



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Gov. Christie Whitman Drives First 1998 New Ford Ranger Off Assembly Line To Celebrate Ford Plant's 50th Anniversary

Gov. Christie Whitman today congratulated the Ford assembly plant in Edison for its contribution to the economic boom the state is enjoying and noted that nearly 195,000 new jobs have been created in the past three-and-a-half years. The Governor spoke at the 50th anniversary celebration of the Ford plant's opening and drove the first 1998 Ford Ranger truck to be produced at the plant off the assembly line.

"I think New Jersey's economy is like a 1998 Ford Ranger -- it looks great, it's got lots of power and it's going to be setting the pace for some time," the Governor said. "It takes a lot of hard work to re-tool and get ready to build the new Ranger. In Trenton we also had a lot of work to do to re-tool New Jersey's economy and get it back in the fast lane. But we did it."

"We did it by cutting taxes 14 times," she continued. "We did it by holding down the growth in government spending -- to the lowest levels in decades. We did it by working with business and labor to keep jobs already here -- and this is a prime example."

Whitman said the New Jersey Department of Labor recently awarded a \$4.25 million customized training grant that is helping to upgrade the skills of the entire workforce at the Edison plant.

"The Ford assembly plant is a clear example of what I mean when I talk about the importance of partnership," said Gov. Whitman. "It's the state working with business and labor to keep jobs right here where they belong -- in New Jersey."

Whitman also announced that a new Business Relocation Report (BRR) of the Department of Commerce and Economic Development showed that nearly 100 companies moved or announced plans to relocate in New Jersey in 1996, creating 7,000 new jobs.

She said the report reinforced the findings of a Dun & Bradstreet report that was released in January. According to Dun & Bradstreet, New Jersey ranked eighth among all states in attracting jobs from other states. New Jersey was the only state in the region to receive a top ten ranking.

According to the BRR Report, 38 of the companies relocating to New Jersey were expected to create nearly 2,400 manufacturing jobs. Eighteen wholesale/distribution companies announced relocations, followed by the high technology industry, with 14 firms, and the services industry, with 12 firms.

"I'm pleased to report that more of the new jobs in companies relocating in our state have been in the manufacturing sector than in any other sector of the economy," Whitman said. "That's especially good news for our future prosperity."

The 1996 Relocation report is an investment intentions survey, summarizing the announcement and or intention of companies to relocate to New Jersey, move a new division, subsidiary or operation to New Jersey, or an out-of-state business making their initial

investment to New Jersey in 1996. These announcements are considered a leading indicator of future business investment in the state.

"My office is getting more and more telephone calls from companies looking to learn about the advantages of moving into New Jersey," said Commerce Commissioner Gualberto "Gil" Medina. "With the new tax cuts for both individuals and businesses, and our new business incentive package, New Jersey has much to offer any business."

In total, there were 107 announcements by companies planning a move or initial expansion to New Jersey. The 95 firms included in the report have already committed to relocated part or all of their business into the state. Of the remaining 12 companies, four are in the planning stages, and 8 have not made a final site location decision.

"Since day one of my Administration, promoting prosperity for all New Jerseyans has been Job One," Whitman said. "Just last week, two Rutgers researchers described New Jersey as the economic dynamo of the mid-Atlantic and Northeast states. They said -- and I quote -- New Jersey has been an economic locomotive."

The Rutgers Regional Report which described New Jersey as the economic leader in the region was written by Rutgers researchers James W. Hughes and Joseph J. Seneca and released last Tuesday. It was called, "Long Term Regional Momentum: Employment Income and Dimensions."

