

Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting
Saturday, December 2, 2000
7:00 p.m.
Crowne Plaza Hotel – Windsor Rooms

Opening

- Good Evening
- (Thank David Wade for his introduction)
- It is a pleasure to be here tonight
- Story

Main Points

1. Advantage Mississippi Initiative (how it affects the agricultural economy of MS)
 - a. Mississippi must market rural areas differently
 - b. MDA will develop a program to stimulate growth in the agricultural business
 - i. Increase the availability of financial assistance
 - ii. Provide incentives which will encourage growth in the MS agricultural industry
 - iii. Assist new agribusiness in developing and implementing business plans

- iv. Develop methods for increasing markets for goods and services
- v. Disseminate information about public and private programs that benefit agribusiness
- vi. Identify sources of financial assistance

c. Creates the Land, Water and Timber Resources Board

- i. To develop marketing plans and opportunities for independent farmers
- ii. To encourage the commercialization of new agricultural technology businesses
- iii. To initiate the development of processing facilities for MS agricultural commodities
- iv. To initiate the development of MS wholesale distribution businesses for agricultural inputs and products
- v. To promote the development of institutional and specialty markets for MS agriculture products
- vi. To encourage additional research for new agricultural product development
- vii. To promote the rural Quality of Life with such programs as 4-H, Future Farmers of America and agricultural education

(Mention the proposed creation of the Delta Regional Authority, on the Federal level; similar to the Appalachian Regional Authority)

2. State of the South 2000: Major Findings from the MDC
 - a. Technology is changing the foundations of our economy
 - i. Technology is an integral part of everything from industry to government to education
 - ii. Because of technology, the South can leapfrog ahead in its development and flourish in the new digital economy
 - b. The traditional “beginning” and “ending” to education no longer apply
 - i. There is a need for continuing education to compete in a global economy
 - c. Political boundaries and economic reality do not match
 - i. We cannot let old lines on a map interfere with collaborative planning and decision making
 - d. Places that remain disconnected from the new economy will become increasingly stagnant

- i. We must connect rural areas to economic activity
 - ii. Rural communities need to collaborate regionally for success
- e. The South's social fabric is changing
 - i. Regions must mend their racial divides and resolve any tensions arising from immigration
 - ii. We need to capitalize on all our human and cultural assets

3. Showing Leadership

- a. By forming common objectives and by seeing beyond the politics of self-imposed borders and finding consensus, MS can compete successfully against our neighboring states and against countries around the globe.
- b. We are creating the right climate for economic growth by improving infrastructure and institutions, establishing rules and incentives that encourage productivity and implementing positive, long-term processes.
- c. When we talk about infrastructure, we must be mindful that bringing transportation resources to a company's

door means more than simply providing a way to move physical goods.

- d. Infrastructure efforts must also focus on the transportation of high speed data with broadband Internet access provided in concert with expanded physical transportation resources.
 - i. Working with MCI WorldCom to provide broadband Internet access to every community in MS
- e. We must go about it in the right way.
 - i. By working together
 - ii. By building consensus
 - iii. By getting rid of our own agendas
 - iv. By working for the good of our people

Closing

- We will continue to sell the state
- Look for new opportunities to bring additional higher paying jobs to the people of our state
- We want our people to build their lives and raise their families in Mississippi
- Now have the climate to make that happen in Mississippi

- Success will take leadership, vision and a solid direction
- The people of MS have our pledge to make their quality of life better