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## Lt. Governor Guadagno and New Jersey Military Installation Growth and Development Task Force Tour 177th Fighter Wing

Tuesday, August 19, 2014

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**Trenton, NJ** - Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno and the New Jersey Military Installation Growth and Development Task Force today continued their tour of New Jersey's military installations with a visit to the Air National Guard (ANG) 177th Fighter Wing, stationed at the Atlantic City International Airport. Chaired by Lt. Governor Guadagno, the Task Force was created through Executive Orders Nos. 134 and 154 and is charged with forging an effective blueprint for securing the long-term growth and viability of New Jersey's military bases and U.S. Coast Guard installations.

"As both the chair of the Task Force and the mother of an Air Force cadet, today's visit is particularly meaningful," said Lt. Governor Guadagno. "Not only are our military bases, including the 177th Fighter Wing, critical to our national security, but they are also critical to our State's economy. And, to such ends, the Task Force remains committed to ensuring their continued presence and economic growth."

The 177th Fighter Wing employs more than 1,100 people and provides combat-ready citizen airmen and single-seat F-16C "Fighting Falcon" aircraft for worldwide deployment in support of United States Air Force (USAF) initiatives. It also serves New Jersey with emergency relief during natural disasters, search and rescue efforts and public safety support. Since October 2001, the 177th has had an active involvement in Operations Noble Eagle, Southern Watch, Northern Watch, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Under the "Total Force" concept, ANG units are considered Air Reserve components of the USAF and are trained and equipped by the USAF. Additionally, the New Jersey ANG forces are assigned to Air Expeditionary forces and are subject to deployment tasking orders along with their active duty and Air Force Reserve counterparts.

Analysis by Rutgers University has detailed the incredible direct and indirect impact New Jersey's military bases have supporting the state's overall economic vitality. Taken together, New Jersey's military installations generate employment for more than 73,000 people and support \$9.6 billion in total economic activity.

"Like all our New Jersey military bases, the 177th Fighter Wing has served with distinction safeguarding our state and nation's interests," said Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, the Adjutant General for the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. "The Task Force will preserve and enhance the State's military installations and their related missions. Through this effort, all New Jerseyans will benefit from more statewide jobs and corporate growth."

These visits emphasize the important role each installation plays in the state's overall economy and future workforce and spread the word of the Task Force's ongoing work. These critical responsibilities include: organizing a broad-based coalition supportive of the state's military bases, assisting in the economic fortification of New Jersey's military installations, and ensuring alignment of base missions with larger Department of Defense priorities. Previous visits by the Task Force include Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, Picatinny Arsenal, Naval Weapons Station Earle and the United States Coast Guard Training Center in Cape May as well as a roundtable for businesses impacted by Picatinny Arsenal.

To complement the Task Force's efforts, the Christie Administration's Fiscal Year 2015 budget includes a \$200,000 appropriation to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to further efforts to safeguard New Jersey's military installations from any future rounds of federal base realignment and closure designations.

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Lt. Governor Guadagno was joined by, among others, Task Force members Brig. Gen. Cunniff, Paul Boudreau, President of the Morris County Chamber of Commerce, and Tracye McDaniel, President and CEO of Choose New Jersey, in addition to Assemblyman Vincent Mazzeo (D-Atlantic) and Atlantic City Councilman Will Pauls.

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*Air National Guard Maintains State, National Security*

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