

*Remarks for the
North Holly Springs Industrial Park Access Road
March 25, 2002*

*(recognize Marshall County Board of
Supervisors / members of Development
Authority)*

In my State of the State address in January, I outlined four priorities for our state – jobs, education, health care and public safety.

We're making strong progress on each one.

Mississippi is growing like never before. In the past two years, during a national recession, we've created more than 21,000 jobs and attracted over \$6 billion in new investments.

Site Selection magazine, one of the top trade publications in the economic development industry, ranked Mississippi as one of the top ten states for its “Governor’s Cup” award.

The perception of Mississippi is changing. The old question of “Why Mississippi?” doesn’t get asked anymore. The question now is, “Why *not* Mississippi?”

And north Mississippi is a hotbed of activity for economic growth.

Case in point: The Alcoa facility in Hernando was scheduled to close. The plant was going to cease operations and move to Mexico.

We stepped in and, with incentives available through Advantage Mississippi, convinced Alcoa to stay here. Not only are they staying here, they are moving ahead with a \$16 million expansion that will double the size of their workforce to 500 jobs. That's how we're able to compete.

Northeast Mississippi offers so many opportunities for new and expanding businesses, and we want to make the most of those opportunities.

Another case in point: Whirlpool Corporation announced last week they are closing a manufacturing facility in Quebec, Canada, and eliminating about 500 jobs.

Where are those jobs going?

About 150 of them are going to an existing Whirlpool facility in Oxford. That speaks volumes for what we're doing, and sends a strong message throughout the economic development community and industry as a whole.

With the increasing population growth in this area, you are in a strong position to compete. Your proximity to Memphis and major transportation routes offers tremendous potential.

We're committed to building Mississippi and making sure it achieves its promise and potential. Our people deserve nothing less.

This groundbreaking today is one more step forward in building Mississippi. I'm looking forward to taking more steps with you.

Thank you.