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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Opens Western Interchange at the Routes 4 and 17 Project; Praises Acceleration of Project

Governor Christie Whitman today cut the ribbon for the new western interchange for the Route 4 and 17 project in Paramus. The Governor also praised the acceleration of the project that will allow the project to be completed by the end of this year.

Joining the Governor for the ribboncutting were federal, state and local officials. The Route 4 and 17 interchange is the busiest in the nation. Originally designed to carry 9,000 vehicles during rush hour, the interchange currently handles more than 17,000 vehicles during rush hour and 285,000 travelers daily.

"Today's event is a great example of how well this project is progressing," the Governor said. "Before the year is out, the entire interchange will be open to traffic, and I know I join area residents, businesses and commuters in saying that we all eagerly await that day."

The western interchange costs \$3.5 million and connects the former Alexander's department store property with the Garden State Plaza, and allows traffic from Route 4 westbound to access the Alexander property, the Garden State Plaza and Route 4 eastbound. The western interchange is the largest portion of the project to open to date.

The opening of the interchange follows the recent agreement between the state of New Jersey and the contractor for the project to accelerate the completion of the interchange. The project is now scheduled to be completed nearly a year and a half ahead of the original completion date. Under the terms of the agreement, NJDOT will pay Bishop-Sanzari-Fletcher Creamer, Inc., up to \$3.5 million to accelerate work in order to open almost all of the interchange to traffic by Thanksgiving of this year. The flyover ramp connection from Route 17 northbound to Route 4 westbound would open by Christmas.

"There remains much work to do, but if the past 10 months show what can be accomplished, NJDOT and the contractor truly can deliver," the Governor said. "For the 285,000 motorists who use this antiquated interchange every day, relief is just around the corner."

"I commend my staff and the contractor for their diligence and perseverance on this project. Built in 1932 as a state of the art cloverleaf, the Route 4 and 17 interchange is a main transportation connector for one of the most densely-populated regions in the Northeast. Our ability to advance this project ahead of schedule is an excellent example of how the department can deliver huge capital

construction projects while greatly improving the quality of transportation in the region and state," Transportation Commissioner James Weinstein added.

The \$120 million overhaul of the interchange began in October of 1998.

