

*Remarks for the
Future Pipe Industries Announcement
November 19, 2002*

Thank you, Mike (Olivier) for that introduction.

Today, it is an honor and a privilege to stand before you to welcome our latest corporate citizen to Mississippi, and to Gulfport.

This is a proud moment for Mississippi, and we believe a prudent move for this company.

It is my pleasure to announce to you today that Future Pipe Industries will be building a new facility that will employ 75 people initially, and over 300 in just a few years.

Future Pipe Industries will invest \$7.5 million and will locate in the Bernard Bayou Industrial District here in Gulfport. This commitment by Mr. Fouad Makhzoumi and his delegation speaks volumes for our state and this community.

For a number of years this company looked at sites throughout the United States. Today, we are pleased that Mississippi *is* their location of choice. Mr. Makhzoumi noted that some of the reasons he chose Mississippi included our business-friendly environment, the access to skilled labor, and our superb transportation facilities.

In Mississippi, we're making bold, decisive moves in all of those areas Fouad mentioned. In the last two years, we've announced 1,700 new locations and created over 47,000 new jobs -- 21,000 of them through the expansion of existing industries -- during a downturn in the national economy. In Mississippi, we're not just working harder, we're working smarter to improve the lives of our citizens through job creation.

We're creating an environment where our businesses and our people can thrive. We're taking critical issues and turning them into significant opportunities for our state.

Today, I'm proud to have Future Pipe Industries as our newest citizen. And, we'll continue to focus on crucial business and economic issues to improve the business climate in Mississippi. It is vital that we build public-private partnerships for the long term economic prosperity for our state.

The partnership we have built with Future Pipe Industries is one that has been nurtured over the years. Just as we welcome our new corporate partner today, we must also embrace our existing businesses and provide our industries with the tools they need to succeed.

In the last two years, we've revitalized our economic development efforts through our Advantage Mississippi initiative. And, we're seeing the benefits with this announcement by Future Pipe today. We're committed to sound fiscal policy, quality educational initiatives, available workforce training, reduced governmental regulations, and responsible, responsive actions for businesses.

Thank you all for joining me today for this important announcement. To Future Pipe, Fouad and the entire delegation here today, we welcome you to Mississippi, and we look forward to a mutually beneficial relationship for our future together.