

ENERGETIC TIME FOR EDUCATION IN MISSISSIPPI

JACKSON, MISS. (August 22, 2003) – Today, the three education chiefs stressed the need for education systems to work together to create a strong future for Mississippi. The state education leaders described their vision for a unique collaboration which can make lifelong educational opportunities available for all Mississippians.

They announced a series of nine regional forums that begin September 5 to implement the recommendations of the Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education. The forums will be a partnership with business, education, government, the nonprofit sector and individuals in the state's communities.

Commissioner of Higher Education David Potter said, "The forums will permit business, education, government, the nonprofit sector and individuals in their communities to actively collaborate in designing ways to translate a vision of a better life for Mississippians into reality. IHL is pleased to be part of this involvement."

Dr. Potter explained, "Eighty-five percent of the jobs of tomorrow require at least some college education, and it is through education that Mississippians can achieve a better life. Education must be at the center of our state's strategic economic development in the current knowledge-based economy."

"The link between an effective public education system and a strong economy is undeniable," said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Henry L. Johnson. "Communities and states producing students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute to society are helping ensure their future economic well being."

"The Community and Junior Colleges are pleased to take the opportunity to work with the State Department of Education, the Institutions of Higher Learning and our general public in an attempt to make all levels of education better," said Dr. Wayne Stonecypher, Executive Director of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges. "We are continuously striving to reach above and beyond our current status."

The initiative is made possible through funding from NASA and is being coordinated by Dr. Olon Ray, former Executive Director of the State Board for Community & Junior Colleges. To register for the forums, contact the President's Office at the host university.

Dates for the forums are as follows:

Date: September 5 Partnership: Copiah-Lincoln Community College Southwest Community College Alcorn State University

Date: September 9 Partnership: Gulf Coast Community College The University of Southern Mississippi

Date: September 10 Partnership: Northwest Community College The University of Mississippi

Date: September 18 Partnership: Itawamba Community College Northeast Community College

Date: September 25 Partnership: East Central Community College Jones County Community College Meridian Community College Mississippi State University

Date: October 9 Partnership: Pearl River Community College The University of Southern Mississippi

Date: October 22 Partnership: Hinds Community College Holmes Community College Jackson State University

Date: October 24 Partnership: East Mississippi Community College Mississippi State University Mississippi University for Women

Date: October 30 Partnership: MS Delta Community College Coahoma Community College MS Valley Community College Delta State University