

Governor's Column – 12/09/01

### **Mississippi's Making Its Mark Around the World**

Ordinarily, I try to stick with one subject in this column, but this time I'm making an exception.

The world as we know it has gotten smaller with technology and the speed of today's travel, but it is still a big and demanding place. Mississippi is making its mark in the world, and it's not because we've stayed at home.

Next week, I will be traveling overseas with two main purposes. First, I will be visiting members of the Task Force Rifles, part of the deployment of Mississippi National Guard soldiers participating in the Bosnia peacekeeping mission. Second, an economic development mission to South Korea will help showcase Mississippi and its opportunities.

Back in September, on the Sunday before the attacks on New York and Washington, I wrote about the men and women of the Task Force 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 155<sup>th</sup> Infantry – the Task Force Rifles. As the country was reeling from the terrorist attacks of September 11, these soldiers were deploying to Bosnia to help keep the peace in that war-torn region.

Part of the reason for traveling to Bosnia is to demonstrate our support for these soldiers. They are making sacrifices and keeping commitments to their fellow Mississippians and fellow Americans. I want them to know we are thinking about them and we appreciate what they are doing.

They are also away from their friends and families during the holiday season. They can't get to Mississippi, so we're going to take a little bit of Mississippi to them. We will deliver holiday packages from their loved ones, and local media traveling with us will provide videotaped evidence of our Mississippians performing their jobs in Bosnia.

In September, I wrote about soldiers like Colonel Bill Glasgow, Sergeant Doug Howard and E-4 Tim Harris – soldiers I visited with during their training at Fort Benning. I'm looking forward to seeing these dedicated soldiers again along with all the members of the Task Force Rifles.

During this holiday season, they are all in our hearts and prayers.

Following the trip to Bosnia, I will be leading an economic development mission to South Korea. While it is our policy not to discuss the details of economic development projects, it is safe to say that we would have a hard time luring new businesses to Mississippi if we stayed at home all the time. It's much easier to sell a product in person than it is over the phone, and part of my job is to be the lead salesman for the state.

We have been working hard to sell Mississippi overseas. The Mississippi Development Authority currently operates offices in London; Santiago, Chile; Yokohama, Japan; and Singapore. By operating on a daily basis in these areas and maintaining a strong presence in their business communities, Mississippi's profile is well-known and respected.

During the visit to South Korea, I will be meeting with several influential business leaders and personally selling Mississippi and its potential. Following the success of this past year, more and more companies are becoming aware of the Advantage Mississippi initiative and the opportunities that come with it. It is vitally important for us to keep up the momentum and continue working to bring in even more companies.

Next week, I will be carrying two different Mississippi's out to the world. One, a Mississippi that cares about her sons and daughters doing dangerous work in a dangerous area. The other, a Mississippi eager to demonstrate its competitive spirit and desire to fulfill the promise of its people. It's the best luggage I've ever had the chance to carry.

