

Leadership Jackson County
Thursday, March 22, 2001
12:30 p.m.
Old Capitol Inn

(Message: Staying focused on making MS an even better place, while working on the budget, prioritizing education and promoting a positive image of our state)

Opening

- Good Afternoon
- (Thank Gaye Aultman for her introduction)
- (Super Bowl Story – you cannot hope for a great opportunity like this to happen, you have to work and make them happen.)

Main Points

1. Budget
 - a. As Governor, I must be a leader and attempt to steer our state in the right direction.
 - i. The job of being a leader is not always a popular position, but you have to do what is right for the state.
 - ii. Remain committed to what is best for our state.
 - b. I must keep the budget balance in good times and in challenging times.
 - c. We must be responsible with your money.

- d. You deserve and demand that of your state leaders.
- e. Last year, the legislature
 - i. Overextended and
 - ii. Gambled with our budget
 - iii. I am not willing to do that this year.
- f. In order to have an honest figure to work with, our budget must be:
 - i. Honest
 - ii. Straightforward
 - iii. Fiscally sound
- g. We must correct the baseline figure for this year's budget
 - i. Or we will start next year's budget \$85 million in the hole.
- h. This year, our state is growing at less than 1%
 - i. We cannot budget next year's growth based on 3.7%, like the legislature is proposing.
 - ii. The nation's economy is at a standstill.
 - iii. Our rate of growth, along with half the nation is sluggish.
 - iv. We cannot build our budget on hope
 - 1. We must be realistic.
- i. If we use these inflated figures to build our budget for the upcoming year, imagine the additional amount of money we will have to

- cut from our agencies, colleges and universities, and schools next year.
- j. We will be budgeting on quicksand.
 - k. The budget problem will escalate into a budget crisis!
 - l. We are urging the legislature to lower the estimated rate of growth from 3.7% to 1% now.
 - m. We should be honest with our people and make the adjustment that bases our rate of growth on a real number, if not:
 - i. It is misleading to our agencies
 - ii. It is misleading to our schools
 - iii. It is misleading to our colleges and universities
 - iv. It is misleading to our people.
 - n. We must restore credibility and common sense to Mississippi's budget.

2. Education

- a. If we budget responsibly, we are allowing the legislature to prioritize where we spend our money next year.
- b. My # 1 priority is education.
 - i. Kindergarten - University level
- c. It is vital that we make education our #1 priority when preparing the budget and spend accordingly.

- d. I want to be honest and upfront with next year's budget, so I do not have to make budget cuts next year.
- e. It is better to give agencies, schools, colleges and universities a realistic budget now
 - i. Rather than an inflated budget that will have to be cut next year.
- f. We have suggested using AMS funds to help bridge the gap in the shortfall for Fiscal Year 02 and help stabilize the budget
- g. We are open to other solutions, and we want to work with the legislature to find a solution that works.
- h. A strong education is vital to all future successes for the people of Mississippi.
- i. We have been silently investing in education for the past years
 - i. We are now beginning to reap the benefits.
- j. We cannot let a budget problem stand in our way of continued success.
- k. Our children and schools are benefiting because of the
 - i. Hard work and dedication of our teachers and educators

3. State Flag – Mississippi's Image

- a. Important how our neighbors, our nation and the world view us.
- b. How Mississippi is perceived affects us in all aspects: economic development, education, tourism, etc.
- c. We have the opportunity to promote a positive image.
- d. Remove obstacle that hinder our success.
- e. We can make a difference on April 17th
- f. The world is taking notice, and we must continue to spread the word about Mississippi.
- g. We must not hinder our progress in any way.
- h. If something has the potential to keep MS from new business or as a tourist destination, then we must work to remedy that problem.
- i. We put the spotlight on Mississippi throughout the nation and world with the Nissan announcement, but there are more opportunities waiting for us.

Closing

- Mississippi is headed forward.
- We are not going to turn back the clocks and disrupt our progress.

- We want more great opportunities for the people of Mississippi.
- We want our children to have the opportunity to live, work and raise their families here.
- Everyone plays a role in our success.
- Working together we can and will make it happen.
- The people of Mississippi deserve that commitment.
- The children of Mississippi deserve that commitment.
- Our future depends on everyone working as a team in Mississippi.
- Making plans now for an even better Mississippi will ensure that future generations continue to succeed in our state.