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NEWS RELEASE

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Gov. Whitman Addresses UTCA Convention; Touts Job Creation, Continued Infrastructure Investment

Heralding tax reductions, job creation and continued investment in New Jersey's infrastructure, Governor Christie Whitman today addressed the annual convention of the New Jersey Utility and Transportation Contractors Association (UTCA).

"New Jersey is stronger than it was four years ago, with far more jobs, lower taxes and a future that holds great promise and opportunity for all New Jerseyans," Whitman told the 1,200-member association of construction and trades companies.

Quoting a recent Rutgers report that called New Jersey "an economic locomotive," Whitman heralded a drop in the unemployment rate, to 5.2 percent, which she announced earlier in the day. "It's been more than 7 years since the unemployment rate has been any lower than this, and it's certainly a far cry from a peak of 8.5 percent during the last administration."

Whitman told the UTCA that the combined capital construction programs of the New Jersey Department of Transportation and New Jersey's other transportation authorities will have generated over \$800 million in contract awards between June and December. The contracts will generate over 30,000 jobs over the life of the construction projects.

"We've shown how a state can reduce taxes and keep the economy growing," Whitman said. She noted that in the past four years, the state income tax has been reduced for most New Jerseyans by 30 percent, and a total of 14 tax cuts has put \$4 billion "back into the paychecks of working men and women in New Jersey."

Calling it "critical to the economy, to the environment and to the quality of life in New Jersey," Whitman vowed continued investment in the state's infrastructure, including the transportation system and waste water treatment and hazardous waste remediation facilities.

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