

## Office of the Governor

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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **Governor Whitman Unveils Renovated State House Dome**

Gov. Christie Whitman today unveiled one of the state's most treasured symbols, the State House dome, which has just completed a \$9.5 million restoration.

"The restoration was a matter of safety, security, and state pride," the Governor said. "The dome that has presided over our State House since 1889 serves once again as a shining reminder of our state's proud history."

The dome renovations were paid for with public and private funds. About \$1.25 million was raised by corporate sponsors, including a \$250,000 grant from Bristol-Myers Squibb.

The "Dimes for the Dome" program enlisted New Jersey schoolchildren who raised more than \$48,000 to pay for the gold leaf which layers the dome. Students sold stickers and bookcovers, hosted "Dome Shops," and held "dime-a-vote" poster contests. The Governor's husband, John Whitman, led the private fundraising efforts.

"The beautifully gilded dome will stand as a tribute to their efforts," the Governor said. "The State House dome is shining with pride again. That's important for Trenton. That's important for New Jersey. And, that's important for all the people who call this state home."

The nearly two-year project involved restoration of the dome's cast iron, copper roof, exterior gilding, stained glass, interior finishes, decorative plaster, and fire suppression and lighting systems. Originally estimated to cost \$12 million, the project was finished under budget at \$9.5 million. State funds paid for the structural work and repairs, while donations paid for the gold leaf and interior restoration of the rotunda.

Constructed in 1792, the New Jersey State House is the second oldest State House in the nation still in continuous use. It is home to the state legislature, the governor's office, and other executive branch offices.

The original dome was built in 1845 and destroyed by fire in 1885. The current dome, in the French Academic Classical style, was built in 1889 by Lewis Broome.