

ajlksjdfkjaslkfjIUSA TODAY Talking Points

- Mississippi's state general fund revenues have increased by 89% since 1999 while expenditures have increased only 88%.
- While in 1992, Mississippi was facing a \$76 million budget deficit; we now has a "rainy day fund" of more than \$244 million.
- Mississippi has the lion share of this growth on:
 1. Infrastructure improvements (e.g., highways, schools, air conditioned classrooms, correctional facilities) [Correctional facilities—By April 2001, Mississippi will have more doubled its correctional capacity since 1995 (9,528 bed increase).]; and,
 2. Education (e.g., teacher pay raises, critical needs scholarships, Ayers settlement, technology, and libraries);
- Our direction for the future will focus on continuing these priorities including:
 1. Improving our educational opportunities (increasing teacher pay to the Southeastern Average, implementing early childhood development, and improving access to technology for our children;
 2. Increasing access to adequate health care (e.g., CHIP, medical scholarships, Health Care Trust Fund);
 3. Expanding economic opportunity by building on our state's innovations and infrastructure:
 - Recruiting polymer businesses to build upon the successes of the Polymer Science Institute at USM;
 - Improving the state's infrastructure through Interstate 69 Highway system and increased utilization of the Port of Gulfport;
 - Expanding space and weather studies associated with the Stennis Space Center;
 - Targeting specific industries for incubation and relocation to Mississippi (i.e., telecommunication and biotechnology);
 4. Ensuring the continual improvement of our communities through public safety services and infrastructure improvement:
 - Support of fire and police services in local communities;
 - Financial support for water and sewer improvements;