

*Remarks for the
Delta Workforce Development Initiative Press Conference
November 21, 2002*

- Today's event a *positive reflection* on how state / county officials and businesses working to *find solutions* to benefit Delta region and communities
- Want to mention I was scheduled to be here for the opening of this center last year on August 20
 - Bad weather prevented us from landing that day
- Sorry I couldn't make it that day, but glad I'm here today
 - Want to thank you all for the great work you do each day
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provides framework for the Workforce Investment Network in Mississippi
 - Unique, locally-designed and managed system
 - Convenient access / customer choice to services and program information
- WIN in Mississippi targets funding in local areas impacted by plant closings, layoffs and a weakened economy
 - That part of WIN's mission why I'm here today
- Pleased to present this check in the amount of \$250,000 to representatives of consortium of Mississippi Valley State University, Alcorn State University, and Mississippi Action for Community Education
- Check represents a grant from the state's Workforce Investment Act funds
 - Provides tools to help community leaders make the most of WIA funds
 - Will help ensure benefits of WIA and partner programs are fully realized
- Partners in consortium will work together to address issues of workforce and economic development, training, and education
- Ultimately consortium will use information to help elected officials with tools, resources and support to effectively serve their communities
- Citizens must be able to meet workforce needs
 - Strong, qualified workforce = key attraction to businesses looking at that Mississippi and the Delta

- MS's growing / over 47,000 new jobs, 21,000 through expansions
 - Nearly \$13 billion invested

- *Growth not happening because we're waiting for someone else to help us*
 - Working together to go after jobs / improve our schools / grow economy
 - Show the world we can compete anytime, anywhere