

*Remarks for the
Quitman WIN Transition Center Press Conference
June 14, 2002*

Thank you, Gary. I'm proud to welcome you all here today for this special event. This is a positive reflection on how state, county and business officials can work together on solutions that will benefit this area and its communities.

We have taken several measures to help communities and people in the area who have been affected by plant closings and lay offs.

Since the inception of the Workforce Investment Network, or WIN, in Mississippi, many of our citizens and businesses have taken advantage of the programs and services offered by the local WIN Job Centers.

More and more people are realizing that the one-stop concept of these centers is part of how we can offer a high-quality workforce.

The WIN in Mississippi program is facing and overcoming new challenges in meeting the needs of communities hit hard by plant closings. This has been especially true in the Local Twin Districts Workforce Area, particularly in Clarke, Wayne, Jasper, Newton and Lauderdale Counties.

Through a regional collaborative effort involving local elected officials and business, the Twin Districts Workforce Area – with funding from the Mississippi Development Authority – has responded quickly by establishing a Regional WIN Transition Center here in Quitman to help workers who have lost their jobs.

Others who participated in making this Center a reality include the Mississippi Employment Security Commission, Jones Junior College, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Clarke County Chamber of Commerce.

Now, laid-off workers have a WIN Job Center dedicated to easing the impact of unemployment and committed to helping them with services, skills training and other programs to help them get back to work.

Within this one center, job-seekers will find representatives from many partners and programs, including:

- The Mississippi Employment Security Commission, who can help with unemployment insurance and provide information on trade-related assistance and the Trade Adjustment Act;

- Vocational Rehabilitation options;
- Jones Junior College career and training counselors;
- An extensive computer center with Internet connection for job searches and posting resumes;
- Classes on resume writing and interviewing techniques;
- Skills assessment and career goals guidance;
- On-the-job and skills training programs.

Further, volunteer members of the Clarke County Chamber of Commerce will be providing counseling on retirement fund options, credit management and tax information.

As part of today's dedication, I am pleased to present this check in the amount of \$100,000 to Paul Mosley, President of the Clarke County Board of Supervisors. This check represents a grant from the state's Workforce Investment Act funds, and will be used to provide county leaders with funds to implement a plan to study recent plant closures in the area and develop strategies for preventing further closings.

I want to thank you all for being here and showing your support. I especially want to encourage job seekers to take advantage of this center and its services.

Thank you again for being here today.