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And finally, let's build on our existing Centers of Excellence as we enhance our high tech efforts across the State.

In Utica-Rome, let's build on our efforts in cyber-security.

In Binghamton, let's create a High Technology Commercialization Center that will transfer ideas from our Centers to the marketplace.

In Albany, at our Center of Excellence in Nanoelectronics, we will work with the University at Albany to create a new College of Nanotechnology -- the first of its kind in the country -- to provide our industry with the high quality workforce it needs to grow in New York State.

A number of years ago we advanced a State policy to relocate state government employees to the center of our cities. We have brought workers to downtown Troy, Schenectady, and Albany, to help reinvigorate our cities and in the process we are freeing up the Harriman Campus. This year, we will create a Harriman Campus Development Corporation to bring new high tech companies to Albany and to provide space for Center spin-offs.

I am pleased to announce this corporation will be chaired by someone who has served the Capital Region with great skill and expertise. John Egan, thank you for your continued service.

Today I am announcing we are expanding the core mission of the Center of Excellence in Environmental Systems in Syracuse to include research and development in renewable and clean energy sources.

By reducing our dependence on foreign energy sources we can not only stop sending our

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energy dollars to unstable parts of the world, but we can become a world leader in clean energy technologies, from wind and solar power to geothermal and fuel cells.

The worldwide market for clean energy technologies is expected to grow to nearly \$100 billion dollars a year over the next ten years. I want New York companies to be the major beneficiaries of this emerging market.

The Syracuse Center, in partnership with Cornell University, SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry, NYSERDA and the private sector, will position New York at the forefront of this new market.

And, a strong New York biofuel industry will create new markets and opportunities for our farmers, help clean the air and water, and keep our energy dollars here at home.

That's why I'm directing NYSERDA to create a similar partnership with the Syracuse Center of Excellence to make New York's bio-fuels industry one of the strongest in the nation.

In addition to becoming the center of clean energy research, the Syracuse Center will also be a model for future urban development. I'm pleased to announce that, working with University and local government officials, we will locate this new facility downtown, on a brownfield, at the site of the old Smith-Corona building.

We will reclaim the blight and replace it with a new, green building that will be the genesis for new ideas and will bolster our efforts to bring new life to downtown Syracuse.

That is exactly the type of program Lieutenant Governor Mary Donohue's Quality Communities Task Force envisioned - revitalizing urban areas through smart growth, turning empty lots into new buildings and new job opportunities. The Lieutenant Governor's task force provided us with

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numerous specific recommendations, 16 of which we've already adopted. Actions like this will make the Quality Communities initiative a national model as well.

Our environment, like our freedom, is inherited from our ancestors and borrowed from our children. Both are given to us in the trust that they will be preserved and improved for the next generation.

Together, we've worked hard to live up to that trust.

Theodore Roosevelt once observed that "The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value."

Over the last nine years we have made remarkable progress in realizing an environmental vision that would make T.R. proud.

We greatly enhanced the Environmental Protection Fund, put record numbers of clean fuel buses on our streets, enacted the toughest acid rain regulations in the nation, and last year we passed historic Superfund Brownfield legislation.

Two years ago, I announced an ambitious ten year goal to protect one million acres of land.

We're more than on track to meet our goal.

I'm proud to announce that, with the purchase of development rights on 6,000 acres of active farmland, we have now protected more than 500,000 acres.

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Every child, regardless of where they live deserves clean air, clean water, and pristine open space. Our programs are guaranteeing that.

Today, I am announcing a new urban forestry initiative that partners DEC and NYSERDA with local communities to plant thousands of trees throughout our urban neighborhoods and parks to save energy, create habitat, raise property values, and improve the quality of life for urban residents across the State.

In 1996, using the resources of the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act, we set a goal to convert all of the State's public school furnaces from coal to clean burning sources of energy. That goal has been met.

Now let's set another goal: that every new public school bus that operates in New York will run on clean fuel. This will require legislation. Let's work together to pass it this year.

