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Gov. Whitman To Participate in Live Online Chat

New Jerseyans and others throughout the country will have an opportunity next week to talk directly to Gov. Christie Whitman when she becomes the first governor to participate in an America Online (AOL) live chat.

Gov. Whitman will respond to comments and questions for one hour beginning at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8.

"This is a great example of how technology can be used to bring government directly to citizens," said Gov. Whitman. "I encourage New Jerseyans who have an issue they would like me to address to participate in the chat."

AOL members can access the chat by typing keyword "Digital City" when they log on to AOL, then clicking "Chat."

People without an AOL account can send an e-mail to the Governor on April 8, between 8 and 9 p.m., using the address: **Govnj2@aol.com**. The e-mail messages will be to the chat area.

The online chat continues the Governor's efforts to use technology to increase citizen involvement in the business of government. This year, Gov. Whitman's State of the State, Inaugural, and Budget addresses were carried live on the internet. The text of the speeches is also available and people can e-mail comments and questions about the speeches directly to the Governor's office.

The Governor's web page, **www.state.nj.us/governor**, has recently been redesigned to provide more information and make it easier to use. The state's web site, which has been online since 1996, receives more than 270,000 "hits" each day.

Information about connecting to the AOL chat can be found on the Governor's web page. A complete transcript of the text of the AOL chat will be available on this page on Thurs., April 9.

Note to Reporters: A computer with AOL access will be available in Communications Director Pete McDonough's office on the first floor of the state house.