



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Whitman Cuts Ribbon on New Jersey Performing Arts Center

Governor Christie Whitman was joined by employees of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) today at a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Center on the eve of its historic opening night in Newark.

"Tomorrow night will be a great night for this city, the region and the whole state," said Whitman. "All of you will play an historic role in an event that some said would never happen, the gala opening of a world-class performing arts center right here in downtown Newark."

The Governor will be attending tomorrow's opening night performance at NJPAC, which will be taped for broadcast on PBS's "Great Performances."

NJPAC is the culmination of a public-private initiative started 10 years ago to establish a performing arts center in New Jersey. The \$180 million facility was funded through contributions by corporations, foundations and private donations, as well as the state, the City of Newark and the federal government.

In addition to representing New Jersey's commitment to the performing arts, Whitman said, "this project has been creating, and will create new jobs and new opportunities for New Jersey residents. In fact, 1,000 jobs were created in construction, and there are more than 75 permanent jobs at the Center. These are part of the 208,000 jobs that have been added to our state's economy since the day I took office. They are part of the reason our unemployment rate stands at its lowest point in seven years."

The 250,000 square-foot building includes the 2,750-seat Prudential Hall; the 514-seat Victoria Theater; a 3,000 square-foot rehearsal space that is convertible for banquets and special events; Theater Square for outdoor performances; a community room, restaurant space, a gift shop and administrative offices. Work on the 12-acre site began in 1993.

Other investments will complement the completion of the NJPAC, including the "Loop," a new minibus service sponsored jointly by NJ Transit and the Prudential Insurance Company. The Loop will make it more convenient to take public transportation to the NJPAC from Newark Penn Station and Broad Street Station. The five, 20-seat minibuses will also serve area businesses, restaurants and other points of interest along its 2.8-mile route, including the Newark Museum, Bell Atlantic, Prudential, PSE&G, the Gateway Complex and Ferry Street in the Ironbound section of the city.

Access to NJPAC has also been made easier for the 4.4 million potential performance-goers and city visitors within 25 miles of the site with the completion of a direct connection from I-280 to Route 21 (McCarter Highway) in Newark, enhanced signage and other I-280 ramp improvements in the area.

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