Since 1995, we've created 18 new State parks from Woodlawn Beach to Brooklyn Bridge to Camp Hero in Montauk.

In the next two years, five new State parks will be opening, including prime waterfront parcels on Long Island Sound and the Great Lakes, and in rural and Central New York.

And today, I commit over the next five years that we will open or expand 20 more State parks, including additional sites on Long Island.

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Working together we have made the Hudson River cleaner than it's been in generations. Water quality has improved and old industrial sites are being reclaimed.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway is thriving.

Before I took office only eight communities had joined the Greenway. Today, the Greenway has reached its 201st community. It is a model of state government offering guidance, expertise, and assistance to local communities so they can shape their own future.

But a momentous event in the history of the Hudson lies before us. In just five years we will celebrate the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's first voyage up the river that would later become America's first great corridor of trade and transport.

We must act so that this 400th anniversary celebration will be held along a river that is healthier in every way than it was when it was handed to our generation.

Let's make it our objective to ensure that by the year 2009, the Hudson River will be swimmable from its source high in the Adirondack Mountains all the way to New York City.

But the health of a river cannot be measured by water quality alone. We must also ensure that the communities along the river have riverfront access and are healthy and vibrant.

We will ensure that every community along the Hudson has at least one new or upgraded access point to the River.

By 2009 we can transform the waterfront of the Hudson River into a series of world class destinations for business, culture, tourism, and research. By the 400th anniversary of Hudson's voyage, we will ensure that Hudson himself would recognize the river's original beauty while the

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vitality of the riverside communities will surpass anything he could have imagined.

And building on our successful efforts to revitalize Niagara Falls and its park land, and by working with the western New York delegation, let us create a Niagara River Greenway that stretches from Buffalo to Fort Niagara on Lake Ontario.

Because you and I have consistently united behind the goal of enhancing our natural resources, our children and their children will have the freedom to grow in a cleaner and healthier environment...

...And because we have consistently come together to improve New York's health care system, they can walk confidently into a brighter and healthier future.

Today in New York, hundreds of thousands of children get routine check-ups, immunizations and hospital coverage when they are ill or injured through Child Health Plus.

Women are ensured appropriate diagnosis, treatment and insurance coverage when facing breast cancer.

And, tens of thousands of lower-income workers receive the health care coverage they need to build their careers and support their families.

This month, a new initiative targeted specifically to Hispanic New Yorkers stressing the importance of cancer screening and prevention will begin. And, long before Washington acted,

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we helped more than 325,000 seniors afford the medicines they need to live longer, healthier and productive lives.

This year, let's do more.

Let's enhance long term care for our seniors. I will propose comprehensive reforms of our long-term care system.

These efforts will provide the services that help the elderly stay in their own homes - where they've lived their lives, raised their children and built their memories. And, for those that need a more intensive level of care, we will promote a variety of options - from assisted living to state-of-the-art nursing homes.

While Medicaid has played an important role in our achievements, we are now faced with a Medicaid program that is quickly outstripping our ability to afford it.

Clearly, we need to improve the Medicaid system. We must start by providing our growing population of aging citizens with the quality healthcare they need while preserving the system for their children and grandchildren.

And we must address Medicaid costs borne by local governments. Senator Bruno has already identified this as an important issue. Senator, I commend your initiative. Let's work together to reduce state and local Medicaid expenses this year and begin to reverse the costs that have squeezed the finances of so many county governments.

Knowledge fosters freedom. And education illuminates the path to that freedom.

Together we have made great strides. We have created innovative programs and initiatives like Project SAVE to enhance safety in our schools, Advantage After-School programs and charter schools. And we created the STAR program to help homeowners, particularly seniors, with the

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burden of school property taxes. We have invested in school facilities and enacted historic school governance reform with Mayor Bloomberg, to provide him with accountability for New York City's schools.

We have invested record resources, increasing state support for education. This year, schools receive \$4.7 billion more than they did when I took office. New York City alone receives \$2.1 billion more. No other state in the nation spends more per student than New York.

In 2001, though, I stood before you and called our school finance system a dinosaur. I said we should scrap it altogether and create a new school aid formula that is fair, simple and sustainable.

