

**For Immediate Release**

July 2, 2003

**Contact:** John Sewell

601-359-2916

## **Mississippi Receives Federal Funding Award for Government Efficiency**

(Jackson, MS) – Governor Ronnie Musgrove announced today that Mississippi’s Food Stamp Program had the lowest error rate in the Southeast United States, for the 2002 calendar year. The Mississippi Department of Human Service’s effective management earned the state an additional \$4.8 million in administrative funding for the food stamp program, to be disbursed in the coming weeks.

“Ensuring that essential services are provided with the utmost efficiency, means more money in the pockets of Mississippi tax payers,” said Musgrove. “I’m proud of the staff of the Food Stamp Program and their focused efforts toward efficiency and effectiveness.”

Under the Food Stamp Act of 1977, a state may receive additional administrative reimbursement for expenses associated with its Food Stamp Program. To receive the funding, a state’s error rate must be 5.9 percent or lower. For FY2002, Mississippi’s error rate was 4.39 percent.

“I am so proud of all the employees in our Division of Economic Assistance,” says MDHS Executive Director Thelma W. Brittain. “Because of their dedication and commitment, we will now have funds to help soften the blow of budget cuts and continue to provide the best services to our clients,” Brittain says.

Governor Musgrove was notified of the Mississippi Department of Human Services efficiency rating and supplementary funding in a letter from Eric M. Bost, Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Service in the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“I personally want to commend you for this achievement and encourage you to continue your efforts to improve program integrity, program access and the overall administration of the Food Stamp Program,” Bost wrote in his letter.

The Food Stamp Program provides monthly benefits that help low income households buy the food they need for good health. Eligibility criteria, income and resource limits and allotment maximums per household size are set by federal laws and regulations governing the Food Stamp Program under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

###