

Acting Governor Kim Guadagno Leads Tour of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and Discussion with Small Business

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Trenton, NJ – Seizing on the momentum gained by the official launch of the New Jersey Military Installation Growth and Development Task Force earlier this month, Acting Governor Kim Guadagno today joined fellow Task Force members to tour Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Hanover. Following the tour and meeting with base military leaders, Task Force members took part in a discussion with a nearby small business owner who, like other area businesspeople, is directly impacted by the presence of New Jersey's largest military installation.

"Today is not only about reaffirming our commitment to the New Jersey's brave military men and women by ensuring the enduring strength and sustainability of the state's military installations, but to reinforce the incredible contributions they make to our economy and overall quality of life," said Acting Governor Guadagno. "And it goes without saying how the presence of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and the state's other military installations instills us all with a great sense of pride in knowing that New Jersey is doing so much to promote the safety and security of America."

Created through Executive Orders Nos. 134 and 154, the Military Installation Growth and Development Task Force is charged with forging an effective blueprint for securing the long-term growth and viability of New Jersey's military bases and U.S. Coast Guard installations. These essential responsibilities include, but are not limited to: organizing a broad-based coalition supportive of the state's military bases, assisting in the economic fortification of New Jersey's military installations, and ensuring alignment of base missions with larger Department of Defense priorities.

"The bases and installations supporting our Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard of the Active and Reserve Components provide employment for tens of thousands of people who in turn, contribute billions of dollars to New Jersey's economy," said Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, The Adjutant General for the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. "The Task Force will be a catalyst for integrated action to preserve and expand the capabilities of our state's military installations."

Analysis by Rutgers University has detailed the incredible direct and indirect impact New Jersey's military bases have supporting the state's overall economic vibrancy. Taken together, New Jersey's military installations generate employment for more than 73,000 people and support \$9.6 billion in total economic activity. Specifically, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst is the state's second largest employer, supporting more than 40,000 military and civilian employees and contributing more than \$7 billion annually to the New Jersey's economy alone. In addition, it is estimated that the Joint Base supports more than 65,000 off-base jobs.

TC Stone House Eatery in Wrightstown, a popular restaurant specializing in fine American cuisine and mainstay of the region's local economy, hosted the Task Force following their briefing. Like so many other nearby small businesses, the eatery is a tremendous beneficiary of business derived from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. Joining Acting Governor Guadagno and members of the Task Force at the Stone House Eatery were Assemblyman Robert D. Clifton and Wrightstown Mayor Tom Harper.

"I am pleased with my location, being just outside Joint Base MDL in Wrightstown," said owner Ron LeBlanc. "I am so thankful for the support and patronage I receive from the base, and hoping to grow my business with their continued support and the future development of Wrightstown."

The coming months will witness the Task Force build on today's tour of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst by visiting

New Jersey's other military institutions, their surrounding small business communities, and other businesses impacted by New Jersey's military installations. These visits will spread the word on its ongoing work and emphasize the important role each one plays to the state's overall economy and future workforce.

Chaired by Acting Governor Guadagno, the Task Force is comprised of experienced members from across the military, government and the private sector, including: Brig. Gen. Cunniff, former Congressman Jim Saxton, Michele Brown, Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Development Authority, Tracye McDaniel, President and CEO of Choose New Jersey, and Paul Boudreau, President of the Morris County Chamber of Commerce.

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Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
Kevin Roberts
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000