This year we are presented with an historic opportunity to answer that call and, indeed, we must do so by July 30th. To assist in this effort, we have assembled a group of our most capable, talented and creative minds from across the State.

This Commission on Education Reform will develop sweeping changes so that all our children have the opportunity to receive the first-class education they need to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

We are fortunate to be able to call upon Frank Zarb to chair this Commission, a man who is uniquely qualified to lead us in this effort, having served five Presidents and as Chair of the Nassau Interim Finance and the Long Island Power Authorities.

And as we work together, rising to meet this historic challenge, there are a series of guiding principles that are critical for us all:

First, we must finally throw out our archaic system of education finance. This year, let's replace it with a new formula that is fair, sustainable and understandable.

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Second, our new education finance system must appropriately focus resources, as they become available, on New York City and our other high need school districts.

Third, our efforts must not pit one family against another in a divisive Robin Hood approach. We can not be taking resources from one school district to meet the needs of another.

Fourth, recognizing the fiscal challenges the State faces this year, working together with each of you, and with educators, parents and community leaders, we need to build consensus on a multi-year commitment of resources that will ensure that our reform effort is sustainable and successful in the years to come.

And finally, New York's new funding system must be linked to reforms in the education system as a whole.

Reform is the key to our effort to provide every child in New York with the best possible education. We cannot simply provide additional resources and maintain business as usual. Rather, we must enact broad based reforms that ensure more of the money we spend on education makes it to the classroom, and that someone is accountable for how it's spent and how it helps our children.

We have been presented with an historic chance to improve our schools and we must put aside our partisan or parochial differences and champion change that will provide the education every New York child deserves.

Every New Yorker can take pride in the fact that we already invest more per student in our public schools than any other state in the country. We already have the most expensive education system in the entire nation - now let's work together to make it the best.

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There can be no better proof of the power of educational reform than our own SUNY and CUNY systems. When we set about changing CUNY, the naysayers said our reforms would not work. They were wrong.

Today, CUNY enrolls more students than it has in more than 25 years and its minority enrollment is at its highest level in 30 years. SUNY enrollment is at an all time high and its minority enrollment is higher than ever before. And SAT scores have gone up across the board at both SUNY and CUNY.

This year, to continue the renaissance of our higher education systems, I will advance detailed, multi-billion dollar capital plans for SUNY and CUNY, to build state of the art academic facilities and make important repairs to the physical infrastructure.

As part of that effort, I will advance resources so important historic facilities like the HH Richardson Complex in Buffalo and Governors Island in New York City become part of the fabric of our universities, bringing them back to their former splendor. And in Binghamton, I will advance a new academic facility to contribute to the rebirth of the city center, in cooperation with private business.

And for the first time, I will advance a new capital initiative that includes our independent colleges and universities - a critical part of our State's higher education system.

This initiative will enhance our high technology efforts, meet academic infrastructure needs, and advance partnerships in economic development.

We can invest these resources with confidence knowing we have made reforms and those reforms have worked.

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But reform can't stop with our education system.

We must, this year, enact sweeping and comprehensive reforms to bolster New Yorkers' confidence in all areas of government. Our progress must be forged within the framework of our democracy - upon a strong, open and free system of governance.

This year, I will ask you to work with me to enact the most comprehensive package of reforms to be proposed in Albany in generations - political and governmental reforms, economic reforms, and criminal justice reforms.

Let's adopt reforms throughout all three branches of government and fundamentally change the way business is done in Albany.

Let's give the people of New York a voice in the legislative process with Initiative and Referendum.

Let's give them greater confidence in the political system with campaign finance reform.

And let's give them a wide-ranging budget reform package, that will enable New York to meet its budget deadline.

But we can't stop there.

Let's give local governments relief from the enormous costs of endless, unnecessary and often frivolous litigation.

Let's pass pension reform and binding arbitration reform and Wicks law reform to further ease the financial burden on local governments.

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Let's bolster our energy systems by reforming our plant siting laws.

