

**For Immediate Release**

March 11, 2003

**Contact:** John Sewell

601-359-2916

## **Governor Musgrove Discusses Public Safety Communications at Interoperability Conference**

(Jackson, MS) – Governor Ronnie Musgrove said today that the ability of the state’s first responders to communicate during emergency situations is critical to protecting the people of Mississippi. Musgrove gave the opening remarks to the Mississippi Public Safety Communications Interoperability Conference.

“9/11 changed every community in every state in this nation. No one has gone unaffected,” Musgrove said. “We have a responsibility to the public, to those we serve, to ensure that we are prepared for any possibility, any threat.”

The conference held today in Jackson focused on initiatives being undertaken at all government levels to improve the ability of different emergency agencies to communicate.

Musgrove said the state was already working on this issue, with the establishment of the State Interoperability Executive Committee by executive order on February 5, 2003.

“The committee is charged with coordinating information between state agencies and, more importantly, with providing recommendations for both the immediate and long-term improvement of public safety wireless communications,” said Musgrove.

In the months following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Musgrove has established an Incident Command System for the state and overseen the implementation of bioterrorism exercises. On March 6, 2003, after Musgrove called on President George Bush and Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge to release federal funds earmarked for the state’s first responders, \$7.5 million in funding was granted for equipment, training and risk and needs assessments.

On March 19, Musgrove will speak at the Governor’s First Responders Conference in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

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