

Oktibbeha County Beans and Greens Dinner
Monday, March 19, 2001
6:00 p.m.
Bost Extension Center – MSU Campus

(Message: Mississippi's budget and education)

Opening

- Good Evening
- (Thank Rep. Tyrone Ellis for his introduction)
- (Mention something about the storm damage that occurred on the MSU campus or Ole Miss playing in the NCAA tournament)

Main Points

1. Democrat Party
 - a. An exciting time to be involved with Mississippi's Democrat Party
 - i. New State Director – Amy Harris
 - ii. New Chairman – John Livingston
 - b. They are working for you – for the state – for the party, to make the Democrat Party all it can be.
 - c. They are there to support you and help you as much as possible.
 - d. I encourage you to take full advantage of their assistance.
 - e. The Oktibbeha county chapter is an outstanding organization.

- i. Serves as an ideal model for other counties.
 - ii. Jean Marszalek does an amazing job.
- f. One of the few counties (if not the only county) that publishes a monthly newsletter.
- g. I'm proud of the work you to, and I encourage your future success.
- h. Thank you for your time, energy and dedication.
- i. You help make the Democrat Party a success!
- j. Teamwork is what helps us succeed. We also rely on teamwork at the State Capital to accomplish great things for Mississippi.

2. Budget

- a. We must be responsible with your money.
- b. You deserve and demand that of your 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.
- 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.
1. We must restore credibility and common sense to Mississippi's budget.

3. Education

- a. If we budget responsibly, we are allowing the legislature to prioritize where we spend our money next year.
- b. My # 1 priority is education.
- c. It is vital that we make education our #1 priority when preparing the budget and spend accordingly.
- d. I want to be honest and upfront with next year's budget, so I do not have to make budget cuts next year.
- e. It is better to give agencies, schools, colleges and universities a realistic budget now
 - i. Rather than an inflated budget that will have to be cut next year.
- f. We have suggested using AMS funds to help bridge the gap in the shortfall for Fiscal Year 02 and help stabilize the budget

- g. We are open to other solutions, and we want to work with the legislature to find a solution that works.
- h. A strong education is vital to all future successes for the people of Mississippi.
- i. We have been silently investing in education for the past years
 - i. We are now beginning to reap the benefits.
- j. We cannot let a budget problem stand in our way of continued success.

Closing

- Mississippi is headed forward.
- 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.