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Contact: Jonathan Earle, Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics, (785) 864-4900.

Former EPA administrator, N.J. governor to speak at Dole Institute Jan. 30

LAWRENCE -- Former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrator and two-term New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman will speak and discuss her new book, "It's My Party Too: The Battle for the Heart of the GOP and the Future of America," at noon Sunday, Jan. 30, at the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics at the University of Kansas.

A book signing will follow Whitman's remarks. The event is free and open to the public, and no tickets are required.

Whitman's book takes aim at extreme elements of the conservative movement she believes hijacked the GOP in recent years, forsaking the broader base that propelled the "Reagan revolution" in the 1980s.

"A clear and present danger Republicans face today is that the party will now move so far to the right that it ends up alienating centrist voters and marginalizing itself," Whitman writes in the book. "More than ever before in modern times, the Republican Party at the national level is allowing itself to be dictated to by a coalition of these small but fervid groups that have claimed the mantle of conservatism, and the leadership of these groups shows no inclination to seek bipartisan consensus on anything."

Whitman served in George W. Bush's cabinet as EPA administrator from January 2001 to May 2003. She left saying she was tired of the ideological battles in Washington and was eager to return home to New Jersey. Prior to her time in the Bush administration she was the first woman elected governor of New Jersey, serving two terms from 1993 to 2000. A lifelong and loyal Republican and a leader of the party's moderate wing, she is a passionate believer in the power of the "productive middle" in politics. She has attended every Republican national convention since 1956.

Jonathan Earle, Dole Institute associate director for programming, said he was delighted to kick off the new year at the institute with a talk and book signing featuring an important national figure.

"I first encountered Gov. Whitman when she was still a county-level politician in New Jersey in the early 1990s," he said. "Even then, you could tell she had a bright future in both the Republican Party and in politics nationally."

The Dole Institute's official program year begins Feb. 3 with featured speaker Lou Cannon, who kicks off the institute's signature program, the Presidential Lecture Series. The series is free and open to the public, but tickets will be required for all events. Tickets to see Lou Cannon on Feb. 3 are available at Student Union Activities and Lied

Center box offices, (785) 864-2787. Tickets for three other events in the Dole Institute's Hansen Hall are available through the Dole Institute, (785) 864-4900.

The Dole Institute is located at 2350 Petefish Drive, adjacent to the Lied Center, on KU's West Campus.

Previously a November event, the Presidential Lecture Series will take place in February, nationally known as Presidents' Month. The series involves the nation's leading presidential scholars, historians and journalists, as well as others including former presidents, cabinet officers, White House staff members and campaign practitioners who will discuss the nation's highest office.

The Dole Institute, established at KU in 1997 to honor the former Kansas senator and presidential nominee, is designed to foster new thinking on major policy issues and encourage student participation and citizen involvement in public service.

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