

*Remarks for the
Natchez Announcement
January 24, 2003*

- Good Morning (recognize mayors, supervisors, elected officials, economic development officials)

- Last week, I was here in Natchez working with city and county officials and economic developers to discuss what we could do to bring jobs to this area. I told you I was going to be back and I pledged a \$25,000 grant for a study to help develop a strategic plan for new jobs.

- This news has been overshadowed by yesterday's announcement of International Paper. This news is devastating to you and your community and to me as Governor. The national recession has hit hard here in Natchez and in Southwest Mississippi. You are experiencing it firsthand.
- We have to deal with the impact of the recession. Our workers must be protected in the short term while being prepared for the long term. The skilled workers from International Paper and others here who have lost their jobs deserve everything that we can do to help them and their families.

- Today, I've brought Bob Rohrlack and Jim Lott from our Rapid Response team, to help ease this transition that our workers will face over the next few months. The Rapid Response Team has helped other communities facing similar circumstances in the face of this national recession and they will work with your community to share your burden and help you meet the challenges you will face.

- But while we discuss our misfortune today with the loss of one plant, I also promised Adams County and the surrounding areas at the beginning of the year I would do everything I could to help Southwest MS.

- Today, I am announcing that we are making available a total of \$450,000 in grants and two new company announcements with a total of 55 jobs.

- At Capital For A Day, I made a commitment to bring a \$25,000 MDA Planning Grant to Natchez. We have increased that to \$50,000. We are also making available a \$100,000 Economy Development Marketing Grant, a \$200,000 grant for Workforce Training and Retraining, and a \$100,000 HOME funds grant.

- C.S. Lumber Company will provide 15 jobs to manufacture cross ties. We have made available a \$300,000 in conjunction with the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors.

- In addition, a new company, Tessengerlo (TEE-SEND-DER-LU) Davison Chemicals has notified us that Natchez has been selected for a new manufacturing facility and will employ upwards of 40 people.

- I just want you to know that we are here to help. We will do everything we can to assist employees and we will continue to fight to bring jobs to this area.

- We will also continue investing in our people and education benefits for every Mississippian. People want to live in good communities. Good schools produce good jobs and good jobs produce good communities.

AGENDA

(Goals for today are fourfold: Acknowledge International Paper Closing, Announce New Industry, Announce New Grants from MDA, introduce Rapid Response Team to assist with IP)

STAFF: Amerita Tell, Richard Davidson, Bob Rohrlack, Jim Lott, MESC officials, local workforce area officials, Lee Ann Mayo, area Mayors, economic development representatives,

8:00 am- Private Meeting with International Paper, Governor, Bob Rohrlack

9:15 am- Private Meeting with local Mayors, and others as appropriate

9:30 am- Press Conference at Adams County Courthouse

10:15- Departure for Airport