

# Office of the Governor

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Governor's Weekly Radio Address NJSAVER Checks in the Mail**

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 the NJSAVER program, the largest property tax relief program in the state's history. Checks to homeowners began arriving in mailboxes earlier this week. The one billion dollar program will be phased-in over a five- year period and checks will increase each year, averaging \$600 by the year 2003.

Attached is a 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.

### **Radio Message for September 10 Property Tax Rebates**

Hello, this is Governor Christie Whitman.

New Jersey citizens have asked for relief from the burden of property taxes. I promised state government's help in providing relief. I'm proud to say we are keeping that promise.

This month, homeowners across the state will find in their mail a property-tax rebate check from the State Treasury. Because the rebate is based on a community's school tax, the exact amount of the rebate check will vary from town to town, but on average, it will be about \$120.

That's the good news. The even better news is that this is just the beginning of what we call the New Jersey SAVER program. Next year you will receive a check for roughly double the amount you get in 1999. What's more, the rebate will increase each September until it reaches a statewide average of \$600 in the year 2003.

In that year, and every year thereafter, the State of New Jersey will return 1 billion dollars to homeowners as a permanent commitment to property tax relief in every community.

I'm sure you will agree that every dollar that state government can put back in your pocket is a dollar well invested. But I have been calling for another kind of support for property tax payers during my tenure as Governor - namely, long-term reform that reduces your tax bill on the front end.

- I have urged towns and school districts to share resources.
- I have dispatched teams of local government experts to help communities cut costs without skimping on services.
- I urged passage of the constitutional amendment that now requires state government to provide funding for any new mandates we impose on local governments.
- And my administration has pursued many of the ideas put forth by the Property Tax Commission I formed last year. In fact, one of those ideas has become a brand new, \$35 million incentive program to encourage local governments to consolidate or regionalize their services where it makes sense and benefits taxpayers.

Are we done helping taxpayers yet? No. As long as taxes remain a burden for New Jersey families, I will keep working to combine reform and relief to ease that burden. Should anyone doubt our resolve, I say look at our record.

During my administration, we have enacted 34 tax cuts while investing record amounts in New Jersey public schools and making an unprecedented commitment to land preservation.

We have saved taxpayers nearly \$9 billion while achieving the largest budget surplus in our history and cutting the welfare rolls in half.

The property tax rebate check you will receive this month is just one more example of how we have made smart fiscal choices so that New Jersey's hard-working taxpayers can be more secure today and more prosperous tomorrow.

One final word: if you have not yet applied for New Jersey SAVER, there is still time. We have extended the filing deadline until September 15 so that as many taxpayers as possible can get a rebate check. You can call the toll-free hotline at 877-658-2972, or file through the Division of Taxation web page at [www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation). Once again, the phone number is 877-658-2972 and the web site is [www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation).

Thank you, and have a great week.

