

Mississippi Road Builders Association Board Meeting  
Tuesday, March 27, 2001  
11:00 a.m.  
MS Road Builders Assoc. Board Room – 601 George Street

(Message: moving Mississippi forward with more opportunities while maintaining a sound state budget)

## **Opening**

- Good Morning
- (Don Richardson will introduce you.)
- (Story)

## **Main Points**

1. Opportunities
  - a. Mississippians now, more than ever, have many opportunities from which to choose.
  - b. Opportunities in:
    - i. Education
    - ii. Jobs
  - c. Education and economic development go hand in hand.
    - i. A sound infrastructure for Mississippi is vital to our success.
    - ii. We must have good roads.
    - iii. New business looking to relocate to MS, need to be able to move their products in and out of the state.

- d. A state must have trained employees for potential new businesses.
  - i. High-tech companies must have high-tech employees.
  - ii. Mississippi has those people, and we are continuing that training.
- e. We have opportunities to invest:
  - i. Invest in education for our kids
    - 1. Teacher pay raise
      - a. 49<sup>th</sup> in nation to 19<sup>th</sup>
    - 2. Computers in the Classroom.
    - 3. National Board Certified Teachers
  - ii. Invest in good jobs for our people
    - 1. Nissan
      - a. Is only the beginning.
      - b. The AMI gave Mississippi the competitive advantage.
    - 2. Supplier opportunities
      - a. Over 2,200 applications sent to Nissan
      - b. Creating thousands of spin-off jobs for Mississippians
- f. Give our people the opportunity for an even **better** Quality of Life
- g. Mississippi must invest.
  - i. The key is prioritizing and investing our money in the right places.

1. Economic development
2. Education

- h. We cannot look at our budget as an obstacle
  - i. Look for opportunities
- i. As the Governor I have to keep the budget balanced in good times and in challenging times.

## 2. Budget

- a. We must be responsible with the people's money.
- b. They deserve and demand that of state leaders.
- c. Last year, the legislature
  - i. Overextended and
  - ii. Gambled with our budget
  - iii. I am not willing to do that this year.
- d. In order to have an honest figure to work with, our budget must be:
  - i. Honest
  - ii. Straightforward
  - iii. Fiscally sound
- e. 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.

- f. 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.
- g. 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.
  - i. We will have to grow at 6% in 2002 to make up for the shortfall and the budget projections.
- h. We will be budgeting on quicksand.
- i. The budget problem will escalate into a budget crisis!
- j. We are urging the legislature to lower the estimated rate of growth from 3.7% to 1% now.
- k. 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.
- l. We need to work with figures and estimates that make sense
  - i. So agencies and schools can work within a realistic budget.
- m. We must restore credibility and common sense to Mississippi's budget.

## **Closing**

- Mississippi is headed forward.
- It takes everyone working together to move our state forward – locally and statewide.
- 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.