

*Remarks for the
IBEW Progress Meeting
May 19, 2003*

- Recognize Curtis Murphy
 - Welcome out-of-state visitors
 - Edwin Hill, International President
 - Jeremiah J. O'Connor, International Secretary-Treasurer
 - Mel Horton, Fifth District Vice President

- IBEW locals in Mississippi among the best in the nation
 - Working hard to make a difference in lives of their members
 - Want to thank them for their commitment, especially
 - Curtis Murphy, IBEW Local 903

- Don Clark, IBEW Local 1211
 - Chico McGill, IBEW Local 733
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- Their good work is part of the reason that Mississippi is taking on a different image
 - Image of a state moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century
 - A state that's competing and leading in the global marketplace
 - A state that's setting new standards in education and economic development
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- In today's economy, Mississippi is like many other states

- Every state impacted by national recession
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - More than 2 million Americans out of work
 - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Have to protect people in the short term while preparing for the long term
 - Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs

- Education is our first priority / has been for past three years since I've been in office
 - Public schools are our cornerstones of our communities and the key to the success of our economy.

- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Princeton Review: 12th best testing system in nation
 - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind” / USA Today article

- SREB: Mississippi first state in southern region to have plan for “No Child Left Behind” approved
 - Speaks volumes of the good work being done here

- One of the most exciting successes in education is in technology
 - Every public school classroom in the state has Internet-accessible computer
 - Mississippi first state in the nation to achieve this goal / confirmed by NGA

- Mississippi's investing in education
 - Increasing investment while others are cutting
 - That is significant in light of national recession
 - Demonstrates our priority / our commitment

- 2003 legislative session: challenged Legislature to fund education first
 - Historic action
 - Strong precedent for the future
 - Education will not be a second priority

- Efforts in education didn't just start this year
 - Have been working on this since I took office
 - We are making strong progress

- We're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education
 - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow

- When it comes to education, we mean business
 - Business means jobs

- Another image of Mississippi that's changing
 - No longer a state that depends solely on agriculture / low wage jobs
 - We are aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people

- Strong growth over past 3 years
 - 2,103 new and expanded facilities
 - More than 50,000 new jobs
 - Total business investment in Mississippi of \$14.1 billion

- In the last two months alone, this is what we've done together:
 - 116 new and expanded facilities
 - 2,871 new jobs created
 - Capital investments of more than \$763 million

- Mississippi Rural Economic Impact Authority has passed
 - \$10 million to aid economic development in rural areas
 - Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges

- We have been and will continue to create quality, high-paying jobs
 - Jobs in construction and beyond
 - I will fight to make sure IBEW and other unions have a role to play

- More work to be done / appreciate your help in making it happen
 - Your input is valuable
 - State Board of Contractors appointees
 - Sonny Fountain
 - Donny Doleac

- We're looking to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
 - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs
 - It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk
 - It's an image of global companies looking for a place to do business in the state

- Thank you for the role you're playing in changing the image