

Mississippi Rural Water Association Annual Conference
Wednesday, March 28, 2001
10:30 a.m.
Trade Mart Complex

(Message:

Opening

- Good Morning
- (Lamar Conerly will introduce you.)
- (Story)

Main Points

1. Water & Sewer Task Force
 - a. We rely on recreational beaches, coastal waters, streams, rivers and lakes that are essential to the quality of life we have come to enjoy.
 - b. The critical importance of safe drinking water.
 - i. Mississippians rely on 1,586 public water supply systems across our state for safe drinking water.
 - c. The proper treatment and handling of wastewater is also critical to the public health and safety of our people
 - i. Approximately 1,900 treatment facilities in MS.

- d. Earlier this morning, I held a press conference to announce the creation of the Governor's Water & Sewer Task Force.
 - i. The twenty-seven member task force will be a time-limited commission with the sole purpose of:
 - 1. Assessing,
 - 2. Evaluating and
 - 3. Recommending action regarding the safeguarding and enhancement of Mississippi's water resources and infrastructure.
 - 4. The will also propose recommendations for assuring the quality and safety of Mississippi's water resources.
- e. Many factors threaten the safety of our water, including natural disasters that have contaminated drinking water.
- f. In the year 2000, 286 counties received boil water notices.
- g. Approximately 60% of Mississippi's monitored rivers do not fully meet state water quality standards.
- h. These are just a few of the reasons for establishing the task force,
 - i. Which Charles Chisholm, Executive Director of DEQ, will chair.

- i. The health of our children and families, and the protection of natural resources are of great importance.
- j. The quality of water in our state has a profound effect on the quality of health and welfare of our citizens, wildlife, as well as our domestic, agricultural, industrial and recreational activities.
- k. The quality of water in our state also has a direct impact on new economic development opportunities for Mississippi.

2. Advantage Mississippi Initiative

a. Economic Development Plan

- i. A Sound/Comprehensive
- ii. Variety of Incentives
- iii. Now MS has a management tool to sell the state
 - 1. We are in direct competition with our sister states
 - 2. (Talk about conversation with Georgia Governor)
 - 3. I have told other Governor's that Mississippi will take away as much business from them as we possibly can.
 - a. We will "fight" for every opportunity we can get.

(Mention articles that have compared MS, LA, AL, etc. stating what Mississippi was doing right)

- iv. The plan helps those communities that have not prospered
 - 1. Gives opportunities for all cities/counties
 - 2. Sends a signal to the nation – Serious about Business
- v. More, higher paying jobs for people of Mississippi
 - 1. Creates a better Quality of Life for every person in all 82 counties.

2. Budget

- a. We must be responsible with the people's money.
- b. They deserve and demand that of state leaders.
- c. Last year, the legislature
 - i. Overextended and
 - ii. Gambled with our budget
 - iii. I am not willing to do that this year.
- d. In order to have an honest figure to work with, our budget must be:
 - i. Honest

- ii. Straightforward
 - iii. Fiscally sound
- e. We must correct the baseline figure for this year's budget
 - i. Or we will start next year's budget \$85 million in the hole.
- f. This year, our state is growing at less than 1%
 - i. We cannot budget next year's growth based on 3.7%, like the legislature is proposing.
 - ii. The nation's economy is at a standstill.
 - iii. Our rate of growth, along with half the nation is sluggish.
 - iv. We cannot build our budget on hope
 - 1. We must be realistic.
- g. If we use these inflated figures to build our budget for the upcoming year, imagine the additional amount of money we will have to cut from our agencies, colleges and universities, and schools next year.
- h. We will be budgeting on quicksand.
 - i. The budget problem will escalate into a budget crisis!
- j. We are urging the legislature to lower the estimated rate of growth from 3.7% to 1% now.

- k. We should be honest with our people and make the adjustment that bases our rate of growth on a real number, if not:
 - i. It is misleading to our agencies
 - ii. It is misleading to our schools
 - iii. It is misleading to our colleges and universities
 - iv. It is misleading to our people.
- l. We need to work with figures and estimates that make sense
 - i. So agencies and schools can work within a realistic budget.
- m. We must restore credibility and common sense to Mississippi's budget.

Closing

- Mississippi is headed forward.
- 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.

- 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.