

*Remarks for the
Northeast Mississippi State of the Region Meeting
May 23, 2003*

- Recognize Mayor Ed Hughes
 - MDA representatives / legislators

- It is great to be in Tylertown today
 - Here with some good news
 - A little something to recognize your hard work in growing this community

- Your work is part of the reason Mississippi is taking on a different image
 - Image of a state moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century
 - A state that's competing and leading in the global marketplace

- A state that's setting new standards in education and economic development

- Every state impacted by national recession
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - More than 2 million Americans out of work
 - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Those obstacles make us work even harder to create opportunities
 - Protect people in the short term while preparing for the long term
 - Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs

■ Education is first priority

- Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
- Princeton Review: 12th best testing system in nation
- Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind” / USA Today article
- Computers in Classroom

■ Mississippi’s investing in education

- Increasing investment while others are cutting
- That is significant in light of national recession

- When it comes to education, we mean business
 - Business means jobs

- Strong growth over past 3 years
 - Over 2,200 new and expanded facilities
 - More than 53,000 new jobs
 - Total business investment in Mississippi nearly \$15 billion

- This past Tuesday, opened Nissan plant
 - Only U.S. auto plant opening this year / key to Nissan revival
 - 5,300 direct jobs / \$1.4 billion investment
 - 26,000 indirect jobs

- Those are important jobs, but every job created in Mississippi is important
 - Doesn't matter if it's two people in a truck or 5,000 people building a truck

- All our work is focused on Mississippi's future and one simple question
 - What do we want?
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- That's why I proposed Rural Economic Impact Authority in January / legislature passed
 - \$10 million to aid economic development in rural areas

- Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges
- This program will play a key role in growth of rural Mississippi

- It's also why we're here today
 - Awarding first Rural Economic Impact Grant to the City of Tylertown
 - \$250,000 will be used to improve an existing building here
 - Help businesses grow / help create jobs

- Mayor Hughes, you know that a check is no good unless it's signed
 - Proud to sign this check for \$250,000 to City of Tylertown
 - Congratulations