

*Remarks for the
Nucor Mississippi Community Leaders Forum
May 20, 2003*

- Recognize Jim Sheble (SHE-bull), General Manager of Nucor in Jackson

- Pleased to be here to participate in Nucor Steel's Community Leaders Forum
 - Have always believed that leadership is action, not position
 - That same belief is shared by Nucor

- Their corporate actions clearly demonstrate their desire to be a leader not only in their industry but in the community
 - Strong investments in Mississippi
 - Job creation
 - Economic contributions
 - Community involvement
 - Environmental stewardship

- Their good work is part of the reason that Mississippi is taking on a different image
 - Image of a state moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century
 - A state that's competing and leading in the global marketplace
 - A state that's setting new standards in education and economic development

- In today's economy, Mississippi is like many other states

- Every state impacted by national recession
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - More than 2 million Americans out of work
 - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Have to protect people in the short term while preparing for the long term
 - Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs

- Education is our first priority / has been for past three years since I've been in office
 - Public schools are our cornerstones of our communities and the key to the success of our economy.

- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Princeton Review: 12th best testing system in nation
 - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind” / USA Today article

- SREB: Mississippi first state in southern region to have plan for “No Child Left Behind” approved
 - Speaks volumes of the good work being done here

- One of the most exciting successes in education is in technology
 - Every public school classroom in the state has Internet-accessible computer
 - Mississippi first state in the nation to achieve this goal / confirmed by NGA

- Mississippi's investing in education
 - Increasing investment while others are cutting
 - That is significant in light of national recession
 - Demonstrates our priority / our commitment

- 2003 legislative session: challenged Legislature to fund education first
 - Historic action
 - Strong precedent for the future
 - Education will not be a second priority

- I know that education is high priority for Nucor as well
 - Every child of every Nucor employee is eligible to receive scholarships to college or vocational school
 - Scholarships worth \$2,500 per year
 - That's not just a helping hand for a student, it's an investment in the future for us all

- Together, we're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education
 - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow

- When it comes to education, we mean business
 - Business means jobs

- Another image of Mississippi that's changing
 - No longer a state that depends solely on agriculture / low wage jobs
 - We are aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people

- Strong growth over past 3 years
 - Over 2,200 new and expanded facilities
 - More than 52,000 new jobs
 - Total business investment in Mississippi of nearly \$15 billion

- Nucor has been a big part of that growth
 - In the greater Jackson area alone, Nucor has 225 permanent jobs
 - Impact of this facility felt beyond Jackson

- According to Nucor figures, the facility generates annual expenditures of almost \$200 million and creates over 1,100 spin-off jobs statewide

- With the passage of Mississippi Rural Economic Impact Authority, we are creating environment to build even more jobs
 - \$10 million to aid economic development in rural areas
 - Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges

- We're looking to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
 - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs
 - It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk
 - It's an image of global companies looking for a place to do business in the state

- Thank you for the role you're playing in changing the image
 - Thanks for invitation to join you here today