

# Office of the Governor

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **GOVERNOR DISCUSSES HISTORIC VOYAGE OF USS NEW JERSEY THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL**

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 historic journey of the battleship USS New Jersey as it makes its way home. The USS New Jersey is the last battleship that will pass through the canal before control of the passage is returned to Panama.

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 October 15 USS New Jersey in the Panama Canal**

Hello, this is Governor Christie Whitman.

On Monday, October 18, New Jersey will make history. More precisely, the Battleship New Jersey will make history.

As you may know, our state has the honor and privilege of becoming the retirement home for the USS New Jersey, which the Navy has officially decommissioned after a half-century of remarkable service.

The Big J, as it is called, was used in battles during World War II and in other wars since then. With sixteen battle stars, it is the most decorated battleship in our nation's history.

After the Navy retired the Big J in 1991, our representatives on Capitol Hill worked hard to convince their colleagues in Congress that the best place to send the USS New Jersey was the State of New Jersey. Finally, last year, they agreed.

Now, as we await a decision by the Navy's Ship Donation Program on exactly where in New Jersey it will ultimately reside, our state is paying \$2 million to tug the Big J from Washington State to the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

On its way, the battleship will pass through the Panama Canal. But this will be no ordinary passage. The Big J will be the last battleship to pass through the canal while the United States has control over the canal. On December 31st of this year, the country of Panama will take over.

This is an exciting journey for the USS New Jersey, and I have the honor of leading a delegation from our state to witness the historic passage on October 18.

It will be even better for us in the coming years when the ship becomes a museum that people can visit to learn more about the Navy and the role that battleships have played in serving America and defending our freedom.

If you want to learn more about the event, I invite you to visit the website that will track every day of the battleship's journey: [www.battleship-NewJersey.org/](http://www.battleship-NewJersey.org/). The website is updated each day, so be sure to come aboard.

I look forward to the day when the USS New Jersey becomes a permanent floating museum. It will be one more reason to be proud that we live in the great state of New Jersey. Thank you, and have a great week.

