Draft Remarks for Governor Ronnie Musgrove

Opening Ceremony and Release of the 2003 Report on the Future of the South
Sunday, June 1, 1:00 PM

*Instructions: Jim Clinton will introduce the head table (Governors Huckabee, Musgrove, Henry, and Warner) and turn the meeting over to you. You will officially open the conference and make a brief overview presentation on the Report and how it was developed. (**NOTE: The following points have been prepared by SGPB staff to coincide with key quotes from the report and from citizens that will be shown on a screen as you are talking. Please try to stick to these talking points as they are presented.**) You should then introduce Governor Huckabee who will further discuss the Report, its goal and its two objectives. Jim Clinton will follow with an expanded discussion on Objective One and the target groups needing special attention under this objective. You will then discuss the Report's second objective. Then ask Governor Warner to talk about his responses to the Report and how he sees it being used in Virginia. After Governor Warner's remarks, you will ask the panel to discuss leadership and civic engagement further, depending on remaining available time. Directions are contained within your remarks as to when and to whom you should recognize for remarks.*

(Please open with welcoming remarks, then move to the release of the 2003 Report on the Future of the South)

Nearly 150 years ago, Charles Dickens wrote his classic novel "A Tale of Two Cities." The book opens with the well-known lines, "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

Those words were used to describe the political situations in 18th century England and France – but can just as easily be used to illustrate the environment in which southern states operate in the 21st century.

Many of the challenges we face today in the American South have been with us for generations – but we are taking a new approach to those challenges, an approach which calls us to turn them into opportunities for our states and for our region.

That approach depends on one major factor for success – leadership. We cannot

stand idly by and simply hope for things to turn out all right in the South. Rather, we must take a proactive stance and commit ourselves to doing the necessary work to help the South emerge as a leader for the nation.

We are in a campaign to grow the southern states, to help them reach the fullness of their promise and potential. And, as it was once said, there are many elements to a campaign — leadership is number one, and everything else is number two.

The leadership for a successful campaign must come from every level –

from county clerks, from mayors, and from governors; from the smallest towns to the largest cities; from partnerships built between public and private entities and based on common goals and trust.

It's that type of leadership that we're seeing across the southern states today. We see it in the growth of our universities as world-class research centers, in the location of new industries in a region once focused more on agriculture, and in the heightened role of our people on the national and international stages.

We're working to prepare all our states for the economy of the 21st century – and I

believe that the South, more than any other region, will be setting the standard for the rest of America to follow.

In addition to its work on the conference and the 2003 Report on the Future of the South, Southern Growth was selected by the Pew Partnership for Civic Change to be a national implementation partner for its grassroots leadership development program, *LeadershipPlenty*. This initiative focuses on the capacity of people from all walks of life to work together to solve community problems. Southern Growth put together two teams of representatives from throughout the region—including the Mississippi Center for Community and Civic

Engagement at the University of Southern Mississippi—to be trained in the *LeadershipPlenty* process.

We were then elated to have Mississippi chosen as the first state in the nation to take *LeadershipPlenty* statewide. We held a luncheon in December to launch the program and since then more than 80 Mississippians have been trained to implement the program in their communities.

There are a lot of wonderful stories about leadership going on in the South:

When Melissa Poe was just nine years old, she organized a campaign in Nashville to write letters to the President of the United States asking that the federal government do a better job of cleaning up the environment. Now, Kids for a Clean Environment—the organization that she started, has more than 2000 chapters and 300,000 members.

When revitalization volunteers in Andrews, North Carolina couldn't get town officials involved in their efforts for civic renewal based on culture and history, they responded by running for office themselves--successfully. With support from Handmade in America, tiny Andrews (pop. 1770) now

has 27 renovated buildings including the train depot, 13 redone facades, an excursion railroad, and more than $5.5 million in new investment.

Pummeled by a dying industrial base, environmental challenges, and a community divided by racial and other issues, citizen leaders in Chattanooga began to reinvent the city during the early 1980s. Two committed individuals led a two-stage process—Vision 2000 and ReVision 2000—that involved more than 4300 citizens in discussions on the city's future. Now Chattanooga is seen as a model of civic engagement and community renewal and was named one of the world's 12 "Best

Practice Cities" at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul.

All over the South and all over the United States, citizen leaders are finding new ways of addressing community challenges. These new ways are more inclusive, more connected, more collaborative than ever before.

