

**For Immediate Release**

April 1, 2003

**Contact:** John Sewell

601-359-2916

## **Governor Musgrove: Jobs for East Mississippi Focus of Cooperative Agreement**

(Jackson, MS) – Governor Ronnie Musgrove said today job creation in east Mississippi is the driving force behind an initiative for a cooperative agreement with the State of Alabama. Musgrove spoke at a press conference this morning at the East Mississippi Business Development Corporation office in Meridian.

“At the February meeting of the National Governors Association in Washington, I met with Governor Bob Riley of Alabama regarding the potential of a cooperative agreement between our two states,” Musgrove said. “Bob Rohrlack, executive director of the Mississippi Development Authority, has been involved in strategic discussions with his counterpart, Neal Wade, director of the Alabama Development Office.

“The agreement will require Alabama to pass similar legislation that is already included in the Advantage Mississippi Initiative,” said Musgrove. “What we are talking about here today is an extension of that vision, and a new means by which Mississippi can continue to focus its potential and create quality jobs for its people.”

“So much has been done to build jobs, to build business, to build Mississippi. It has been done, and it will continue to be done, without raising taxes,” Musgrove said.

Musgrove commented that politics should have no role to play in the development of an agreement.

“There is so much promise and potential for Mississippi, and the line we share with Alabama fades away in the brightness of what we can accomplish here,” he said. “Governor Riley and I will meet, the party lines will blur, and we will work together to improve the quality of life for the citizens of our states.”

Mississippi was listed by “Site Selection” magazine last year as one of the top ten states for new and expanded facilities. In September 2001, the state was named one of the top ten states for small business survival. Under Musgrove’s leadership and during a national recession, more than 2,000 new and expanded facilities have opened, creating more than 50,000 jobs and a total business investment of over \$14 billion.

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