take advantage of it.
- g. The world is taking notice, and we must continue to spread the word about Mississippi.
 - i. Mississippi is Open for Business, not just in the U.S., but also around the world.
- h. We put the spotlight on Mississippi throughout the nation and world with the Nissan announcement, but there are more opportunities waiting for us.

Closing

- Mississippi is headed forward.

- It takes everyone working together to move our state forward – locally and statewide.
- We are not going to turn back the clocks and disrupt our progress.
- We want more great opportunities for the people of Mississippi.
- We want our children to have the opportunity to live, work and raise their families here.
- Everyone plays a role in our success.
- Working together we can and will make it happen.
 - Partnerships are the key.
- The people of Mississippi deserve that commitment.
- The children of Mississippi deserve that commitment.
- Our future depends on everyone working as a team in Mississippi.
- Making plans now for an even better Mississippi will ensure that future generations continue to succeed in our state.