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Governor Corzine, Camden Educators and Officials Break Ground for New Morgan Village Middle School

Construction project will save and create 275 jobs

CAMDEN- Furthering his commitment to build infrastructure and improve educational facilities across the state, Governor Jon S. Corzine today joined New Jersey Schools Development Authority (SDA) and Camden School District officials to break ground for the new Morgan Village Middle School. The 520-student school, which will serve children in grades 6-8, is the fifth new project to get under way in Camden under New Jersey's school construction program.

"We have an obligation to transform every school into a positive learning environment for our children," Governor Corzine said. "Camden's students deserve to be educated in safe, modern schools and I am proud that the new Morgan Village Middle School project will deliver those surroundings to them while promoting the city's revitalization and creating jobs during tough economic times."

The 92,390-square-foot, two-story middle school will be built on a parcel adjacent to the existing building and marks another step in the redevelopment of Camden and stimulating its economy. The school is scheduled to open in September 2010.

"The Morgan Village Middle School project represents New Jersey's commitment to provide a quality education for all students, no matter where they live,"

said Senator Dana Redd, (D-Camden and Gloucester). "The students of South Camden deserve to learn in a modern, state-of-the-art educational setting which inspires them to achieve their maximum potential. I'd like to thank Governor Corzine and Schools Development

Authority Chief Kolluri for their dedication to improving education in Camden and giving students a chance to succeed."

The SDA has completed two projects in Camden: the Early Childhood Development Center and the Octavious V. Catto Community School. Two other projects, H.B. Wilson and Thomas H. Dudley elementary schools, are scheduled to open this fall.

Camden has three additional projects included in the SDA's Capital Plan - Camden High School, Lanning Square Elementary School and Pyne Poynt Family School. All told, the SDA has spent or allocated \$460 million to date for projects in Camden.

"This school is an anchor in one of the city's most stable areas and will continue to ensure the vitality of the Morgan Village neighborhood," said Camden Mayor Gwendolyn Faison.

An effect of the economic downturn has been the savings to taxpayers resulting from greater competition for construction jobs. The contract award of \$20,997,000 was \$6.1 million, or nearly one-fourth, below the SDA's construction cost estimate. Another school awarded earlier this year, Egg Harbor City Middle School, came in \$2.8 million below estimate.

"This school construction program is important to improving the quality of our children's lives and will have a profound impact on the economy," SDA CEO Kris Kolluri said. "In fact, this project will save and create approximately 275 jobs."

The school construction program received new funding in July 2008 when Governor Corzine signed legislation authorizing \$3.9 billion in new funding - \$2.9 billion for SDA Districts and \$1 billion for Regular Operating Districts.

The SDA will commit \$1.3 billion toward school construction this year, which is estimated to save and create 11,000 jobs. The SDA plans to advance 27 projects into preliminary or full construction in 2009. The agency will soon begin to post monthly job creation reports for these projects on their website. Today's ceremony marks the SDA's first groundbreaking of 2009.

Sara T. Davis, president of the Camden Board of Education, remarked, "The Morgan Village Middle School will become a beacon for 21st century learning in the South Camden community. It brings innovative instruction and new technology to a local community that has done without for far too long. Morgan Village Middle School will bring new promise and fulfilled dreams for the Board and our children of that area."

Morgan Village's construction will be accomplished in two phases. Phase one involves construction of the replacement school. Phase two, which will require procurement of a separate contract, will entail the demolition of the old school to provide for play areas and a parking lot. The second phase will begin after students occupy the new building.

Chanree Construction Co. is the general contractor, Fletcher-Thompson Architecture Engineering is the design firm and URS Corporation is the construction management firm.

The school will include general-use classrooms, special-education classrooms, science labs, school-to-career classrooms with labs, small-group instruction

rooms, a media center, a cafeteria with a kitchen, an auditorium and a gymnasium.

Overall the SDA has completed 592 projects: 46 new schools; 41 extensive additions, renovations and/or rehabilitations; three demonstration projects and nearly 400 other projects.

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