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NEWS RELEASE

GOVERNOR TOURS, SKIS MOUNTAIN CREEK RESORT; CITES SUCCESS OF NEW JERSEY TOURISM INDUSTRY

Gov. Christie Whitman demonstrated her commitment to promoting tourism in New Jersey today when she toured and skied at the Mountain Creek Resort in Vernon Valley and taped a television tourism commercial at the resort.

"New Jersey is a beautiful state, which has a myriad of attractions for tourists all year long," the Governor said. "It's an excellent place to participate in winter sports, with many areas perfect for skiing, ice skating or snowboarding."

She said tourism is the state's second largest industry sector, with New Jersey's travel industry generating 161 million trips and \$25.5 billion in expenditures in 1997. She said travelers spent \$7.5 billion on restaurant meals and \$6 billion on retail purchases in 1997.

According to the Governor, New Jersey's travel and tourism industry was directly responsible for 400,000 jobs with a payroll of \$6.7 billion and for \$2.2 billion in state and local taxes.

The Mountain Creek Resort features four mountain peaks, 47 trails, 4,000 feet of snowboarding trails, and two lodges. Formerly Vernon Valley/Great Gorge Ski Area and Action Park, it was purchased by Intrawest last Spring. Intrawest, headquartered in Vancouver, owns other resorts in Canada, Colorado, Vermont and West Virginia.

Under Intrawest's ownership, the resort has undergone \$20 million in capital improvements, including the addition of seven new ski lifts, North America's first detachable eight passenger open-air gondola, and a complete renovation of the South Lodge. In addition, more than \$13 million in improvements have been made to the snowmaking equipment, water park, alpine slide, and mini golf attractions.