

*Remarks for the  
USDA / Rural Development Conference  
February 19, 2003*

- Recognize Nick Walters / Angie Dvorak /  
Mayor Johnny Dupree
  
- Jordan / 15-point buck / priorities
  
- More important than ever to set priorities  
and stick to them
  - That's what we've been doing in MS

## ■ Impact of national recession

- More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
- More than two million Americans out of work
- States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

## ■ Effects of national recession touches everyone

- Recession has no respect for political parties
- Every state affected

## ■ Have to deal with the impact here in MS

- Protect people in short term / prepare for long term

- Best way to do that is through creating jobs and investing in education
  - Everybody benefits from good schools
  
- Education must be first priority for MS
  - Making great progress
    - Teacher pay
    - Test scores
    - Computers in Classroom
  
- Keeping education a priority with a budget that puts Schools First / 62 percent
  - *HISTORIC ACTION THAT WAS TAKEN*
  - *UNPRECEDENTED COOPERATION*
  - *WAS A HISTORIC DAY WHEN SIGNED EDUCATION BILLS*

- Budget is key issue of legislative session
  - Must budget based on real numbers, not on hope
  - Funding education at 62%
  - Fully funding MAEP for the first time
  - Funds teacher pay raise
  
- Particular investment in higher education / \$200M “brain trust”
  - Recruit best minds for research, development, workforce training
  - Higher education has critical role in economic development

- Time to prove to people of MS we're serious about education
  - Make the investment now for dividends tomorrow
  
- When it comes to education, we mean business
  - Business means jobs
  
- MS Rural Economic Impact Authority
  - \$20M to help with economic development in rural areas
  - Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges

- MS's potential not exclusive to metropolitan areas
  - Promise of our people is just as strong in rural areas
  - Fighting to bring quality jobs to every Mississippian
  
- Economic development is economic development
  - Doesn't matter if it's two people in a truck or 5,000 people building a truck
  
- We have to look to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
  - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- Have to continue investing in education
  - More computers in classrooms
  - Higher test scores
  - Better funding for higher education
  
- Will Rogers quote: Even if on right track, will get run over if you just sit there
  - MS is on the right track, and we're moving