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## Taking Action In The Capital City

Wednesday, September 7, 2016

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### Taking Action In The Capital City

The Christie Administration has made revitalizing New Jersey's urban communities a priority since the first days of this administration by working collaboratively with mayors and other city leaders to overcome challenges and bring real change to New Jersey's inner cities. By forming partnerships, the Christie administration and leaders of our great cities have proven that action and results can outstrip despair and broken promises as progress continues to be made through economic development, crime reduction, and greater educational opportunities.

#### Economic Development Authority (EDA)

**Business Growth & Redevelopment.** Since 2010, the EDA has approved over **\$97.7 million** in financing assistance, business incentives and tax credits to support projects in the City of Trenton. This assistance is expected to leverage over an estimated **\$183 million** in total investment and is expected to serve as a catalyst for the creation of **100** new permanent jobs and **1,193** construction jobs.

**Village Charter School.** The Village Charter School, Inc. opened for business in Trenton in the fall of 1999. The School operates out of a 47,000-square-foot facility that it had leased from Mercer Street Friends. In 2013, a \$6 million tax-exempt bond issued by the EDA helped the School purchase the facility on 10 acres from Mercer Street Funds.

**Roebbling Lofts.** Roebbling Lofts is a mixed-use development being advanced by HHG Development Associates, which will transform the old Roebbling Steel building into rental lofts and apartments. Located on Clark Street, the Roebbling Lofts will be constructed in a vacant warehouse, previously used for manufacturing wire rope. Vacant for nearly 20 years, the structure represents the first of four John A. Roebbling's Sons buildings planned for rehabilitation by HHG. The project will include multi-family lofts, two-bedroom lofts, and one-bedroom units, all featuring high ceilings and large industrial windows. Future plans for the complex include an additional building housing loft-style units and restaurant/retail space to be built from the ground up. The \$42 million project was approved for up to \$16.1 million over ten years through the residential Economic Redevelopment and Growth (ERG) program.

**Church of Our Lady of the Angels.** Church of Our Lady of the Angels is a Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of Trenton. The church has acted as a community center since 2005. A \$1.75 million tax-exempt bond issued by the EDA helped the church expand and renovate its 10,000-square-foot building, allowing it to increase its program offerings for the community of Trenton.

**UCEDC.** In July 2015, the EDA's Board took action allowing for the continuation of a strategic partnership with UCEDC, a statewide not-for-profit economic development corporation. The partnership helps to extend the state's reach to underserved businesses and communities and expands the array of training and technical assistance services available to New Jersey entrepreneurs and small businesses. UCEDC offers a wide variety of free and low-cost training workshops, including a series of courses that help develop financial and business literacy for business owners and a comprehensive program that walks entrepreneurs through all aspects of starting a business, culminating in the development of a business plan. UCEDC has held 13 networking events in Trenton since 2010, as well as 19 financial/business training workshops.

**Regional Business Assistance Corporation (RBAC).** The EDA makes capital available to financial intermediary organizations that can effectively reach small businesses in local markets, including micro-lenders and Community Development Financial Organizations (CDFIs). These organizations have the ability to offer term loans and lines of credit to micro-enterprises and small companies not qualified for traditional bank financing. Since 2010, the EDA has provided a total of \$5.5 million to five CDFIs, including a \$500,000 loan in 2015 to RBAC, a Trenton area not-for-profit organization that provides loans and also partners with other community development organizations to conduct workshops and training sessions that help clients achieve their business goals. Nearly 50% of RBAC's loans have gone to support minority-owned businesses.

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**Glass Artistry Architectural Glass & Metal.** EDA closed on a \$280,000 direct term loan under the Small Business Fund to support Glass Artistry Architectural Glass & Metal. The loan helped to finance the purchase of the new location in Trenton.

**TerraCycle.** TerraCycle makes affordable, eco-friendly products from a wide range of different non-recyclable waste materials. With over 50 products available at major retailers, TerraCycle is one of the fastest growing eco-friendly manufacturers in the world. Headquartered in Trenton, the company finalized a \$1 million direct investment under the Edison Innovation Fund to advance new technology that will help to identify new uses and compounds for waste materials.

**Trent Center Campus.** EDA approved up to \$11 million through the residential ERG program to support the rehabilitation of the Trent Center Campus – a 14 story apartment complex for senior citizens with 474 total units. The estimated \$36 million rehabilitation project includes upgrading the HVAC system, elevator and emergency generator replacement, improving the security system, replacing interior and exterior doors, updating kitchens and appliances, updating bathrooms, painting, parking lot repairs, curbing and landscaping.