At the core of the movement towards new leadership models is an emerging awareness that quality of life issues are inseparable from economic development issues. The quantity and quality of a community's civic engagement and social capital directly impact both quality of life and

economic opportunity. The volunteers and professionals who are taking on the community-based work that so directly determines our success or failure are reinventing the wheel of community leadership.

Business and cultural observers have written extensively on the increasing pace of change and its disorienting effects. Most businesses use tools on a daily basis that did not exist a generation ago and organize work in new patterns that demand quick thinking and team involvement. They face competition that is more agile and relentless than ever before.

Communities struggle to meet rapidly mutating challenges without the financial or human resources that could allow them to be effective. The effects of economic restructuring play out in the loss of traditional leaders. The consolidation of small banks into larger banks means decisions are often made outside of the affected community. The deregulation and evolution of utilities has also resulted in decision-making that is more centralized. In the South, this problem has historically been more acute because of our reliance on branch plants for economic growth. The leadership and investment potential of home offices has most often resided elsewhere.

Technology itself triggers new challenges and offers new tools. The Internet and the World Wide Web offer remarkable new communication and networking capacity, the potential for virtual communities that allow people to connect and organize in new and exciting ways. However, computer games and television often discourage collaboration and meaningful communication, rewarding those who stay within their electronic cocoons.

Globalization offers new, higher paying jobs; new industries and career paths; and cost savings to consumers. However, it also can mean increased competition for local manufacturers, vulnerable workers, and—at

its worst—war and terrorism. Few communities, especially smaller communities, have developed realistic assessments of their positions in the global marketplace much less plans for enhancing those positions.

The combination of technology and globalization has created a ferociously competitive business environment, one in which businesses can lose market share without even knowing to whom the share is lost. Workers and supervisors are under increasing pressure to be efficient. Executives must deliver profits and growth quarterly or face extinction.

The staggering flow of information from an endless variety of media makes sorting through it all and developing any sort of understanding all but impossible. The reader, viewer, or listener often feels overwhelmed by the onslaught of data, opinion, and images. In the absence of effective analysis and filters, trust in government and business leaders steadily erodes.

Large-scale demographic changes offer new challenges. The Baby Boom generation is becoming a retiree boom. Many Southern communities face the special challenges associated with immigration as the Hispanic

population in the South begins to mirror the growth experienced in Western states.

Over a thirty-year period, responsibilities once held by the federal government have been steadily returned to states and communities, often without the financial resources necessary to meet these new demands. Then, in the middle of an economic downturn, with most states and communities already financially strapped, the United States experienced the all-too-real horror of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Certainly, New York City and Washington, DC suffered disproportionately in the attacks themselves, but no state and no community

has been insulated from the aftershocks. The already-shaky financial markets began a steady decline and already-challenged state and local coffers sank deep into the red.

So, it is in this environment that the Southern Growth Policies Board attempts to Reinvent the Wheel. Our Council on the Southern Community led the way in developing this Report, and Governor Mike Huckabee served as chairman of that Council.

The work done on this Report represented another step in Southern Growth's commitment to engage more

Southerners. The Report itself is an example of the kind of leadership and civic engagement that we're here to discuss. Last fall, 75 leaders from all over the South gathered for a two-day brainstorming retreat. A series of preliminary recommendations emerged from that meeting.

Southern Growth staff members then began a series of focus groups held throughout the region where those ideas were tested and developed further. Throughout the process, Governor Huckabee and the Council on the Southern Community provided guidance and feedback. Then an online survey was used

to elicit still more opinions and ideas.
Governor Huckabee and the Council met
again in Little Rock in March and framed
final recommendations. Southern Growth's
Executive Committee approved them in
April, and the full Southern Growth Board
approved them this morning. I'd like to ask
Governor Huckabee to now lead us through
the Report's primary recommendations.

(Governor Huckabee will make a presentation, then introduce Jim Clinton. Jim will make a presentation, then return the podium to Governor Musgrove.)

Thank you, Governor Huckabee and
Jim. I want to talk a little more about the
second objective of this new goal. This
objective calls for us to "Develop
courageous, accountable leaders who are
guided by ethics, informed by knowledge of

economic and cultural change and insistent upon inclusive approaches to community action."

