

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
609-777-2600

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor's Weekly Radio Message: Standing by New Jersey's Veterans

Gov. Christie Whitman provides a weekly radio message to radio stations throughout the state. Each week, the message focuses on a different concern or event of interest to New Jerseyans.

This week, in celebration of Veteran's Day, the Governor discusses honoring New Jersey's Veterans in several meaningful ways. The Governor issued a proclamation officially marking Veteran's Day in New Jersey. The proclamation has been sent to every school superintendent to be used as a teaching tool and sign of patriotism in school classrooms across the state. Governor Whitman has also kept her promise to build the new Menlo Park Veterans home, which will house residents at the end of this year. Providing property tax refunds, preference for veterans in civil service hiring, and working toward completing the Korean War Memorial are all ways New Jersey is standing by its veterans.

Attached is the text of the message.

The radio message can be accessed by calling the Governor's actuality line at 609-292-3249. It will be available today, beginning at noon, and will run through the weekend

Governor's Weekly Radio Message November 13, 1998 Serving New Jersey's Veterans

This week, we celebrated Veterans' Day - a holiday to honor all the men and women who sacrificed so much in service to our nation. Keeping with tradition, I issued a proclamation officially marking Veterans' Day in New Jersey. What's more, we sent the proclamation to every New Jersey school superintendent, in the hope that our schools will use it as a teaching tool and a sign of our patriotism.

Of course, all the proclamations in the world could never repay the debt we owe our veterans. We must honor their contributions to our freedom in deeds as well as in words.

That means, for example, keeping the promise I made to build the new Menlo Park Veterans Home. I'm happy to say that we will be moving residents in right after Christmas.

We have also done right by our veterans by putting money in the state budget to cover claims made by disabled veterans who qualify for exemptions from local property taxes. Many disabled vets didn't know about a long-standing state law that excludes them from paying taxes, so now we're ensuring that these heroes finally get the money that is rightly theirs.

Equally important, we are honoring our pledge of preference for veterans in civil service hiring. In fact, this summer we extended that policy to cover combat veterans of Somalia and Bosnia. As I've said before, the government that veterans helped preserve owes them something in return.

During my years as governor, more than 380 veterans have benefited from veterans' preference in state government. And as long as I am governor, we will maintain and defend the veterans' preference. Just as our veterans never retreated from their commitment to America, New Jersey must never retreat from its commitment to them.

Honoring our veterans also means making sure that the brave New Jerseyans who served in the so-called "forgotten war" are never truly forgotten in our state. We are well on our way toward our goal of completing the Korean War Veterans Memorial by the summer of 2000. In fact, the commission has selected a design - and it's the work of the nationally acclaimed design team of Tom Carrillo and Jay Warren. Jay is the sculptor who did such a great job on the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial statue.

These are concrete ways in which we are keeping the faith with those who kept freedom alive for all of us. And we are going to continue standing by our veterans, in word and in deed.

We are going to keep working to ensure the dollars are there to provide quality medical treatment to New Jersey's veterans. We're going to keep advocating for the needs of our aging veterans, as we did by fighting to keep open the federal VA nursing home in East Orange. And we're going to keep singing the praises of our men and women in the armed forces, who have created such a stirring legacy of leadership, patriotism, and courage.

We owe them that - and so much more.

From all of us in New Jersey to all of you who have served the cause of freedom, we salute you and we thank you.