**North 25 Housing.** A residential ERG of up to \$8.8 million was approved to advance the \$29 million North 25 Housing apartment project on Willow Street. The project includes the rehabilitation of an existing 233-unit Section 8 multifamily development. The scope of renovations includes the rehabilitation of all family units, exterior repairs, major system upgrades, and site improvements.

#### **Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (NJOHSP)**

**Interfaith Outreach.** NJOHSP has been a member of the Capital City Coalition for a Safe Community in Trenton since the Coalition was founded approximately two years ago. The group is made up of various law enforcement agencies, including New Jersey State Police, Trenton Police Department, City officials, and community leaders. The founder of the Capital City Coalition is a member of NJOHSP's Interfaith Advisory Council—a network designed to facilitate the sharing and dissemination of information with faith based organizations and pertinent members of their communities around the State—and has been an active participant for about two years.

#### **Office of the Attorney General**

**Trenton Violence Reduction Strategy (TVRS).** TVRS is an innovative crime reduction and prevention program that has been funded by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) since September 2013. The initial \$1.1 million grant awarded to the Trenton Police Department and The College of New Jersey was provided to work with adult ex-offenders and individuals at-risk of engaging in criminal conduct by providing them the opportunity to receive case management and wrap-around services (counseling, treatment, employment placement, etc.) to help them take accountability and responsibility for their lives.

- The program has been an unqualified success. It currently includes 77 participants has received an enormous amount of participation from the community.
- All of the active participants are either employed or attending school, most have received life skills and other training from a Trenton-based non-profit service provider and various family members of program participants have been assisted in accessing social service programs, family counseling, and other supportive services.
- This program is not only critical to the reduction in crime we have seen in Trenton, but has yielded significant benefits for the participants involved in the program and the good faith of the community. It has been recognized as a best practice by the state's Study Commission on Violence and leadership from TVRS hosted representatives from the City of Baltimore at the November 2015 call-in event.
- The Office of the Attorney General, TCNJ, and the Trenton Police Department have agreed in principle to a three-year extension of TVRS and an additional \$1.4 million in funding that will allow for nearly 100 new participants to be served between now and June 2019.

**Targeted Interdiction Deployment Effort (TIDE).** During the summer of 2013, OAG, in partnership with federal, state, and local partners, implemented TIDE, a crime suppression strategy focused on reducing violent crime, increasing the number of arrests and convictions for non-fatal shootings, and prioritizing the arrest of dangerous individuals with outstanding criminal warrants against them. As part of TIDE, the New Jersey State Police has deployed Troopers who engage in long-term criminal investigation, undercover narcotics investigations, and routine vehicle patrols through the city. The State Police, along with assets from the Trenton Police Department, Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, Mercer County Sheriff's Office, and other municipalities in Mercer County (Lawrence, Robbinsville) formed a Shooting Response Team whose sole responsibility is investigating non-fatal shootings in Trenton. In addition, a warrant squad made up of state, county, and local law enforcement personnel is tasked with apprehending criminal defendants with outstanding bench warrants issued against them.

**Targeted Anti-Gun Initiative (TAG).** TAG is a directive issued by the Attorney General to the County Prosecutor mandating that anyone charged with illegal possession of a firearm and who had an aggravating circumstance such as a prior felony or gang affiliation be required to accept a plea deal of no less than three and a half years or face the potential for seven to 10 years at trial. Since issuing the TAG directive in August 2013, the County Prosecutor's Office has opened 245 cases against 308 defendants, 161 of whom have been indicted and 73 have pled guilty. No guilty plea has been for less than three and a half years as stipulated by the directive and many agreements have been for five years or more.

**TIDE and TAG.** Taken together, the TIDE/TAG initiative, along with the crime prevention and reentry efforts of TVRS have resulted in dramatic reductions in violence in Trenton. In February 2015, the total number of violent crimes that occurred in the city dropped to a 14-year low. In 2015, shooting murders were down 56% compared

to 2014, 60% compared to 2013, and 40% compared to 2012. The total number of murders in 2015 was down 50% compared to 2014, 54% compared to 2013 and 29% compared to 2012. In addition, the clearance rate for non-fatal shootings tripled, and in 2015 alone, more than 200 guns were taken off the street.

