

*Remarks for the  
Area Development Meetings  
December 10-11, 2001*

I am glad to be here this morning, for several reasons.

First and foremost, I want to thank each of you here for your commitment to growing Mississippi and helping our great state fulfill its promise and potential.

I also want to thank you for your support of the Advantage Mississippi initiative. The impact of this program on our state's growth has been tremendous, and Mississippi is now setting the standard for economic development.

Other states are looking at us as a new and strong competitor. Other nations are looking at us as an attractive and productive place to do business.

I look at us as the state that is finally living out its dream.

These are exciting times for Mississippi. The economy is in a sluggish period, and I believe it will be some time before we climb out of it.

However, despite the conditions of the economy, we are growing Mississippi. New suppliers are moving to the state to support the Nissan plant. We are working hard to keep industry in the state as well as to attract new industry.

And, I am committed to making sure the Mississippi Development Authority has the tools it needs to do its work in partnership with you.

Under the guidance of Bob Rohrlack, who has now been on the job for an entire week, I am confident the MDA will take things to the next level. Bob brings tremendous experience and skills to the MDA and I am pleased to have him with us.

Bob?