

*Remarks for the  
Mississippi Renewal Community Organizational Meeting  
February 12, 2002*

In today's world, the number of ways to do business is limited only by our imagination. Over the past two years, we've shown how we can create our own opportunities as well as capitalize on opportunities offered to us.

With the passage of the Advantage Mississippi initiative, we put in place the most aggressive economic development package in the nation.

We are demonstrating, more than ever before, our commitment to bringing good, quality jobs to the people of Mississippi while retaining existing jobs.

Now, along with the Advantage Mississippi initiative, we have another tool to work with – the Mississippi Renewal Community Area.

Through strong cooperation between the Mississippi Development Authority, local communities and the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District, we're set to move forward even faster.

The designation of this area by the Department of Housing and Urban Development on January 22 means that a total of 13 counties and 30 municipalities in Mississippi are going to be able to recruit and retain businesses with the aggressive new option of federal tax credits.

Under the program, tax credits of \$1,500 to \$3,500 per employee are available to businesses in the area. This is a tremendous tool for this area, and I am excited about what we can do together with it.

A great deal of effort was put into the application we made to HUD, and as a result, almost 200,000 Mississippians will benefit from it.

In the end, economic development is economic development. It doesn't matter if you're talking about two guys and a truck or 4,000 people making the truck. At every level, we're working hard to bring high-quality, good-paying jobs to our people.

Our success depends on the work we do together and the energy with which we do it. Malcolm Forbes once commented that “diamonds are just chunks of coal that stuck to their jobs.”

Let’s stick to our jobs; let’s commit ourselves to doing great things for the people of Mississippi. The end results are going to be the message we send to generations to come; I want it to be a positive message.

I look forward to working with you as we write that message. Thank you.

