

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor's New Year Resolution: Continuing New Jersey's Economic Well-being

Gov. Christie Whitman provides a weekly radio message to radio stations throughout the state. Each week, the message focuses on a different concern or event of interest to New Jerseyans.

This week the Governor discusses New Jersey's strong economy-315,000 new jobs during her administration, an unemployment rate below 5% for the last six months, and the lowest welfare caseload in three decades. The Governor will continue to promote economic growth this year through working with businesses to form strategies to bring more jobs to New Jersey and by promoting international trade through a trade mission to South America.

Economic growth also means respecting every dollar that government collects from its citizens. Encouraging shared services between towns and working towards civil service reform are two ways the Governor plans to ensure tax dollars are invested more efficiently. She is committed to fostering the economy to create and maintain opportunities for the people of New Jersey.

Attached is the text of the message.

The radio message can be accessed by calling the Governor's actuality line at 609-292-3249. It will be available today, beginning at noon, and will run through the weekend.

Governor's Weekly Radio Message December 31, 1998 Economic Well-being

I would like to extend my best wishes for a happy New Year to everyone in our New Jersey family.

New Year's Day has always been a time to reflect upon the past and to consider plans for the future. So I would like to take this opportunity to discuss one of the factors most important to the future of our state: the economy.

Economic prosperity is essential to creating and maintaining opportunities for the people of New Jersey.

A strong economy means that a company can expand and create more jobs. It means that more people can support themselves and get off welfare. And it means that families can start saving for a house or for their child's college education or for retirement.

That's why my administration has worked so hard over the past five years to foster economic growth.

We cut taxes 17 times. We targeted job training toward companies that were ready to hire. We conducted trade missions and encouraged foreign investment. And we created incentive packages to entice businesses to move to or expand in New Jersey.

Those strategies are working. New Jersey has almost 315,000 more jobs today than on New Year's Day five years ago. In fact, in the first 11 months of 1998, we added more than 55,000 new jobs to the economy.

What's more, our welfare rolls continued to drop by about 1000 cases every month during 1998. The current caseload is the lowest in three decades and shows one of the most significant improvements in the nation.

And our unemployment rate has remained below 5% for the sixth month in a row. Today, more people are working in New Jersey than ever before.

Of course, sustaining a strong economy requires constant attention. In the New Year, I will keep doing all I can to promote economic growth.

I will, for example, continue to promote international trade as a way to expand our economy. In fact, soon, I will take part in a trade mission to South America.

I will also keep working with the business community to forge strategies that will bring more jobs to our state.

But, maintaining economic prosperity means more than creating jobs. It also means doing more to make sure that our hard-working families keep more of what they earn. That means finding new ways to lower taxes - particularly, property taxes.

Although we've made a good start in creating property tax relief, we haven't done enough. We still have to do more to lower the cost of government.

That means, for example, removing barriers to consolidation and shared services between towns and among school districts. It also means fighting abuses of the system that state investigators have uncovered in several local governments.

The bottom line is that we have to respect every dollar that government collects from its citizens.

That's why I will also keep pushing for civil service reforms that would invest your tax dollars more efficiently.

This year, my new year's resolution is to continue to do everything I can to lower taxes, promote job growth, and to foster investment in New Jersey's economy.

I am confident that New Jersey can lead the way in economic growth as we make our way into the new millennium.