

## Economic Engines Honoree

Category: People



### Janet Napolitano

Governor of Arizona

[www.governor.state.az.us](http://www.governor.state.az.us)



Photos: Mark Butler



Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano has made education a cornerstone of her economic development program.

#### Years in Office

6

In her six years in office, Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano has guided the state during a time of prosperity and is now steering it through a sea of economic troubles.

In her time as governor, Napolitano has put in place several initiatives aimed at strengthening the state's intellectual capital, which is vital to attracting new business. She has increased funding and student financial aid at Arizona's community colleges and universities, giving all residents access to higher education. The governor has also challenged school districts to re-deploy a nickel of every administrative dollar back into the classroom, resulting in millions of

dollars in new classroom spending. In addition, Napolitano worked closely with the University of Arizona and Arizona State University to break ground on Phoenix's first medical school, in order to address the critical shortage of doctors in the state. Finally, she led the direction to establish the \$35 million 21st Century Fund, which is charged with improving math and science education while promoting business innovation.

Napolitano has revitalized the Healthcare Group, which provides affordable health insurance to thousands of small business owners and employees that would otherwise be without any coverage. In addition, women and minority-owned businesses have benefitted under Napolitano's administration. During her tenure, the number of women and minority-owned businesses that contract with the state has increased.

Napolitano has also brought national and international attention to the state, particularly in the sports arena. She helped secure the 2008 Super Bowl at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, a Nextel NASCAR race and the college bowl championship game.

Now dealing with an increasingly fragile economy, Napolitano is faced with making some tough decisions to keep the state on an even keel. When announcing her budget plans for 2009, the governor made it clear that she intends to protect classroom spending for grades K-12.

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Napolitano reads to a group of schoolchildren.