

Poplarville Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet
June 23, 2000
Pearl River Community College
6:30 p.m.

Opening

1. Good Evening
2. Story

Main Points

1. Economic Development

- a. Top economic development strategists say when companies are looking for a place to locate or relocate they begin with a long list and start paring down from there
 - i. Right now, Mississippi is not making long list
 - ii. On paper, we are not competitive
 - iii. We not only want to make the short list, but we want to be chosen as the location site.
 - iv. We also cannot ignore the importance of existing industry expansion
 1. Stennis Space Center – creating jobs

- b. New economic development plan is being developed
 - i. Coordinating our state efforts with cities and counties to provide more flexibility
 - ii. Tax incentives
 - 1. Texas – largest incentive is workforce training dollars
 - iii. Community college Workforce Dev. Training – restoring funding.
 - iv. Effective selling of the state
 - v. Being developed through input from people across the state
 - 1. Listening tours
 - 2. Mississippi Partnership for Economic Development
 - a. First ever public/private partnership

2. Trained, skilled and educated workforce is vital to future economic growth

- a. We must invest in our schools
 - i. Elementary, Community & Junior College, Colleges & Universities
 - 1. Ayers Case*
 - a. Must resolve now so that we can move our educational system forward*

2. *College Board Appointments*
 - a. *1944 Congressional Districts*
 - b. *Appointees must see the “big picture”*
 - c. *Work in the best interest for all universities*
3. *USM Gulf Coast Campus – favor*

- b. We must invest in our teachers
 - i. Raising teacher pay to the Southeastern average
 1. Most critical issue facing the people of MS
 2. Business sector realizes its importance, and made it their most critical issue.
 3. We will fund it. – A matter of priority
 4. Must be a priority in budget.
- c. We must invest in our students
 - i. Keeping good teachers, teaching in the classroom
 - ii. Classroom technology
 1. Computer in every classroom by end of 2002
 - a. Leading the nation

2. Gates Foundation Grant- teaching technology skills to teachers.
 - a. Only 1 of 7 states to receive it.
3. Magnolia
 - a. Mississippi had the first statewide library system to be inner-connected.
 - b. Opens up access from university and college libraries to every public library in the state.
4. MS History online

d. Better Schools = Better Jobs

Closing

- We have been told we are 50th for so long
- We are leading the nation in so many areas
- We have to believe in our state, and the advancements we have made, and are making daily.
- Must promote those advancements both internally and externally