

*Remarks for the
Mississippi Employment Expo
March 19, 2002*

Today's a great day for a job fair! It's a great day to find a job, to hire a new employee, to begin making a difference.

We've been hosting these job fairs around the state and believe me, they're making a difference. In Pascagoula last month, over 500 job offers were made on-site at a job fair.

We're bringing together two of Mississippi's greatest resources here today – our businesses and our people. When the two are put together, fantastic things happen.

There's a broad range of employers represented here today – financial institutions, health care, military, automotive – all offering exciting opportunities for employment.

I want to thank them for their commitment to Mississippi and their belief in the quality of our workforce.

I want to encourage those looking for jobs today to put forth their best, to demonstrate why the people of Mississippi are the best workers in the nation.

At the end of this day, there will be jobs filled. Those jobs don't represent statistics; they represent security, self-confidence and the pride that come with earning one's way.

Fats Domino once commented that a lot of people have a B.A., an M.B.A. or a Ph.D., but don't always have a J.O.B.

That's not going to be the case in Mississippi. Our people are able to work, they're ready to work, and they're going to work.

We're going to fight to make sure they have the support they need, especially in areas like workforce training. Now is not the time for us to back off our commitment to helping our people obtain the skills they need to perform at the highest levels.

I'm sure the companies here today would agree with me that we cannot afford to cut funding for workforce training – it's too valuable an investment in our future.

We've made strong progress in the past two years because we've made jobs a priority.

We've created over 21,000 new jobs and attracted more than \$6 billion in investments because we've made jobs a priority.

We will not back off on our priorities.

Yes, today's a great day. Someone's going to get a new job; someone's going to get a new employee; Mississippi's going to move one step ahead.

Let's take that step together.