

NEW JERSEY **BUSINESS** MAGAZINE

Former Gov. Christine Todd Whitman Discusses Innovation and Leadership with RD Council



On Jan 28, 2026

Former New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman recently addressed the Board of Directors of the Research & Development Council of New Jersey, sharing reflections on the role of research, development, and innovation in effective state leadership and long-term economic competitiveness.

Drawing on her experience leading New Jersey through periods of economic and technological change, Governor Whitman spoke with Board members about the importance of sustained investment in research and development, the connection between STEM education and economic growth, and the challenges governors face in balancing immediate priorities with long-term innovation strategies. Her remarks emphasized the value of collaboration among government, industry, and academic institutions in positioning New Jersey as a national leader in innovation.

“New Jersey’s strength has always come from its people, its universities, and its research-driven industries,” said Whitman. “Prioritizing innovation and the STEM talent pipeline is a necessity to our long-term economic competitiveness. When government, academia, and industry work together with a shared vision, we create the conditions for ideas to move from the lab to the marketplace and for the next generation of leaders to thrive.”

“As New Jersey begins a new gubernatorial administration, Governor Whitman’s perspective was both timely and grounding,” said Kim Case, executive director of the Research & Development Council of New Jersey. “Her experience in the governor’s office provides a rare view into how governors navigate complex issues like innovation, economic development, and workforce preparedness—and how thoughtful leadership can move the state forward.”

The discussion took place during the Council’s January Board of Directors meeting, hosted at MTF Biologics’ Edison facility. Council members from across sectors convened to collaborate on strategies to strengthen and support New Jersey’s innovation ecosystem.

During the meeting, Board members toured MTF Biologics’ Edison facility to see how New Jersey-based research and expertise translate directly into life-saving and life-improving medical treatments. As a global nonprofit with deep roots in the state, MTF Biologics works closely with physicians, scientists, and organ and tissue donation partners to support patients across a wide range of clinical needs. At the site, donated human tissue is carefully prepared for use in surgeries and medical treatments that restore mobility, heal injuries, and save lives.

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