

*Remarks for the
Mississippi Economic Development Council / Governor's Cup Awards
July 10, 2003*

- Recognize Gray Swoope / other dignitaries
 - Kim Compton (MEDC Awards Chairperson)
 - Max Hipp (MEDC Incoming President)
 - Phil Hardwick (emcee)
 - Steve Hale

- Tonight we honor the best in business in Mississippi
 - Small businesses and big businesses
 - All committed to excellence and making a difference
 - All winners of the Governor's Cup Award

- Your 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

- We're working 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 **top** priority /
 - Public schools are the cornerstones of our communities and key to a successful economy

- Over the past three years Mississippi's educational achievements have affected schools statewide.
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - "No Child Left Behind" / 6th in nation to have plan approved
 - 12th in the nation for educational accountability
 - Computers in Classroom

- In 2002 number of schools identified as “needing improvement” by the federal government decreased 90% -- from 122 to only 11

■ Increasing investment while others are cutting

- That is significant in light of national recession
- Demonstrates our priority / our commitment

■ Education is our **top** priority

- Because good schools bring good jobs and build great communities
- We are already reaping the benefits of this

- 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

- We're always working to make these numbers climb even higher

- Investments in infrastructures of communities around the state
 - Companies want good transportation, energy, technical resources

- We've been creating, and will continue to create, quality, high-paying jobs
 - Jobs with great companies like these we honor tonight
 - Our people have the talent and the skill

- We've made tremendous progress for our state over the past three years
 - More work to be done / appreciate your help in making it happen
 - Your input is valuable

- 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 dreamed
 - 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've played in making that dream a reality
 - And thank you for your continuing role striving to take it even further