

*Remarks for the  
M-Tek Groundbreaking  
May 9, 2002*

Thank you, Howard. Mr. Fujita, I am proud to be here with you today. I'm particularly proud to be here today, to help welcome M-Tek to Mississippi.

Mississippi is growing like never before. In the past two years, during a national recession, we've created more than 21,000 jobs and attracted over \$6 billion in new investments.

*Site Selection* magazine, one of the top trade publications in the economic development industry, ranked Mississippi as one of the top ten states for its “Governor’s Cup” award.

Regardless of what the U. S. Chamber of Commerce may say or believe, Mississippi is open for business. We are working harder than ever to create quality, high-paying jobs for the people of this state.

In fact, I am leaving tomorrow morning for Japan, where I will spend a week meeting with companies already doing business here and other companies we want to come here.

The perception of Mississippi is changing – and despite what others may say, it’s changing for the better. The old question of “Why Mississippi?” doesn’t get asked anymore. The question now is, “Why *not* Mississippi?”

And the answer is, because we can compete with anyone, anytime, anywhere.

The rest of the world sees what we've done with the Advantage Mississippi Initiative, both in terms of recruiting and retaining business.

We're committed to building Mississippi and making sure it achieves its promise and potential. Our people deserve nothing less.

This same message applies to people in every state across our nation. If we are to build our states, our country, we must do it by creating jobs and building industry. We must do it by investing in our people through workforce training.

Even though we are in a national recession, backing off on our investment in economic development and workforce training would sap our strengths and cut our competitive edge.

That simply can't happen if we are going to succeed.

It's been said that "success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go."

I tell you this – we aren't letting go. There are too many opportunities out there, and too many opportunities for us to create, to ever think about letting go.

Mississippi is doing more and doing it better than ever before. The momentum is there, and it is growing.

I am excited about the goals we've set for ourselves. I know you share those goals with me, and I look forward to reaching them.

Thank you.