

*Remarks for the  
Opening of the Mississippi World Trade Center  
May 2, 2002*

Good morning. Thank you for joining us here today to celebrate the official opening of Mississippi's World Trade Center.

Today is both a joyous occasion and an important one to reflect upon. As we bring Mississippi's World Trade Center to fruition, it is also important to honor those who lost their lives in the World Trade Center tragedy in New York on September 11.

Please join me in remembrance for a moment of silence.

(Brief moment of silence observed)

On September 11th, the World faced terrorism with courage and we faced destruction with perseverance. By targeting the World Trade Center and all it represents, our enemies struck at the very core of our economic foundation.

But, with every trial we face, we must find the strength and the determination to move forward and to make our dreams realities.

Today is one such reality. Today marks a new day in the history of Mississippi.

With the opening of Mississippi's World Trade Center, opportunities for economic expansion for our state will be realized.

Through the Advantage Mississippi Initiative, one of our primary objectives was the establishment of a new World Trade Center.

I would like to personally thank the coalition that helped make today possible. This coalition, comprised of public and private entities, includes:

- The United States Department of Commerce International Trade Administration,
- The International Trade Clubs of Mississippi,
- The Mississippi District Export Council,
- Bell South, and
- The many educational institutions from across our great state.

In particular, I would like to thank the Partnership for Economic Development Services who believed in our vision for this World Trade Center and provided the necessary funding to allow this affiliation with the World Trade Center Association to exist.

I also appreciate the efforts of the Mississippi Development Authority staff who have worked hard to formulate the structure of the activities, programs and services that the Center will offer to Mississippi's business community.

Due to the efforts of these groups, today Mississippi is launching another important step toward successful global competition. Once again, Mississippi has proved that it is serious about economic development and the creation of higher wage jobs.

Our World Trade Center will bring global attention to our state and offer further evidence that Mississippi can compete with anyone, anytime, anywhere.

In fact, the timing of this announcement could not have been better planned. I will be leaving next week to conduct a business development mission to Japan to meet with existing and prospective investors.

Mississippi has long since realized the value of international trade to our economy. Last year, Mississippi's exports totaled \$3.5 billion.

Over 60,000 jobs created in our state are attributed to exports. For every direct job created, two additional ones are created in supporting industries.

Mississippi's exports range from cotton to paper, plastic to ships. Through Mississippi's World Trade Center, we will expand these exports and improve Mississippi's opportunities for growth and expansion in the global marketplace.

Our mission at Mississippi's World Trade Center will model the objectives of the World Trade Center Association.



We will:

- Encourage expansion through world trade;
- Promote international business relationships;
- Foster participation in world trade;
- Create and encourage mutual assistance and cooperation among members;
- And promote and market the concept of the World Trade Center in Mississippi and the world.

The Mississippi World Trade Center will serve as a central site for the coordination of all existing international programs and services in the state.

It will also provide a conduit for the delivery of new services and benefits through affiliation with the World Trade Center Association.

Through this center of excellence, we will promote international trade, investment, education, tourism and cultural exchange in Mississippi.

We will develop and implement Mississippi's international programs and unify the state's efforts and resources to make us more efficient and competitive in the global marketplace.

We will also serve our members as a productive, efficient resource to create new international economic opportunities for growth. Members will realize enormous benefits within the state and around the world as they enhance their trade and investment opportunities.

As a World Trade Center, Mississippi will gain worldwide exposure and international credibility as a serious contender for economic development projects.

As we remember those who perished in the World Trade Center last fall, it should be our goal to fulfill their mission through the establishment of this new venture. In their honor, I would like to close by sharing an important message from the President of the World Trade Centers Association, Guy Tozzoli (Tahzolee):

"We are not so adolescent that we think world trade will rid the world of evil. It will not by itself stop wars. But, if the world is ever to achieve understanding among peoples, if war is to be relegated to history books, novels and movies, it will not be done without trade. That, we are sure of."

Thank you for being here today and for sharing my vision for economic prosperity for our citizens.

It is now my pleasure to introduce to you, Mr. Liles Williams, President of the Mississippi World Trade Center Board of Directors.