

*Remarks for Steve Hale
American Eurocopter Groundbreaking Ceremony
August 7, 2003*

Good morning, and on behalf of Governor Ronnie Musgrove, I'm pleased to welcome you all here today.

Today's groundbreaking marks the culmination of a great deal of hard work and cooperation between many different individuals and entities. It has been my pleasure to work with Governor Musgrove and each of you here to make this day a reality.

The process to make it to this point demanded a shared commitment and dedication to American Eurocopter, and to the people of Mississippi, and we met that demand.

As a result of that work, I'm proud today to congratulate European Aeronautics Defense Systems and its subsidiary American Eurocopter on the decision to locate here, and to welcome you as Mississippi's newest corporate citizen.

Mississippi is rapidly becoming known as a destination for industry. Publications and industry executives around the country are talking about us with a new sense of excitement and energy. Last year, *Site Selection* magazine wrote that ["If your firm needs to fast-track a new facility in the South, don't overlook Mississippi. State officials will act quickly to get your operation up and running ahead of the competition."](#)

That quick action begins in the Governor's office. Governor Musgrove has been involved from the outset, and as a result, \$2.6 million has been provided in support of this project through the Appalachian Regional Commission, Community Development Block Grant funds, and workforce training dollars.

I want to take a moment and recognize Mabel Murphree with the ARC, and thank her for her involvement in this project.

I also want to thank the officials from the TVA, Mississippi State University, East Mississippi Community College at Mayhew, and all the communities, economic development organizations and business leaders who have dedicated their time and energy to this project.

The bottom line is this: American Eurocopter's confidence in Mississippi and its workforce sends a strong signal to business and industry that Mississippi is a great place to do business.

We are committed to building a long-term, pro-business environment, and evidence of that commitment is found here today. It's found in other industries that have chosen to do business here. It's found in the more than 2,300 new and expanded facilities that have created over 53,000 jobs in the past three years.

With strong leadership from the Governor's Office and our dedication to working together, we are gaining attention around the world. We will continue to capitalize on these strong partnerships to create opportunities – and quality jobs – for the people of Mississippi.

And today, we welcome a new partner to Mississippi in American Eurocopter. We're glad you're here, and we look forward to a long and prosperous partnership with you. Thank you.