

*Remarks for the
Mississippi Association of Planning and Development Districts
April 10, 2003*

- Recognize Les Newcomb, Executive
Director of the South Mississippi PDD

- 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

- In today's economy, Mississippi is like many other states

- Every state impacted by national recession
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - More than 2 million Americans out of work
 - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Have 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

- Many think of us as 48th, 49th, 50th in education
 - That's no longer true
 - Education is our first priority / has been for past three years since I've been in office
 - Public schools are our cornerstones of our communities and the key to the success of our economy.

- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Princeton Review: 6th best testing system in nation

- Leading other states in preparedness for
“No Child Left Behind” / USA Today
article
- 6th in the nation in National Board
Certified Teachers

- One of the most exciting successes in
education is in technology
 - Every public school classroom in the
state has Internet-accessible computer
 - Mississippi first state in the nation to
achieve this goal / confirmed by NGA

- Mississippi's investing in education
 - Increasing investment while others are cutting
 - That is significant in light of national recession
 - Demonstrates our priority / our commitment

- Efforts in education didn't just start this year
 - Have been working on this since I took office
 - We are making strong progress

- We're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education
 - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow

- When it comes to education, we mean business
 - Business means jobs

- Another image of Mississippi that's changing
 - No longer a state that depends 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 are putting our people to work in highly skilled jobs with good pay
 - Nissan plant opening in May / only auto plant opening in America this year
 - \$1.5 billion investment by Nissan / 5,000 direct jobs
 - Even more from suppliers

- We gained the attention of companies around the world when we landed Nissan
 - They're coming to Mississippi because the word is out about what we can do
 - Site Selection magazine: Mississippi ranked as Top 10 location for new companies
 - One of top 10 states for small business survival
 - Expansion magazine: 4 Mississippi cities ranked in latest survey of 50 hottest American cities for expansion or location of facilities

- When businesses read these industry publications, they see that Mississippi has something to offer
 - They realize the image has changed

- Mississippi Rural Economic Impact Authority has passed
 - \$10 million to aid economic development in rural areas
 - Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges

- 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 imagined
 - 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

- Recognize legislators are in the audience
 - Thank them for bipartisan cooperation during the session
 - Thank for their commitment to realizing promise of Mississippi