

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor's Weekly Radio Message Stresses Preserving New Jersey's Heritage

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

This week the Governor discusses the importance of preserving New Jersey's history. She urges support of Public Question No. 1, which will appear on the November ballot. If approved by voters, Public Question No. 1 will not only preserve thousands of acres of open space and farmland, but it also will allow for funds to be allocated for historic preservation through programs run by the New Jersey Historic Trust. Places like battlefields and historic homes and parks will be preserved so future generations can share pride in New Jersey's heritage. "We owe it to our future to preserve our past," Gov. Whitman said.

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 October 23, 1998 Historic Preservation

By now, you have probably heard or read about the proposal that will appear on the November ballot, Public Question No. 1, which asks voters to approve a plan that will help New Jersey preserve 1 million acres of open space and farmland within the next decade.

You may have heard about the 500,000 acres of farmland we want to preserve for all time, or the 200,000 acres we want to save as public recreation space. You may know about the 200,000 acres of greenways we hope to preserve along streams and trails, and the 100,000 acres that will be set aside for watershed protection.

There are truly a million reasons to vote for this proposal, which can literally shape the landscape of our future. But I want to offer one more important reason: preserving our history. Some of the money that Public Question No. 1 seeks to allocate each year will go toward historic preservation through grant programs run by the New Jersey Historic Trust.

I have often said that Virginia has nothing on New Jersey when it comes to Revolutionary War sites. But New Jersey history is so much more.

Consider all the Garden State has to offer. There's Fort Lee Historic Park, site of a reconstructed Revolutionary War fort, and Fort Mott State park, featuring gun embattlements from the Spanish-American War. There's Paulsdale, former home of suffragette Alice Paul, the Wallace House in Somerville, where George Washington stayed during the winter of 1778 to 1779, and Liberty State Park - the doorway to America for 12 million immigrants.

That's just the start. Fans of our national pastime trace its roots to the site of the first pro baseball game, in Hoboken. Science buffs treasure Thomas Edison's laboratories in Menlo Park, where he developed the phonograph and the incandescent light bulb. Beautiful, Victorian Cape May was once a summer resort for several U.S. Presidents. And each year in Flemington's courthouse, you can witness a reenactment of the Trial of the Century.

As New Jerseyans, we take pride in our history. But we must also take care of our history so that future generations can share our pride and visit these landmarks of our national journey. Despite the remarkable ability of computer technology to take

us on virtual tours of historic sites, there's nothing like the real thing, both to educate us and to inspire us.

We owe it to our future to preserve our past. But taking care of our past doesn't just honor our heritage; it can also enhance our economy. We've already seen how historic preservation pays dividends for New Jersey as it creates construction jobs and generates tourism dollars.

The Rutgers Center for Urban Policy Research estimates that heritage tourism has an annual economic value of more than \$400 million. Heritage travelers in New Jersey spend more and stay longer at their travel destination, and that helps our economy as well.

Beyond the dollars it generates and the lessons it teaches, historic preservation also contributes to a higher quality of life. Just as we want to preserve what's best of our open spaces and farms and parklands, we also want to protect the charm and beauty and style of our heritage. Restoring and preserving these pieces of our history makes our neighborhoods and communities more attractive places in which to live and work and raise a family.

There are a million and one reasons to support the preservation initiative on the November ballot. I hope that you agree, and that you will encourage your friends and family to support it, too. Let's make history - and make future generations glad we did.