

Entergy Board of Director's Retreat
Sunday, March 25, 2001
6:00 p.m.
Ritz-Carlton in Amelia Island, FL

(Remarks after dinner: Creating opportunities for new jobs and making Mississippi more competitive with the AMI)

Opening

- Good Evening
- (Wayne Leonard, CEO of Entergy, will introduce you)
- (Make a comment on dinner – Wal-Mart Story)

Main Point

1. Advantage Mississippi Initiative

a. Economic Development Plan

- i. First plan in 11 years
- ii. Before it was a patchwork approach with E.D.
- iii. Now it is
 1. Sound/Comprehensive
 2. Variety of Incentives
- iv. Now MS has a management tool to sell the state
 1. Designed by business leaders across the state and noted E.D. experts throughout the nation

2. Had the strong support of business people and local developers
 - a. They knew how important it was for our plan to pass and become reality
3. We are in direct competition with our sister states
4. (Talk about conversation with Georgia Governor)
5. I have told other Governor's that Mississippi will take away as much business from them as we possibly can.
 - a. We will "fight" for every opportunity we can get.

(Mention articles that have compared MS, LA, AL, etc. stating what Mississippi was doing right)

- v. The plan helps those communities that have not prospered
 1. Gives opportunities for all cities/counties
 2. Begin using immediately
 3. Sends a signal to the nation – Serious about Business

- 4. A Marketing Plan being developed to sell the state
- vi. More, higher paying jobs for people of Mississippi
 - 1. Competing with other states for those jobs
 - 2. We now have a competitive advantage
 - 3. Creates a better Quality of Life for every person in all 82 counties
- b. Key elements of the Package
 - i. Name Change
 - 1. Mississippi Development Authority
 - ii. Ace Fund
 - iii. Regional Economic Development Act
 - iv. Mississippi Advantage Jobs Act
 - 1. Allows qualifying businesses to receive up to 4% of their employee's wages back at the end of each quarter as a rebate from MS Tax Comm.
 - v. Growth & Prosperity Act
 - 1. 10-year exemptions (including school taxes) to qualifying companies locating in designated counties

- vi. Tax Credit Amendments
 - 1. Mixture of tax credit incentives targeting high-tech, research and higher paying jobs
- vii. Workforce Training & Retraining
 - 1. Allows flexibility for the state to make multi-year commitments for workforce training and retention support
- c. We will use this plan to launch Mississippi into as many good opportunities in all areas.
 - i. Economic development
 - ii. Education

(Wedding Dress Story)

2. Opportunities

- a. Mississippians now, more than ever, have many opportunities from which to choose.
- b. Opportunities in:
 - i. Education
 - ii. Jobs
- c. Education and economic development go hand in hand.
- d. A state must have trained employees for potential new businesses.

- e. High-tech companies must have high-tech employees.
- f. Mississippi has those people, and we are continuing that training.
- g. We have opportunities to invest:
 - i. Invest in education for our kids
 - 1. Teacher pay raise
 - a. 49th in nation to 19th
 - 2. Computers in the Classroom.
 - 3. Accountability plans for teachers and schools.
 - 4. www.FastForwardMS.com
 - 5. MS at the forefront on testing standards
 - 6. National Board Certified Teachers
 - ii. Invest in good jobs for our people
 - 1. Nissan
 - a. Is only the beginning.
 - b. The AMI gave Mississippi the competitive advantage.
 - 2. Supplier opportunities
 - a. Over 2,200 applications sent to Nissan
 - b. Creating thousands of spin-off jobs for Mississippians
- h. Give our people the opportunity for an even **better** Quality of Life

- i. Mississippi must invest.
 - i. The key is prioritizing and investing our money in the right places.
 - 1. Economic development
 - 2. Education
- j. We cannot look at our budget as an obstacle
 - i. Look for opportunities
- k. As the Governor I have to keep the budget balanced in good times and in challenging times.

3. Budget

- a. We must be responsible with the people's money.
- b. They deserve and demand that of state leaders.
- c. Last year, the legislature
 - i. Overextended and
 - ii. Gambled with our budget
 - iii. I am not willing to do that this year.
- d. In order to have an honest figure to work with, our budget must be:
 - i. Honest
 - ii. Straightforward
 - iii. Fiscally sound
- e. We must correct the baseline figure for this year's budget

- i. Or we will start next year's budget \$85 million in the hole.
- f. This year, our state is growing at less than 1%
 - i. We cannot budget next year's growth based on 3.7%, like the legislature is proposing.
 - ii. The nation's economy is at a standstill.
 - iii. Our rate of growth, along with half the nation is sluggish.
 - iv. We cannot build our budget on hope
 - 1. We must be realistic.
- g. If we use these inflated figures to build our budget for the upcoming year, imagine the additional amount of money we will have to cut from our agencies, colleges and universities, and schools next year.
- h. We will be budgeting on quicksand.
 - i. The budget problem will escalate into a budget crisis!
 - j. We are urging the legislature to lower the estimated rate of growth from 3.7% to 1% now.
- k. We should be honest with our people and make the adjustment that bases our rate of growth on a real number, if not:
 - i. It is misleading to our agencies
 - ii. It is misleading to our schools

- iii. It is misleading to our colleges and universities
- iv. It is misleading to our people.
- l. We need to work with figures and estimates that make sense
 - i. So agencies and schools can work within a realistic budget.
- m. We must restore credibility and common sense to Mississippi's budget.

Closing

- Mississippi is headed forward.
- We are not going to turn back the clocks and disrupt our progress.
- We want more great opportunities for the people of Mississippi.
- We want our children to have the opportunity to live, work and raise their families here.
- Everyone plays a role in our success.
- Working together we can and will make it happen.
- The people of Mississippi deserve that commitment.
- The children of Mississippi deserve that commitment.
- Our future depends on everyone working as a team in Mississippi.

- Making plans now for an even better Mississippi will ensure that future generations continue to succeed in our state.