

1. How would you rate your first year in office?

It has been a very good first year of our administration, and we look forward to continued success and growth for our state. The improvements we have made in education, healthcare and economic development offers our people the opportunity for a good quality of life right here in Mississippi.

2. What would you consider, in addition to the announcement of the Nissan plant's arrival in Mississippi, your/the state's biggest accomplishment?

There have been several accomplishments made throughout our first year. It is difficult to select just one. We have taken one of the largest steps forward for the state in the area of education by passing legislation to raise teacher pay to the Southeastern average. A raise in teacher salaries will, in turn, lead to even better education for our children. We are able to recruit new teachers and retain the great ones we have.

The Task Force on Computer Technology is overseeing the placement of an Internet-accessible computer in every classroom in the state by 2002, is bringing Mississippi one step closer to becoming a leader in the world of education across the nation.

Healthcare for Mississippi's children is more readily available since the start of 2000. The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides much needed insurance coverage to Mississippi children of working families, has experienced an increase of 36 times the number covered when the Governor took office.

The Advantage Mississippi Initiative allows us to become more competitive in economic growth with other states. The incentives in the package coupled with new approaches to workforce training and community involvement, we are attracting companies around the world to do business with Mississippi. Nissan has shown their faith in our state and in her people; other companies will soon follow their lead.

3. What would you consider your biggest challenge this year?

Every opportunity brings with it challenges that we must face head-on, and each challenge we have faced brought different circumstances and situations. Each time, we have developed innovative and creative options to help us determine solutions. Our administration has approached each situation with the determination that we can, and will find solutions that work in the best interest of our people.

4. What's on next year's agenda?

We will continue to focus on ways to improve education and health care for our people. We will also look for new and innovative solutions to challenges that we take on throughout our state. We look forward to moving our state forward and developing Mississippi into America's State of Promise.