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NEWS RELEASE

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Severe Thunderstorm Causes Power Outages, Downed Trees and Damage to Structures Throughout Monmouth County

Monmouth County, NJ – Beginning at approximately 6 PM on July 22nd, a severe thunderstorm whipped through Monmouth County causing widespread power outages, downed trees and damage to homes and other structures. Road closures were caused by downed power lines, toppled trees, and traffic channelization was utilized in many communities to control intersections where traffic signals were rendered inoperable by the intense storm.

The Monmouth County Office of Emergency Management began an immediate assessment of the storm's impact and activated the Monmouth County Emergency Operations Center staffed with representatives of county departments and agencies and utility representatives. An assessment of the immediate needs of municipal jurisdictions was immediately undertaken and the coordination of rendering appropriate assistance began through the local emergency management coordinators, utilizing Monmouth County available resources where needed. In addition to the activation of the Monmouth County Emergency Operations Center for this storm, Wall and Howell Township also activated their Emergency Operations Centers.

There was a total of eighty road closures reported as a result of the storm including traffic signal outages and/or trees blocking roadways. The Monmouth County Department of Public Works installed emergency generators at critical traffic signals throughout the county and had those signals operational by 5 AM Tuesday morning. The Monmouth County Department of Public Works cleared the roads that did not have downed power lines involved within four hours from the abatement of the storm.

Monmouth County OEM contacted all 56 long term care centers within Monmouth County to ensure their sustainability throughout the event. County OEM also provided staff and resources to install a backup generator at Howell Township Police Department when their unit failed during the storm.

Jersey Central Power and Light reported approximately 135,000 power outages due to the storm which equates to approximately 45% of the county without power. Areas reporting the most significant power outages were Belmar, Lake Como, Spring Lake, Spring Lake Heights, Wall, Howell, Upper Freehold, Sea Girt, Tinton Falls and Freehold Township and Millstone. It was reported that approximately half of Upper Freehold Township was without power as was a third of Freehold Borough. Parts of many other communities also experienced power outages.

The Monmouth County Sheriff's Office Communications Center, between the start of the storm at approximately 6 PM Monday and 6 AM Tuesday morning, had a total of 2,670 emergency calls and 3,706 non-emergency calls for a total of 6,376 calls in that 12- hour period. In a similar 12 hour period on a regular day, there were a total of 706 calls – 193 emergency, 513 non-emergency.

“We applied the lessons we learned in Superstorm Sandy back in October 2012 and responded appropriately, efficiently and effectively, working in harmony with local officials and OEM staff to meet the challenges this storm presented,” said Monmouth County Sheriff Shaun Golden. “We shall continue to assist our communities as Monmouth County recovers from this unexpected event.”

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