

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR ADDRESSES AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE; STRESSES VALUE OF PERSEVERANCE AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Gov. Christie Whitman today told delegates to the American Legion New Jersey Boys State that the state's plan to save one million acres of open space and the suit against tobacco companies that will mean about \$300 million for anti-smoking efforts in New Jersey are textbook examples of what can be accomplished through perseverance and by people taking personal responsibility for changing the world.

She said former Assembly Member Maureen Ogden and Helen Fenski, a former deputy commissioner of the state Department of Environmental Protection, pushed long and hard for preserving open space.

"Maureen and Helen took it as their responsibility to push for preserving open space," the Governor said. "They did so years before anyone else took up the charge. But they were like voices in the wilderness. By that I mean they kept making the argument that we were losing open lands to office parks, housing complexes, and shopping centers and that we needed to do something to save our state."

"They persevered with that message when it seems like no one was listening," she said. "Like President Lincoln, they never let defeat get them down. On June 30th, I will sign a bill that will see their visions for open space become a reality. That bill will ensure that preserving one million acres of open space and farmland becomes a reality."

Gov. Whitman said many New Jerseyans died from smoking-related illnesses during the years long battle against tobacco companies.

"Nevertheless, those of us in public service, joined by advocates from across the state, have kept the pressure on. Our concern for the health of our children was one of the principle reasons New Jersey joined with other states in suing the major tobacco companies," the Governor said.

"The settlement of that suit means that New Jersey is going to get about \$300 million from tobacco companies every year. "And next week I will sign a state budget that provides over \$18 million dollars to help young people and adults keep away from tobacco," she said.

"With both anti-smoking efforts and open space preservation, we hope to provide a better New Jersey for everyone, their children and their children's children. But we wouldn't have achieved what we have without perseverance and without so

many people taking personal responsibility for changing the world," Gov. Whitman said.

A copy of the Governor's remarks is attached.

