

Remarks for
South Pike Area
Chamber of Commerce
Thursday, November 20, 2003

- Recognize:
 - Mayor Storer
 - Members of the South Pike Area Chamber of Commerce

- It is great to be with you here today

- Good to be back in Magnolia

- favorite parts of my job
 - meeting with the people who have a vision of greatness, success, and economic development for Mississippi's future and its citizens

- H.W. Lewis said, “Those who are unwilling to invest in the future haven’t earned one.”

- Mississippi is earning its future, reaping the rewards, and is focused on its priorities
 - Priorities- Education and jobs
 - Improving the quality of life for all of its 2.8 million citizens

- As Governor these are the priorities I have focused on
 - Also the priorities that the Pike County area has focused on

- In May of this year the city of Magnolia received an economic development grant for \$500,000 to make public facilities improvements on behalf of Southeastern Railway Surfaces, Inc.

- Thank the city of Magnolia and Pike County for taking the initiative and seeking to improve existing industry and the quality of life for its residents

- The same initiative is also evident in the rich development we see throughout Pike County and its Industrial Park
 - With over 35 industrial facilities ranging from fabric mills and poultry processors to packaging manufactures

- Pike County also offers customized industrial training programs provided through Southwest Mississippi Community College
 - for new industries who plan to move to Pike County through MDA

- Investing in the people of Pike County to reap the dividends for years to come

- By working together, we have accomplished a lot, but it hasn't been easy in these tough economic times

- Invested in existing industry and brought new industry to south Mississippi
 - Expanded Northrup Grumman with 2,000 new jobs
 - Expanded Howard Computers with over 2,000 new direct jobs and over 10,000 indirect jobs in the years to come
 - ValueLine Furniture with over 100 new jobs

- Image of MS in 2003 is far different than the image most know and unlike anything anyone could have imagined
 - We are moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century

- We are competing and leading in the global marketplace
 - 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
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- It's an image of companies looking for a place to do business in the state
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- We are setting new standards for education and economic development

- We are aggressive about creating good paying, quality jobs for all Mississippians
 - Over 2,200 new and expanded facilities
 - More than 56,000 new jobs

- Total investment in Mississippi nearly \$15 billion

- Companies are coming to Mississippi because the word is out about what we can do

- Public schools are the **key** to a successful economy
 - And the cornerstone of our communities

- Good schools / lead to good jobs / good jobs
lead to better communities / good
communities lead to an even better
Mississippi

- Some states are not willing to invest in
education, but Mississippi isn't one of them

- Historic action of fully funding education
first

- That is the way it should always be

- Our hard work in education is paying off across the state
 - As our children reap the fruits of our labor

- Test Scores are improving
 - Just last week / the results of the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress scores came out
 - Our eighth graders math scores are up 12 points
 - compared to the nations score which is only up 10 points
 - Our fourth graders math scores are up 7 points
 - compared to the nations score which is only up 4 points

- With our State Accountability system
 - more than 80% of Mississippi public schools have achieved a rating of Level 3 Successful or higher
- Under the federal NCLB accountability system
 - 50% of MS schools met the Adequate Yearly Progress Requirements
- NCLB score: Alabama – 33%, Delaware – 43%, Tennessee – 53%, and Florida 13%

- We have not stopped with just improving the test scores
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th / when fully implemented
 - Computers in the Classroom
 - First state in the nation
 - 6th in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers
 - Princeton Review: Mississippi has 12th best testing system in nation

■ **Good schools = good jobs**

- Mississippi's image of high-paying, highly skilled jobs and high educational standards is one we have built with people just like you

■ It's an image Pike County and its Chamber of Commerce are building

■ Thank you for your commitment and dedication to building a better Mississippi