



*SHAUN GOLDEN/ SHERIFF*

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SHERIFF REINFORCES EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND SAFETY DURING NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH**

**Freehold:** Sheriff Shaun Golden wants to reinforce to residents how crucial it is to plan, prepare and stay informed during natural disasters and emergencies. This comes in recognition of National County Government Month and its theme: Ready and Resilient Counties: Prepare Respond Thrive.

“We need to be vigilant on how to prepare for natural disasters and emergencies, particularly as we approach the upcoming hurricane season, which starts June 1,” said Sheriff Golden. “After Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy impacted Monmouth County, it was recognized that many people did not have a family emergency plan. In an effort to change that the Monmouth County Sheriff’s Office, Office of Emergency Management, OEM, created STORM, Seniors Taking on Readiness Measures.”

STORM is aimed at assisting seniors, who are among the most vulnerable population, in the event of an emergency or disaster. The program equips those with emergency preparedness information, assists them with a family disaster plan and provides them with an emergency kit.

OEM, which was the lead agency in preparing for Superstorm Sandy when coordinating the response and recovery efforts during and after the storm, travels to senior centers throughout the county to present STORM.

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During the program, seniors are provided with a family disaster plan booklet, which asks for personal, family, work, medical, insurance, emergency & evacuation related information. Once the booklet is completed, they obtain a free emergency supply kit, which includes basic necessities for use during an emergency.

"Many residents are well informed and involved, but they fall short in creating a plan and building the kit," said Mike Oppegaard, OEM Coordinator. "STORM gives them that plan and equips them with the basic necessities in the event they need to go to a shelter. All those tools will lessen the impact on emergency management services during a disaster or emergency."

In addition to STORM, OEM has formed other programs aimed to help strengthen resiliency, and expedite recovery during emergencies and disasters. A recruiting campaign was launched with the United Way of Monmouth which seeks volunteers to assist in the staffing of evacuation shelters during emergencies, and, the Monmouth County CART (County Animal Response Team) was created. CART builds and supports a unifying partnership between governmental, not-for-profit organizations, animal industry, and volunteers in order to facilitate local animal disaster preparedness and response development. OEM has also built and strengthened public private partnerships with large businesses such as home improvement, grocery and department stores, which deliver effective and efficient resources and assets essential to overall preparedness, response and recovery.

"Our OEM team continues to be committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of residents, businesses and visitors to Monmouth County," said Sheriff Golden. "I'm proud to acknowledge their efforts during National County Government Month and throughout the year."

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