

## Economic Development Plan Opening Statement

Eleven years have passed since the current economic development plan was drafted in 1989. The pace of economic development growth in the United States has accelerated at speeds once thought to be impossible. Right here in Mississippi, we have been the beneficiaries of that expanding economy as well. But if we are to sustain that progress and expand prosperity to all of the people who live in our 82 counties, then we had to begin the time-consuming work of redefining our approach to economic growth.

We have to ask ourselves- How does Mississippi rate when it comes to comparative and competitive advantages? What will give us the edge over our sister states?

Leadership. Leadership will give us the advantage. That is why we created the Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development. This is the first-ever public/private partnership formed with the purpose of setting priorities for Mississippi that will give us the competitive edge we need to make the short list of major corporate entities looking to locate, while we broaden our ability to assist the expansion of existing businesses and nurture entrepreneurship.

A lot of work and a tremendous number of hours have gone into the production of this report. Is it comprehensive? Yes. Can we do everything overnight? Of course not. But where will we go if we do not start today.

We have created a blueprint for creating the Mississippi that is America's State of Promise.

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We developed five guiding principals to direct our course as we identified the most critical issues facing the State of Mississippi, and the actions we propose to provide solutions for our economic development needs.

## Economic Development Plan Closing Statement

As you can see, we have created a plan that is comprehensive – one that will benefit all of the people of Mississippi. It will take all of us – public and private, corporate and individual- focusing our attention on securing the basics and reaching for the best for our people, our businesses and our state.

For the first time ever, we have a common agenda. An agenda that places priority on economic growth and prosperity for our people.

Now the Legislature will be called into action to make sure that this administration and the private sector have the tools they need to successfully seize new and exciting challenges, and actively engage in expanding job opportunities for our people.

With your help, we can make a difference. We can make Mississippi America's State of Promise.