

*Remarks for the
“Smart Business, Smart Growth” Sustainability Conference
March 26, 2003*

- Recognize Jayne Buttross / other dignitaries

- Proud to welcome you to the Mississippi Gulf Coast and this conference on “Smart Business, Smart Growth”
 - This reflects the methods we’re using to build Mississippi

- Important to recognize from the outset the importance of the delicate balance between our environmental systems and our efforts to create jobs for our people
 - Need to make the best use of all our resources

- We're doing that along the Gulf Coast and across Mississippi
 - Coastal Impact Assistance Plan focusing on health of the environment here
 - Focusing on habitat protection, water quality, infrastructure

- That's important when we're working to bring jobs to this area
 - Carnival Cruise Lines / working to bring a cruise ship to the Coast
 - Environment plays key role in infrastructure for an effort like this

- Our efforts to conduct smart business and enjoy smart growth begin in education
 - Mississippi is leading the nation with education efforts

- Education is the first priority for Mississippi
 - Making great progress
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Test scores up / accountability standards stronger than “No Child Left Behind”
 - Princeton Review: Mississippi has 6th best testing system in nation
 - Mississippi 6th in nation in National Board Certified Teachers
 - Computers in Classroom

- Mississippi first state in nation to fully fund education and fund it first
 - Other states cutting to the bone
 - We're funding at 62 percent

- We're proving to the people of Mississippi that we're serious about education
 - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow
 - That's smart business

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

■ Job creation from January 2000 to February 2003

- 2,103 new and expanded facilities
- 50,253 new jobs
- Total investment of \$14.1 billion

■ Mississippi Rural Economic Impact Authority

- \$20M to help with economic development in rural areas
- Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges

- Mississippi's potential not exclusive to metropolitan areas
 - Promise of our people is just as strong in rural areas
 - Fighting to bring quality jobs to every Mississippian

- We have to look to the future of Mississippi / where do we want to go?
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- We're realizing smart growth because we conduct smart business
 - That's good for Mississippi