

## Office of the Governor

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### NEWS RELEASE

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### **GOVERNOR'S WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS DISCUSSES NEW JERSEY LEADING THE WAY INTO THE NEW MILLENIUM**

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.

In this week's address, Governor Whitman talks about how New Jersey is leading the way into the next millenium. From preserving open space to adding to the state's workforce through WorkFirst New Jersey to helping 51,000 children and their families get subsidized health insurance, New Jersey is fast becoming the best place in which to live, work and raise a family.

A copy of the text of the address is attached.

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.

The address is also available on our website at <http://www.state.nj.us/governor/radio2.html>.

### **RADIO ADDRESS LEADING THE WAY INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM**

Hello, this is Governor Christie Whitman.

Some people would say that tomorrow is not the beginning of the new millennium, that it really begins on January 1, 2001. But whatever date you prefer, on this - the last day of the 1900s - it's impossible not to feel part of the wave of history. As we stand on the shoreline of the new millennium, we are humbled by the passage of time and the promise of the future.

We can also be very proud of the part our country has played in shaping the history of our world, for the better.

Here in New Jersey, we have played a big role in making our country great - from the colonial days to our present day partnership in the global economy.

And what better time than the last day of the year to look back to see how far we've come as a state, and what this year has meant

to us?

Today our residents are enjoying more open space. That's because we have committed ourselves, through the Garden State Preservation Trust Act, to preserving one million acres of open space and farmland over the next decade. That's about half of the remaining undeveloped land in New Jersey.

Generations from now, I hope the people of New Jersey will look back on 1999 and recognize it as a time when all the citizens of our great state acted so wisely in setting aside fields and farms and public spaces.

This year we also saw more of our people working than ever before, with 378,000 more high-quality jobs than in 1994, and 70,000 more in this year alone. And with 34 tax cuts, including a 30% income tax cut, and a billion-dollar property tax relief program, our citizens are keeping more of their hard-earned money.

Moreover, we're adding to our workforce through our WorkFirst New Jersey welfare reform program. Since WorkFirst began in 1997, we've cut the welfare caseload by more than half. And research confirms that families leaving welfare are now clearly better off financially.

We also helped 51,000 children and their families this year through our KidCare program, which subsidizes health insurance for families who can't afford coverage. And our HMO Patient Bill of Rights and HMO Report Card provided more patients with accountability and quality health care.

Families were also a lot safer too. That's because New Jersey's crime rate fell to its lowest level in a quarter century. That means more of our citizens are safer, and more criminals are facing tougher penalties for their crimes.

Lastly, this year we continued to make quality our first priority in education. Our statewide academic standards and accountability in funding have put the spotlight where it belongs: on teaching and learning.

Moreover, we now have 47 charter schools providing innovation and choice for parent and students, and our public school choice plan is underway in 10 school districts. And we're working toward an unprecedented plan for renovating and rebuilding public schools across the state.

Looking back, we have a lot to make us proud. As I said in my State of the State address at the beginning of this year, the last year of the millennium: the state of New Jersey is vibrant and vigorous.

As we look ahead we can do so much more as part of New Jersey's "one family." I am confident that working together, we will continue - in the year 2000 and beyond - to make New Jersey the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

With my prayers and hopes for you and your family, I wish you a very safe, happy, and prosperous New Year.

Thank you, and have a great millennium.

