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NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR VISITS BURLINGTON; TEACHES FOURTH GRADE CLASS ABOUT USS NEW JERSEY; COMMENDS LOCAL EFFORTS TO PRESERVE OPEN SPACE

Gov. Christie Whitman today shared information about her recent trip to the Panama Canal to observe the journey of the USS New Jersey to the state when she taught a fourth grade class and addressed an assembly at the Clara Barton Elementary School in Bordentown. The Governor also visited a 300-acre farm in Medford Township and applauded Burlington County and local officials for their efforts to preserve the farm.

Later in the day, the Governor planted an apple tree in honor of the late Senator William Haines at the site of an industrial center named for him in Burlington Township.

Governor Teaches Fourth Grade Class at Clara Barton Elementary School

Governor Whitman, who teaches a fourth grade class at a different school each month, told fourth grade students and a school assembly at the Clara Barton Elementary School that the USS New Jersey earned sixteen stars in combat and is the most decorated battleship in America's history.

"Decorated means it earned special awards for the service it performed in a war. Now the battleship is being retired. It won't be used in battle anymore. Instead, it will become a floating museum, and it will stay in New Jersey," the Governor said.

"On its way home, the ship passed through the Panama Canal just two days ago. The Panama Canal is a shortcut for boats that are traveling from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean or the other way around," she said.

"I had the honor of watching the USS New Jersey pass through the canal on Monday. It was the last battleship to travel through the canal while our country is in charge of the canal. At the end of this year, the country of Panama will take control of it," the Governor said.

"This is an exciting journey for the USS New Jersey, and it will be even better for us when the ship becomes a museum that people can visit to learn more about the Navy and the work battleships have done for America," she said.

Governor Visits Farm That Local Officials are Working to Preserve

The Governor also visited the Eni Family Farm (called the Cow Point Farm) on Stokes Road in Medford and met with Medford Township and Burlington County

officials who are working to preserve the 300-plus acre farm. The county is presently in the process of negotiating the exact terms of the transfer with the township and the owner of the farm, which is a buffer between a large commercial area and a residential area.

Gov. Whitman applauded the leaders of Medford and Burlington County for agreeing to work together to acquire development rights to the farms. She said she was glad that state funding will play a major part in the acquisition. New Jersey's Garden State Preservation Trust Act dedicates a stable source of funding to save one million acres of farmland and open space by 2009.

The Trust is responsible for approving projects submitted by Green Acres, the State Agricultural Development Committee and the New Jersey Historic Trust. It will also submit at least two appropriation bills to the Legislature each year.

"A year ago, voters in New Jersey proclaimed that land preservation is a legacy they want to leave for their children and grandchildren. We made a million-acre commitment, with fully half of that amount in farmland. Together, we declared that the Garden State must always remain so," she said.

"Here in Medford, where I know citizens are concerned about sprawl, preservation is a timely issue. That's why preserving Cow Point Farm, such a prominent piece of land, will mean so much. Not only will it be a symbol of Medford's commitment to preservation, but it will also ensure that these 300-plus acres will remain clean and green and open - a permanent part of the character of this community," the Governor said.

Governor Plants Tree in Honor of Late Senator William Haines at Haines Industrial Center

Gov. Whitman planted an apple tree in honor of the late Burlington County Senator William Haines, during dedication ceremonies for the Haines Industrial Center. The center was named in honor of Senator Haines. The apple tree was planted at the site of a warehouse that is under construction at the center.

"It is fitting that this new industrial complex, which will encourage business growth and create jobs here in Burlington County, carries the name of the man who did so much for this part of the state. I'm committed to seeing this kind of growth continue. That's why we are working with the Department of Transportation as well as the Legislature and local and county officials to encourage redevelopment in this area," the Governor said.

The center is a 700-acre industrial park that spans Burlington and Florence Townships. Designed and built by Whitesell Construction Company, the center includes five buildings that have been completed and the warehouse that is being constructed. The buildings are capable of accommodating varied production, warehouse, or distribution requirements of Fortune 500 corporations and smaller companies that need ultra-modern, rail-served facilities with quick access to major East Coast population centers and the interstate highway system.

The Center will be the site of a 600-car park-and-ride facility when the Southern New Jersey Light Rail System is completed in 2002.

