

For Immediate Release

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Contact: John Sewell

601-359-2916

Governor Musgrove Signs Bill Creating Mississippi Jobs

(Jackson, MS) – Governor Ronnie Musgrove today signed Senate Bill 2886 on the deck of the U.S. Navy Aegis guided missile destroyer PINCKNEY (DDG 91), sealing the state's commitment of \$48 million to support Northrop Grumman's expansion of the state-owned Ingalls shipyard in Pascagoula.

"Today is a significant day for the State of Mississippi, significant in the fact that we are once again demonstrating our commitment to realizing the promise and potential of our state and our people," Musgrove said. "We are doing so through our partnership with Northrop Grumman, in a joint effort to improve the shipbuilding facilities that produce ships like this one we're on today."

Northrop Grumman Ship Systems is the state's largest private employer, with more than 11,000 workers in Pascagoula and Gulfport. As many as 2,000 new jobs are expected to be created through their expansion. The company has an annual payroll of more than \$430 million and an annual impact of more than \$2 billion on the state, an impact that is expected to grow \$3.5 billion by 2006.

Musgrove said the ranking of three coast cities – Biloxi, Gulfport and Pascagoula – in a recent survey of America's 50 hottest cities for expansion in *Expansion Management* magazine was evidence of the state's tremendous potential.

"The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined," said Musgrove. "It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs. It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk. It's an image of companies like Northrop Grumman doing business in the state, with Mississippians building state-of-the-art ships for our nation's military."

Mississippi was listed by *Site Selection* magazine last year as one of the top ten states for new and expanded facilities. In September 2001, the state was named one of the top ten states for small business survival. Under Musgrove's leadership and during a national recession, more than 2,000 new and expanded facilities have opened, creating more than 50,000 jobs and a total business investment of over \$14 billion.

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