

*Remarks for the
MDA / Nissan Press Conference
April 2, 2002*

Good morning. Today we're here to kick off a tremendous new aspect of the relationship between Mississippi and Nissan – a training series to help minority businesses become better equipped for doing business with the exciting new automotive industry.

I want to thank Jim Morton, Bob Rohrlack, and Gennie Lacy Jones for their work in making this effort a reality.

The Mississippi Minority Contractors Association, the Mississippi Economic Council, the Mississippi Minority Business Alliance and Jackson State University have also lent a great deal of guidance to this project, and I want to thank them for being a part of it.

Since the announcement of the Nissan facility in 2000, we have worked hard to ensure that all Mississippians would have a chance to benefit from this great addition to our business community.

Today is evidence that our hard work is paying off. Through this training program, minority businesses will learn more about everything from doing business with the auto industry to how federal programs can help them grow.

There's an old saying that "a rising tide lifts all ships." Mississippi's tide is rising and we're all moving up with it.

The world is taking notice of Mississippi now, and for all the right reasons.

Mississippi is growing like never before. In the past two years, during a national recession, we've created more than 21,000 jobs and attracted over \$6 billion in new investments.

Site Selection magazine, one of the top trade publications in the economic development industry, ranked Mississippi as one of the top ten states for its "Governor's Cup" award.

The perception of Mississippi is changing. The old question of “Why Mississippi?” doesn’t get asked anymore. The question now is, “Why *not* Mississippi?”

And the answer is, because we can compete with anyone, anytime, anywhere.

The rest of the world sees what we’ve done with the Advantage Mississippi Initiative, both in terms of recruiting and retaining business.

We're committed to building Mississippi and making sure it achieves its promise and potential. Our people deserve nothing less.

This same message applies to people in every state across our nation. If we are to build our states, our country, we must do it by creating jobs and building industry. We must do it by investing in our people through workforce training.

Even though we are in a national recession, backing off on our investment in economic development and workforce training would sap our strengths and cut our competitive edge.

That simply can't happen if we are going to succeed.

It's been said that "success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go."

I tell you this – we aren't letting go. There are too many opportunities out there, and too many opportunities for us to create, to ever think about letting go.

Believing “I must do something” solves more problems than saying “something must be done.”

You won't hear us say, “something must be done.” We live in America's state of promise. It is a promise too long unkept. That has changed.

Mississippi is doing more and doing it better than ever before. The momentum is there, and it is growing.

I am excited about the goals we've set for ourselves. I know you share those goals with me, and I look forward to reaching them.

Thank you.