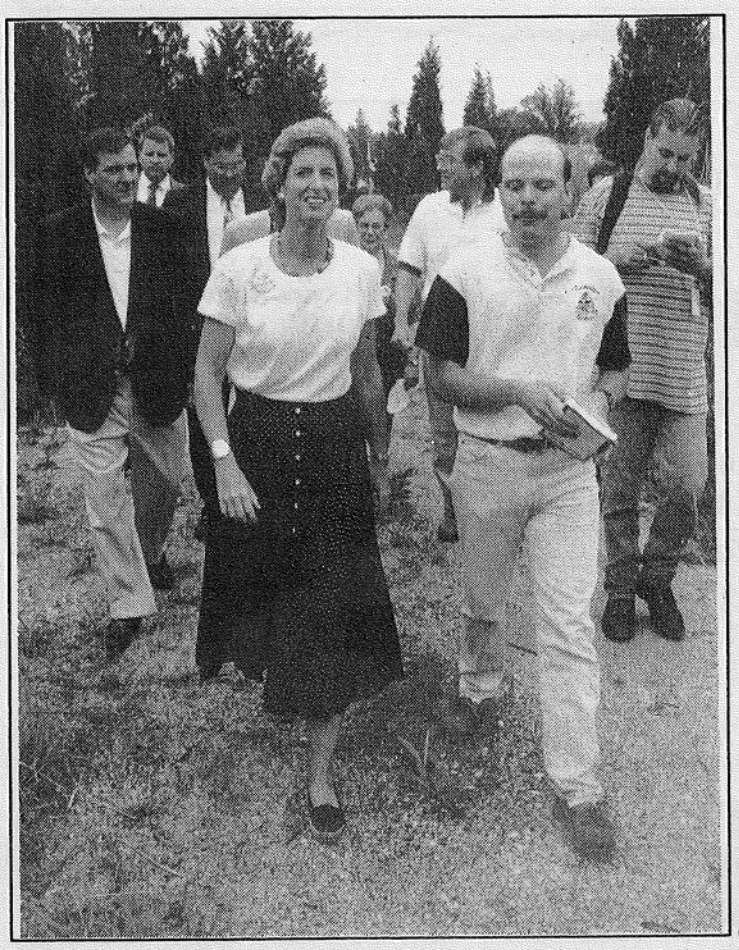




Above: Governor Whitman visits the Baymen's Museum and discusses the Seaport project with Freeholder Director John P. Kelly.

Left: Governor Whitman walks through the site of the future Tuckerton Seaport.

Governor Pledges Support

By GINA G. SCALA

Donning an "I love Tuckerton" pin in an effort to preserve maritime traditions here, New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman toured the Barnegat Bay Decoy and Baymen's Museum on June 24, as well as the future site of the Tuckerton Seaport.

Arriving at 8:15 a.m., the governor spent close to an hour touring the sites with museum officials and meeting with more than 100 people who gathered Saturday morning to welcome her to the area.

Economy, education, history, and tourism of the area are all wrapped up in one project.

"In my opinion, she was very excited," museum president Thomas Gormley said of Whitman's reaction to the projects. "She listened very well."

Gormley, who is also a borough councilman, said the Governor indicated she would do anything to help the Tuckerton Seaport project become a reality.

"It's not if anymore," Gormley said, "now, it's WHEN."

Ground breaking for the seaport could be as early as next spring, according to Gormley, who said that with the support of the Governor, officials are hoping to obtain additional funding through grants for the proposed project.

One of the areas of the project that drew Whitman's attention was environmental education. "She liked that," Gormley said, noting that the federal and state governments are purchasing thousands of acres of wetlands to protect it. "Visitors have no idea why. We want to show them."

"Economy, education, history, and tourism of the area are all wrapped up in one project," Gormley said. Seminars and lectures pertaining to the history of Barnegat Bay, environmental and coastal issues as well as marine science will be regularly scheduled at the seaport, proposed on 16 acres of land formerly known as Crowley's Basin in Tuckerton.

Ground breaking for the seaport could be as early as next spring . . .

George Washington had declared the borough the new nation's third port of entry in 1791, placing it only behind New York and Philadelphia.

Today, the area is still considered a federal navigational waterway.

During the 18th century, Tuckerton Creek provided a source of commerce to Tuckerton, the Atlantic Coast and Little Egg Harbor Bay through coastal shipping, ship building, and trade.

"You can read about it," museum trustee Sam Wilkinson commented about the excitement, "but you can never feel it until you come here."