And let's have proportionality in our laws. The Rockefeller Drug Laws allow non-violent drug offenders to be more severely punished than rapists. We need to change that. Let's reform these antiquated laws this year.

Let's make this the most productive legislative session ever.

When I addressed you one year ago, I promised that 2003 would be the year of renewal for Lower Manhattan. And I promised that we would never forget the brave heroes we lost on that sacred ground.

Later, I outlined an aggressive timeline to ensure that promise would be kept. Then, we followed it.

We selected a plan for the future World Trade Center that was created by Daniel Libeskind, but shaped by the heartfelt comments of millions of people around the globe. The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation launched what became the largest design competition in history to select a memorial, with 5,201 individuals from 61 nations taking part.

We restored a sense of normalcy to the site and its surroundings with new improvements; and we restored the normal commute for thousands of people by resuming PATH service.

To cap off a year of tremendous progress, Mayor Bloomberg and I unveiled the design for the Freedom Tower, the tallest building in the world. When completed, the Freedom Tower will reclaim our skyline with a proud symbol of our nation's resilience and a new beacon of

opportunity opposite its inspiration in the harbor.

Now, as we begin a new year, we must look anew at the challenges that still lie ahead in Lower Manhattan, and build on our blueprint to meet them.

I'm pleased to announce that on Thursday, January 22nd, we will unveil Santiago Calatrava's design for the new World Trade Center Transportation Hub. Akin to Midtown's Grand Central Station, it will serve as a new architectural icon for the ages, born of hope and forged of steel and glass. It will create a new grand civic space for Lower Manhattan, carrying natural light down to the platforms and into a place once made dark by evil.

This new terminal will unite the PATH with pedestrian passageways connecting west to the World Financial Center and east to the MTA's Fulton Street Transit Center.

Later this month, the LMDC, Port Authority and the MTA will announce four options to provide direct access from Lower Manhattan to JFK and Long Island. It is an ambitious project, but one we must pursue if New York City is to join the ranks of Chicago, London and other central business districts that provide direct access to its airports. Over the next four months, the options will be vigorously analyzed. In April, we will announce the selected option, along with a concrete plan to fund it and to build it.

These new initiatives bring us closer to fulfilling a pledge we made while the fires were still burning at ground zero: we will never forget the heroes who died on September 11th.

We must honor their memory in all that we do in Lower Manhattan - not confined to a tract of land or work of art, but throughout the entire 16 acre World Trade Center site as one living memorial. The Freedom Tower will soar to the heavens and recall the loss of our two icons in the sky. The museum will tell the countless individual stories of lives cut short and the unprecedented heroism we witnessed. The performing arts center, the transportation hub, the commercial buildings, will restore culture and commerce - and life - to the site in defiance of terrorism.

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And at the centerpiece of this 16 acre memorial will be a special place to remember and reflect on all that we lost, and pay tribute to those we will never forget. Yesterday the jury selected the design, "Reflecting Absence" and soon it will be unveiled. I want to commend the jury for their tremendous dedication to this effort.

In the end we know that there is no right way to remember, only that it is right that we do remember. And in the end, I know that the same spirit, that same love of freedom that united New Yorkers on September 11th and everyday since will prevail.

The advancement of freedom is not the sole obligation of the men and women in uniform we have honored here today - who courageously accept sacrifice as part of their oath to uphold the founding principles of our great state and nation.

We are, as Lincoln said, a government "of the people," which means that each American in some way, contributes to our freedom. Some volunteer at blood drives; others coach little league. We do it as representatives of the people, here assembled.

Lincoln, speaking of a great American, said: "He loved his country partly because it was his own country, but mostly because it was a free country; and he burned with a zeal for its advancement, prosperity, and glory."

I have laid out a bold agenda for New York's future. Let us honor the trust the public has placed in us by burning with that same zeal for the advancement, prosperity, and glory of this state we love, and are sworn to serve.

Together, let's do our part, and pass on to the next generation, not what we had, but what we truly struggled to achieve.

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Thank you. God Bless You. And God Bless New York.

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