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NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES \$28 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDS FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Gov. Christie Whitman announced today that New Jersey will receive a total of \$28.6 million under the federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) for this year's summer youth employment and job training programs. The Governor announced the funding during a visit to New Brunswick's Alliance for A Successful Teen Employment Program (A-STEP).

"These funds will go toward youth training and summer youth programs to help give economically disadvantaged young people more opportunities to find jobs and receive the training to succeed in those jobs," the Governor said.

"We in New Jersey believe that children deserve a world-class education, and through curriculum standards in all schools, we're working to deliver just that," Gov. Whitman said. "But education shouldn't have to end in June."

The Governor said programs like New Brunswick's A-STEP demonstrate how businesses and volunteers can join together to help young people prepare for and join the world of work.

"New Jersey understands that, to play on our motto, prepared teenagers and good jobs are perfect together," she said.

For the summer employment program, JTPA funds totaling \$25.4 million will be allocated to 17 programs throughout the state to serve in-school disadvantaged and at-risk youths 14 to 19. The goal of the program is to improve or maintain students' academic levels from the previous school year while providing work-related experience. Most programs will include a combination of classroom training and an introduction to the world of work or a combination of remedial classroom training and an opportunity to learn vocational skills.

An additional \$3.2 million in JTPA funds will be allocated to youth training programs to serve about 3,000 in-school and out-of-school economically disadvantaged youths, aged 14 to 21, who are encountering barriers to employment. The program is designed to enhance the educational, occupational, and citizenship skills of youths, encourage school completion or enrollment in alternative school programs, increase employment and earning opportunities, and reduce welfare dependency.

The A-STEP program is a public/private partnership between New Brunswick Tomorrow and the City of New Brunswick, which is aimed at teaching crucial skills essential to acquiring and maintaining a job. The program, which began in 1993, placed more than 150 high school students in summer positions with 40 employers in 1997. The goal for this summer is 175 placements.

New Brunswick Tomorrow is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to fostering public/private networks of agencies, institutions, and volunteer organizations that are dedicated to enriching the lives of the people of New Brunswick, promoting self-sufficiency, and personal dignity.

"I applaud all the businesses that have hired the young people who have graduated from A-STEP," Gov. Whitman said. "And of course, I want to congratulate all the hard-working participants who are taking charge of their futures through this program."

"The program itself is a lesson for young people," she said. "It's about working as a team. It's about following through on one's responsibilities. It's about making a commitment to jobs."