

*Remarks for the
Remote Sensing Press Conference
December 12, 2002*

Good afternoon.

Mississippi is competing at a new level across the board, and in many cases, we are a leader among our competitors.

We are demonstrating to the rest of the country that we are a leader in education. Our teacher pay is on the rise, just like our test scores. More of our students are graduating from high school and going on to college. We are the first state in the nation to place an Internet-accessible computer in every one of our more than 32,000 public school classrooms.

We're demonstrating that we're a leader in economic development. We landed one of the top economic development projects in the nation with the Nissan plant, a facility that is being expanded before it's even opened, and bringing with it an investment of \$1.5 billion and more than 5,000 direct jobs. At the other end of the spectrum, we're one of the top ten states in the nation for small business survival.

Now, we're poised to strengthen our leadership even more through the development of Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems technology. Today, the Governor's Advisory Commission on Remote Sensing Technologies is presenting its final report on this issue.

Through collaborative efforts between the state's universities, the NASA Stennis Space Center, the Mississippi Development Authority and private companies, we are in a position to be a leader in the Remote Sensing industry.

Through our e-Government initiative, we have already built the foundation for people to do business with the state, on-line, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Anglers and hunters can get a license on-line. It's now possible to renew your driver's license on-line.

We're moving into a new era of technology.

For us to make the most of this era, however, we have to turn some obstacles into opportunities.

We will be presenting legislative recommendations – recommendations that can be implemented immediately without funding – to begin that work.

I would like to turn the podium over to Charles Chisolm, Chair of the Advisory Commission, to discuss the work completed by the Commission and its recommendations.

(Chisholm speaks)

Thank you, Charles. Let me emphasize our major recommendations:

First, we must bring together those with the best experience in this field to work together. I will call on the Legislature to establish a policy board to coordinate government activities regarding Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems.

Second, legislation should assign responsibility for these operations, under the oversight of the *policy* board, to the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

By doing this, Mississippians will have greater accountability and coordination of remote sensing and GIS activities.

This technology has many applications, including homeland security and economic development. Robert Latham, executive director of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and head of Mississippi's homeland security, and Bob Rohrlack, executive director of the Mississippi Development Authority, are here and available to answer questions in those areas.

David Litchliter, with the Department of Information Technology Services, served as vice chairman of the commission, and is also available to answer your questions.

I want to thank each of the members who served on this commission and shared their talents and expertise on this report. Their input and focus on continuing to make Mississippi a leader is greatly appreciated.

I would like to open the floor for questions.