

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Kicks Off Shore Bike Tour in Grand Style, Presents Historic Preservation Check and Throws Out First Pitch at Baseball Game

Gov. Christie Whitman today kicked off a two-day bike tour through the shore area. The Governor will bike over 55 miles of coastline in Atlantic, Cape May, Monmouth and Ocean Counties by the time the sun sets on her fifth swing through the area.

"I've been looking forward to this tour and always enjoy the opportunity to visit with the people who live and play at the best coastline on the eastern seaboard," said the Governor. "New Jersey's tourism industry is a driving force behind our economy and much of that is a result of our fantastic shore resorts."

The Governor started the bike tour at the Resorts Casino in Atlantic City where she congratulated the casino on the unveiling of renovations done to the casino. The Governor presented casino officials with a proclamation to signify the completion of the \$50 million project.

After biking along the boardwalk the Governor continued to Ventnor City where she presented a check representing a NJ Historic Trust grant that will be used to renovate the municipal building in the shore town. Ventnor will receive \$750,959 to aid them in the ongoing restoration of the buildings exterior.

The renovations to the 1928 building will include work on the multi-colored slate roof, rustic brick, and half-timbering, as well as the refined terra cotta. This is the second grant awarded to Ventnor for restoration efforts. The municipal building project received \$390,000 in 1993.

In addition, the Governor visited and greeted shore-goers in Margate where she toured Lucy the Elephant, a six-story structure in the shape of a pachyderm, recognized as a national historic monument. Margate received a \$305,190 grant from the NJ Historic Trust to continue exterior and structural repairs to the . The repairs received an initial grant from the trust of \$177,050 in 1993. The park where Lucy is located was renovated with Green Acres Funds totaling \$100,000.

The tour featured stops in Longport at Ozzie's Restaurant, the inauguration of the new "Wild Wonder" roller coaster at Gillians Islands and visits to Sea Isle City and Avalon.

To wind up her first day of the tour, the Governor wound up her pitching arm and tossed out the first pitch at the Atlantic City Surf baseball game at the Sandcastle Stadium.

Prior to the bike tour kickoff, the Governor visited construction workers at the Atlantic City Tunnel project site. The tunnel is a public/private project that will consist of a 2.23 mile roadway and tunnel connecting linking the Atlantic City Expressway and the Marina District and the Brigantine Island Bridge.

The Governor will continue her jaunt through the hot tourism sites of the shore on Saturday in Ocean and Monmouth Counties.

The tourism industry brought \$26 billion into the state last year, with Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic, Cumberland, and Cape May counties accounting for over \$14 billion. Over 18 million beach trips were taken to New Jersey last year and New Jersey has the fourth highest market share of U.S. overnight beach trips.

