

**Remarks For
Administrator Thomas J. Barrett
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
(as written)**

**Tour of American Steel Pipe
Birmingham, Alabama
October 6, 2006
10:00 a.m. (Central)**

Good morning. It's great to be in Birmingham. And I want to thank each of you for showing me around, and for sharing a little about the exciting work that is going on here.

All across this great Nation, our economy is growing at a record pace. Consumer spending is up... the national unemployment rate is low... and wages are on the rise. And, just this morning, the government announced that over 51,000 jobs were created in September. This means that the economy has created more than 1.7 million jobs over the past 12 months... and, more than 6.6 million jobs since August 2003. This includes the 30,000 jobs created in Alabama.

And...Alabama continues as one of the leading states for record unemployment with only 3.5%! That is a great credit to the people here.

One way to sustain and strengthen this great momentum is to invest in transportation. That's because safe pipelines, reliable roads, and dependable transit drive our economy to be more powerful, productive and prosperous.

A safe and reliable pipeline network assures us that fuel will be available to help get us to and from work, visit friends and family, cool and heat our homes, and go about the business of our daily lives.

Indeed, pipelines and our entire transportation network play a critical role in keeping the American economy moving. Overall, transportation accounts for one in ten American jobs, and helps move some 52 million tons of goods and products across our country daily.

That's why under President Bush's leadership, we're investing record levels of money in transportation, and providing state and local government's unprecedented flexibility to fund and manage their own transportation needs.

This morning I've had the chance to see first-hand the signs of strong economic growth right here in Birmingham.

American Steel Pipe and its affiliated companies have grown by adding up to 300 new jobs since 2005 as demand for the steel pipe used in building new oil and natural gas pipelines has increased. And meeting these supply demands means continued economic growth, not only for this company, but for our entire nation.

What's happening here in Birmingham is a snapshot of what we're seeing all across the country. Everywhere we look, this economy is creating jobs by the thousands. Together, we must work to maintain this momentum.

And, I can tell you that the work being done is about more than just manufacturing pipe. These men and women are creating optimism and opportunity for this region and for the entire Nation.

Throughout our history, our Nation has been synonymous with opportunity. With each new job and new investment, this company knows the power of its people also means a brighter future and a better economy.

The progress we see here today shows all of us that the people of Alabama understand this vital connection, and are working hard to safeguard it.

Thank you for joining us today, and now we will take a few questions from the media.

###