

## Key economic troubleshooter to step down

### Rose draws praise for role in A.C. development

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State economic-development czar Gary Rose, sometimes called the second-most powerful man in the Corzine administration, is leaving his post at the end of the month.

A longtime associate of Gov. Jon Corzine from their days at Goldman Sachs, Rose helped the governor consolidate state business-development functions into the new Office of Economic Growth and became a key troubleshooter for the governor.

Corzine praised Rose yesterday for his work in promoting development in Atlantic City and attracting foreign pharmaceutical companies to the state. He said the economic downturn and employment losses nationwide made for a difficult task in bringing jobs to New Jersey.

"It's a pretty tough lift when you have a recession," the governor said during a meeting with The Star-Ledger's editorial board. "I give him a lot better marks than what his critics would."

During his tenure, Rose seemed to make an equal number of friends and enemies among the state's business and political leadership.

Senate President Richard Codey (D-Essex), who had an uneasy relationship with Rose, said, "His personality was just ill-fitted for government, that's all. He's a very bright man, a capable man. But there's a huge difference — as I'm sure the governor would tell you — between working at Goldman Sachs and working in government."

"There is absolutely no question that Gary Rose is a tough, demanding guy," said Joan Verplanck, president of the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce. "I suspect that most guys who got to where he got to are tough, demanding guys."

Rose, 63, was among a cadre of former Goldman Sachs executives Corzine brought in when he took over in 2006. An Elizabeth native, the multimillionaire investment banker took only \$1 in salary and accepted his position after Corzine appealed to his affection for his home state. Rose declined to comment yesterday.

The governor's press secretary, Sean Darcy, said: "His original commitment to Gov. Corzine was for two years, and Gary was here for two-

and-a-half. Gary's dedication to bringing new jobs to New Jersey and his work towards expanding the state's economic growth are unparalleled."

Statehouse insiders said Rose's role in Corzine's office was far more than just the top economic-development official. They described Rose as being the governor's go-to guy when it came to putting out the fires and crises of the moment.

"They have just been buried with that kind of stuff," Verplanck said. "And I'm not sure they ever had an adequate amount of staff for the economic development function. What do they have — seven people?"

*Staff Writer Claire Heininger contributed to this report.*

