

31st Annual Conference of MS Municipal Clerks & Collectors Assn.
Thursday, March 15, 2001
1:00 p.m.
University Club

(Message: 15-20 minutes on the Budget, Education and Opportunities)

Opening

- Good Afternoon
- (Thank whomever for their introduction)

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. We have opportunities to invest:
 - i. Invest in education for our kids
 1. Teacher pay raise
 - a. 49th in nation to 19th
 2. Computers in the Classroom.
 3. Accountability plans for teachers and schools.
 4. www.FastForwardMS.com
 5. MS at the forefront on testing standards
 6. National Board Certified Teachers
 - ii. Invest in good jobs for our people
 1. Incentives from AMI

- a. Training and re-training
 - b. Tax credit incentives
- 2. Nissan
- 3. Supplier opportunities
 - a. Over 2,200 applications sent to Nissan
 - b. Creating thousands of spin-off jobs for Mississippians
- d. Give our people the opportunity for an even **better** Quality of Life
- e. Invest – the money is there.
 - i. The key is prioritizing and investing that money in the right places.
 - 1. Education is our top priority!
- f. Don't look at budget as an obstacle
 - i. Look for opportunities
 - ii. The Governor has to keep the budget balanced in good times and in challenging times.

2. Budget

- a. We are taking a responsible approach to the slowdown in the economy by affecting a slowdown in budgeting and spending.
 - i. We must be fiscally responsible
 - ii. Must be fiscally prudent
 - iii. Must look at the budget realistically
- b. Mississippi is not broke.
 - i. Our economy has been up, so eventually it must slow down.

- ii. 27 other states are experiencing this slow down in their economy.
- iii. Mississippi is growing at a slower rate than we had expected.
 - 1. Growing at less than 1%.
 - 2. We cannot have a projected rate of growth next year at 3.7%; it is not realistic.
- c. Our budget proposal reflects our people's priorities
 - i. Education
 - ii. Economic development
- d. We must look for innovative ways to bridge our budget recommendations, whether we use:
 - i. AMS settlement funds
 - 1. For one time expenditures
 - 2. We have access to this money now
 - ii. Rainy Day funds for to education on track.
 - 1. Already used \$15 million
 - 2. \$35 million is still available
- e. Education recommendations
 - i. Mississippi's colleges and universities are doing an excellent job.
 - ii. Our students excel, and they are competitors in the global market.
 - iii. We must continue to support our state's heart and soul, her people.
 - iv. A strong education system is vital to all future successes for the people of our state.

- v. Our success in economic development depends on our continued success and advancement in education.
- vi. High tech companies need high-tech employees.
 - 1. They need skilled employees
 - 2. They need a strong, educated workforce
 - 3. Mississippi **does** provide that for them.
- f. Economic development recommendations
 - i. In order for MS to remain competitive, we must continue to support programs that give our people the opportunity for more, new, high-paying jobs.
 - ii. For years we have been quietly investing in economic development and education, and now we are beginning to reap the benefits.
 - iii. Rewards of this long-term investment are here.
 - iv. **Nissan** is proof that we can succeed.
 - v. They have shown their faith in our state.
 - vi. Opportunities all over the state will spin-off from the Nissan plant.
 - vii. We must target other companies that best suit specific areas of our state.
 - viii. We must keep up the momentum
 - ix. We are happy to “land” Nissan, but we want more businesses to move to MS

- x. We want more jobs, more economic development, more opportunities.
 1. We want to be in that “spotlight” again and again for the great things happening in Mississippi.

Closing

- Everyone plays a role in our state’s success. We all have to work together to succeed, make changes and create progress.
- We also have to concentrate on educating our children and training the current workforce
- The world is taking notice, and we must continue to spread the word about Mississippi.
- We must not hinder our progress in any way.
- If something has the potential to keep MS from new business or as a tourist destination, then we must work to remedy that problem.
- Mississippi’s Image: Important how our neighbors, our nation and the world view us.
- How Mississippi is perceived affects us in all aspects: economic development, education, tourism, etc.