



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR TO JOIN WORLD LEADERS AT ECONOMIC FORUM IN SWITZERLAND

Gov. Christie Whitman today announced that she has accepted an invitation from the World Economic Forum to participate in its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland on January 30 - February 2. The Governor will join U.S. and world leaders for this renowned conference on the development of economic regions and the world economy.

"I am looking forward to taking part in this exciting conference on economic development," said Gov. Whitman. "The conference will provide an opportunity to share successful economic development policies that can be implemented here in New Jersey. It will enable me to promote business development and expansion in the Garden State and to develop New Jersey's vital international trade relationships."

International trade plays a crucial role in New Jersey's economy. New Jersey ranks fifth among states in the United States for foreign investment -- \$26.2 billion. The Garden State is ninth in exports among states. In 1997, it is estimated that New Jersey firms exported almost \$26.2 billion worth of products abroad. More than 600,000 New Jerseyans -- nearly 16 percent of the workforce -- are employed through export production and foreign investments.

The conference will provide the Governor with an opportunity to bring New Jersey center stage and showcase the state's success in economic development. The Governor will also have an opportunity to meet with government and corporate leaders from throughout the world and to learn about their successful strategies and policies to promote economic development.

During the conference, the Governor will participate in panel discussions on US economic policy for the next millennium. Information regarding participants on this panel is attached. The Governor will also participate in panels regarding the effects of globalization on the economy and the issue of global warming.

The World Economic Forum is a Swiss not-for-profit and non- partisan foundation that promotes interaction among leaders from government, business, academia and the arts with the objective of improving the state of the world.

Gov. Whitman was one of only two United States governors to be invited to this year's conference. California Gov. Pete Wilson has also been invited to attend.

During the conference, the Governor is scheduled to meet with the Honorable Ernesto Zedillo, President of Mexico, His Excellency Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of Poland, the Honorable Emil Constantinescu, President of Romania. The Governor will also meet with Dominique Strass-Kahn, Minister of the Economy, Finance and Industry of France and Kiochi Haraguchi, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

The Governor will meet with conference participants, including president and CEO of Sony, Nobuyuki Idei, vice chairman of Hoffmann LaRoche, Andres Leuenberger and chief executive of Cable & Wireless PLC, Richard Brown. All three international corporations have operations in New Jersey.

Attendees are also expected to include House Speaker Newt Gingrich, U.S. Senators John Kerry and Orrin Hatch, Senior Policy Advisor to the President Ira Magaziner, U.S. Ambassador the United Nations Bill Richardson and Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala.

Gov. Whitman will be accompanied by Commerce Commissioner Gil Medina during the conference, which is closed to the press.

Updated information regarding the trip and the full and final list of participants will be provided next week.

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