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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Whitman to be Honored for Work on Behalf of New Jersey's Biotechnology Industry

Governor Christie Whitman will be honored this evening by being the first inductee into the "New Jersey Technology Hall of Fame," a newly created award begun by the American Electronics Association (AEA) and the Biotechnology Council of New Jersey.

"No matter where you look," said Gov. Whitman, "we're making New Jersey the 'technology-friendly state.' And the effect speaks for itself: more jobs, greater opportunity, and a brighter future for the people of our state."

She will receive the honor at a ceremony this evening at the Sheraton at Woodbridge Place in Iselin, which will air live on the Internet at www.aeanet.org the website of the AEA. The award will be bestowed annually to a government official who has been a champion of the high-tech industry in New Jersey, as well as two business leaders.

Gov. Whitman has been instrumental in supporting business initiatives to stimulate the growth of the state's start-up and smaller high-tech companies. For instance, the Technology Business Tax Certificate Program is an unprecedented package of tax benefits for small and mid-size tech companies.

In addition, the Seed Capital Program and the Technology Fund Program provide loans so high-tech firms can bridge the financial gap between developing products and getting them to the marketplace. The Technology Centre of New Jersey in North Brunswick also offers growing companies an opportunity for customized labs and other facilities at an affordable cost.

Yet New Jersey's success in technology starts with education, according to Gov. Whitman, where it ranks among the state's highest priorities for schools. During last year alone, the state's 21 countywide Educational Technology Training Centers trained more than 40,000 educators.

Also, the New Jersey Department of Education released its statewide survey of technology use in public schools, which showed that the state is ready to meet its target of one computer for every five students by 2002. Before this date, however, the state's

Distance Learning Network Aid will have already awarded more than \$275 million to help districts link with each other.

According to the AEA, New Jersey is ranked seventh on its list of cyberstates, with 180,000 electronics and information technology workers. An additional 165,000 New Jerseyans work in the pharmaceutical, research and development, and engineering sectors. One in ten of New Jersey's workers are high-tech employees.

The NJ Council of the AEA, which is located in Warren, is the nation's largest trade group representing more than 3,000 U.S.-based technology companies. The Biotechnology Council of New Jersey represents biotechnology companies currently in New Jersey, and those considering the state as a business location. This year, the Biotechnology Industry Organization recognized Gualberto "Gil" Medina, Chief Executive Officer and Secretary of the New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission, as "Outstanding State Government Executive of the Year" for his contributions to the state's rapidly growing biotechnology industry.

"Technology, for all its complexity, is about people connecting with other people. People seeking a better life, with better jobs, greater opportunity, and a brighter future. And what Edison proved in his lab so many years ago is still true today: New Jersey and Technology are Perfect Together," concluded Gov. Whitman.

