

*Remarks for the  
Mississippi Quality Awards / Governor's Achievement Awards  
March 21, 2003*

- Recognize George Walker (chairman, State Board for Community Colleges)
  
- In the invitation to speak here today, I was asked to talk about workforce development, economic development and performance improvement
  - I'm happy to do just that
  - Mississippi is setting a new standard for others to follow in this area

- Every state impacted by national recession
  - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
  - More than two million Americans out of work
  - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs
  
- Have to protect people in short term / prepare for long term
  
- Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs
  - Everybody benefits from good schools

- Education must be first priority for MS
  - Making great progress
    - Teacher pay / 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> when fully implemented
    - Test scores up / accountability standards stronger than “No Child Left Behind”
    - Princeton Review: MS has 6<sup>th</sup> best testing system in nation
    - MS 6<sup>th</sup> in nation in National Board Certified Teachers
    - Computers in Classroom

- Keeping education a priority with a budget that puts Schools First / 62 percent
  - MS first state in nation to fully fund education and fund it first
  - Other states cutting to the bone
  
- We're proving to the people of MS that we're serious about education
  - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow
  
- When it comes to education, we mean business
  - Business means jobs

- Mississippi's image changing in the business community
  - Site Selection magazine / top 10 for doing business
  - Top 10 state for small business survival
  
- Four Mississippi cities ranked in America's 50 hottest cities for manufacturing expansions and relocations out of more than 300 metropolitan areas
  - Gulfport / Biloxi / Pascagoula tied for 35<sup>th</sup>
  - Jackson ranked 39<sup>th</sup>

- Last weekend, went down to Gulfport to see new Carnival cruise ship, the Conquest
  - Sailing out of Gulfport now
  - Working to make it a permanent arrangement
  - Confident that will happen / folks in New Orleans scared it will happen
  
- Article in New Orleans Time-Picayune about Carnival cruise ship
  - Some telling comments about the work we're doing to grow Mississippi

■ Vice President of Public Relations for New Orleans Chamber had this to say:

- “Mississippi has been aggressively developing its port. The fact that they were able to step in and fill that gap, it does show that Mississippi continues to pursue a sound growth program.”

■ Owner of the Court of Two Sisters restaurant in the French Quarter:

- “I think it’s a fiasco. It’s a black eye for the city, it’s a serious amount of dollars to the city.”

- General manager of the Chateau Sonesta Hotel:
  - “It’s publicity you can’t buy. Now, it’s sailing from Gulfport, and obviously that’s not good for us.”
  
- Recent article in the Detroit News about the auto industry
  - Mississippi’s landing of Nissan cited as success story
  - “Mississippi got...the chance to be the beachhead for Nissan’s latest assault on the rich U.S. market. The plant makes Mississippi a magnet for investment by hungry auto suppliers.”



- One other sentence in the Detroit News article
  - “Governor Ronnie Musgrove has made it clear that among the things he might cut to manage his state’s nagging deficit, economic development won’t be one of them.”
  
- They’re right / I won’t cut our efforts to grow Mississippi
  - I can give you 2.8 million reasons why that’s the case

■ Job creation from January 2000 to February 2003

- 2,103 new and expanded facilities
- 50,253 new jobs
- Total investment of \$14.1 billion  
(\$14,129,936,686, to be exact)

■ MS Rural Economic Impact Authority

- \$20M to help with economic development in rural areas
- Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges

- MS's potential not exclusive to metropolitan areas
  - Promise of our people is just as strong in rural areas
  - Fighting to bring quality jobs to every Mississippian
  
- The new standard we have set as a state is also a reflection of the high standards of those we honor today
  - Standards of excellence / performance
  - Commitment to turning obstacles into opportunities
  
- That's what's making a difference for Mississippi

- We have to look to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
  - Good schools / good jobs / good communities
  
- Will Rogers: Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there
  - MS is on the right track / moving faster than ever