**Trenton Prevention Policy Board (TPPB).** The TPPB brings together governmental and non-governmental leaders from throughout Trenton to focus on providing policy recommendations and implementing strategies that address core concerns for at-risk youth in the city, including education, employment, health care, domestic violence, and juvenile crime. Co-led by TCNJ and the Mercer County Department of Human Services with funding from OAG, the TPPB has achieved a number of important accomplishments, including:

- Credited with aiding the Trenton Health Team in applying for funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to establish a Trauma Informed Care program that trains health care providers, emergency responders, educators, and others in working with at-risk youth and considering how adverse childhood experiences (domestic violence, incarcerated parents, witnessing/being victims of violent crime) inform their behavior.
- Applied for and received a Community Development Block Grant that utilizes art-based programming to reach up to 25 at-risk youth identified by Trenton Central High School to improve their confidence and self-esteem.
- Worked with County Division of Mental Health to form community response trauma teams who are mobilized to respond to crisis events and work with families to mitigate the harm from these experiences.

#### **Department of Education**

Since the beginning of his administration, Governor Christie has demonstrated a commitment to investing in innovative, successful charter schools that outperform and exceed expectations at every level. Since 2010, the Christie Administration has opened two charter schools in Trenton:

- International Academy of Trenton Charter School approved 2013 opened 2014; currently grades K-4, serving 447 students.
- Trenton STEM-to-Civics Charter School approved 2013 opened 2014; currently grades 9-10, serving 200 students.

#### **Department of Agriculture**

**Equipment Assistance Grant Award to Trenton Public Schools.** On May 14, 2015 Trenton Public Schools were awarded \$25,162.00 from New Jersey through the National School Lunch Equipment Assistance Grant. The funds were used to purchase a combination walk-in refrigerator/freezer and an ice machine for the Dunn Middle School. Since the purchase and installation of this equipment, Dunn Middle School has increased the quantity of food being stored, resulting in improved efficiency in producing food, and can now ensure food is being stored at proper and safe temperatures. In compliance with the USDA grant requirements, priority was given to school sites in which 50% or more of the students are eligible for free or reduced priced meals, and are high-need schools (i.e., school in underserved areas, school with limited access to other resources, and age of food service equipment).

#### **School Development Authority**

**New High School Project.** Under the Christie Administration the School Development Authority (SDA) has created and attended various public school facilities meetings with Trenton school district staff and board of education members in order to address concerns surrounding the new High School project. On March 2, 2016, SDA Board of Directors authorized a \$117 million contract to build a new Trenton Central High School to Terminal Construction Corporation. The school is anticipated to be open for students by September 2019.

#### **Department of State**

**Partnership with Trenton Public Schools.** Since 2013, the State Museum has been working to enhance classroom instruction for Trenton Public Schools students in grades K-12. Working with the previous superintendent, the Museum proposed a partnership with 3 schools to work with teachers and principals to craft programming available both at the Museum and in the classroom, free of charge, utilizing the collections and experts at the Museum.

#### **Department of Labor and Workforce Development**

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development has invested approximately \$8 million in Trenton since FY 2010 to support a wide range of workforce training and development programs, particularly in traditionally underserved communities.

#### **Department of Human Services**

**The Trenton Health Team.** The Trenton Health Team (THT) is a community health improvement collaborative serving the city of Trenton. The collaborative is an innovative partnership among St. Francis Medical Center, Capital Health, Henry J. Austin Health Center, and the Department of Health and Human Services of the City of Trenton. The Trenton Health Team was formed in response to the healthcare crisis in Trenton, with the intent to reform healthcare by establishing a holistic model. THT is working to make this holistic model a reality through five strategic initiatives:

- Expansion of access to primary care
- Community-wide clinical care coordination

- Engagement of residents
- Operation of the Trenton Health information exchange
- Serving as a Medicaid Accountable Care Organization

Using a data-driven approach, THT is working intensely with many community groups, assessing health care needs and helping residents learn how to care for – and advocate for – themselves. Data from these assessments helps to pinpoint gaps and barriers to service, and identifies ways to improve delivery of preventive and remedial services. The success of this approach in Trenton will have implications throughout the state and the nation as urban areas work to improve health care and rein in costs.

The Trenton Health Team is one of three Medicaid Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) certified by the Department of Human Services. Governor Christie's budget for the fiscal year 2017 includes \$3 million (\$1 million each) to help these ACOs build their administrative infrastructure and develop community partnerships.

#### **Department of Community Affairs**

**Division of Local Government Services.** Staff continues to guide Trenton to financial sustainability in accordance with the terms of the Transitional Aid (TA) program. In FY15, the City received \$24,860,000 in TA. This amount was held constant in FY16 but \$4.8 million was shifted from Transitional Aid to Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Aid .

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