One of the Southerners who responded to our survey said, "Oftentimes, leaders in our region make decisions based on limited information, limited discussions, limited resources and not enough vision to determine the outcome of their decisions,"

Objective two, in short, calls for better-prepared leaders. The report outlines some of the qualities of better-prepared leaders who can help us build a thriving, 21st century South.

It could help to accelerate the leadership transformation process if we clearly describe what we expect of our leaders. Although there was surprisingly little dispute among the Southerners contributing to this report about what those qualities should be, it was clear that leadership has an oral rather than written job description. We've included a table, on page 49 of the report, summarizing many of the features identified by Southerners as things they want to see more —or less of—in their leaders.

We want leaders who are decent, honest, reliable, humble and compassionate. We want leaders who are visionary and courageous. We want leaders

who are energetic and innovative. One of the things we heard over and over again in developing this report was a desire to have leaders who are inclusive, who make it a habit to involve all stakeholders. We want leaders who are always learning.

We don't want leaders who are corrupt and take undue advantage of their positions. We don't want leaders who use stereotypes instead of facts. We don't want leaders who care only about the powerful. We don't want leaders who say one thing and do the other.

We need to reduce extreme partisanship. We need to identify new and

different leaders and not rely on the same people over and over again. We need to not allow single-issue politics to divide us. We need to choose human values over an obsession with celebrity.

Good leadership, however, requires more than better-prepared leaders. Leadership must be cultivated within and supported by businesses, universities and schools and volunteer organizations in the community. It is not that each institution must play the role of a formal leadership development program. But all institutions have the potential to act as enablers of leadership development.

While there are many legitimate approaches to leadership development and many Southerners doing good work in the field, it is clear that we need more champions and catalysts. Champions might include governors or chambers of commerce, people with the power to make leadership development a widely shared priority and the institutional resources to make it happen. Catalysts are the grassroots organizers, those that the Kettering Foundation calls "key partners in supporting democratic processes."

One of the most exciting things about the development of this Report was seeing all the amazing work that Southerners are

doing. The Report profiles a number of initiatives and we will celebrate some more of them in our Innovators presentation later today. From the Oklahoma Academy to Mobile United, from Mission Mississippi to the Youth Advisory Councils in Arkansas, Southerners are working at the community level to build leadership capacity. Some of the success stories profiled in this report are just amazing.

I encourage you to read this Report, to draw inspiration from its success stories and support from its recommendations. Southern Growth Policies Board and the Council on the Southern Community are committed to pursuing these

recommendations and to measuring our progress towards achieving them.

So, our thanks go out to Governor Huckabee and the Council on the Southern Community for its work on this Report; to the staff of Southern Growth Policies Board, and to all the Southerners who made contributions to the Report through the retreat, the focus groups, and the survey that helped define it.

Governor Warner, you've been busy, among other things, as Chairman of our Southern Technology Council. Tell us what this report means for you and for Virginians.

(Governor Warner will respond for about five minutes)

1. Which recommendations in the report do you think will have the greatest impact on your state and why?

2. Many of the recommendations in this report require implementation at the local level. Who do you think should see this report? Who are the likely champions? What are some things that state government could do, or you as Governor could do, to support implementation efforts?

3. What do you see as some of the key barriers to creating better-prepared and

more diverse leaders in your state? How can we overcome these barriers?

4. There are many excellent initiatives in the South that are aimed at building leadership and community capacity. However, there is little communication among these programs. The report recommends establishing a Southern Leadership Network to link programs and alumni throughout the region. How would such a network benefit your state?

(Governor Musgrove wraps up the session and announces NASA's Project DEVELOP display in room across the foyer.)

We've discussed various leadership models and initiatives here today and this is

just the beginning of our conference. There is much more in store as to how we can engage citizens from all walks of life throughout the South to ensure a prosperous quality of life, as well as economic future, for our region.

One announcement before we have a short break. We have representatives of NASA's Langley Research Center's Project DEVELOP with us here at the conference. DEVELOP demonstrates the benefits of Earth science applications to local communities by utilizing college students to conduct projects for local communities or states. These students also rehabilitate NASA computers and place them, along

with Earth Science curriculum materials for teachers, in schools. DEVELOP is working with Mississippi's Department of Environmental Quality, as well as four of our local schools. Please be sure to visit their room across the foyer for more information.