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NEW JERSEY SEES QUALITY OF LIFE REBOUND

Young adults and middle income earners lead the rise

West Long Branch, N.J. – In its regular tracking of residents’ satisfaction with life in New Jersey, the **Monmouth University Poll** finds the Garden State Quality of Life Index has bounced back from the four-year low registered last fall. The index currently stands at +23, which up from +18 in September and more in line with readings taken a year ago.

Half of the overall index score comes from residents’ overall rating of the state as a place to live. Currently, more than 6-in-10 New Jerseyans say the state is either an excellent (15%) or good (48%) place to call home, while 25% rate it as only fair and 11% as poor. This 63% positive rating is a very slight uptick from the 61% positive rating recorded in September.

Local evaluations, which make up the other half of the index score, have also increased by a few points. Specifically, positive evaluations of one’s hometown as a place to live have increased to 72% from 69% in September. Perceptions of personal safety have also increased. Currently, 62% of Garden State residents say they feel very safe in their own neighborhood at night, which is up from 58% who said the same in September.

Positive evaluations of local public schools stand at 61%, which is basically the same as the 60% positive rating recorded in September. Evaluations of local environmental quality have remained steady at 72% positive.

“After taking a precipitous dip in the fall, the Garden State Quality of Life Index is back on par with where it stood for most of the past two years,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “The uptick is particularly noteworthy in the center of the state and the more rural counties because these regions drove the lower numbers we saw last September.”

The Garden State Quality of Life Index score increased most significantly among young adults age 18 to 34 – from +12 in September to +26 in the current poll – and among middle income residents earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000 – from +15 in September to +30 in the current poll. Regionally,

the index score bounced back in the two areas where it had dropped the most last fall. The index score has increased from +12 to +24 among Route 1 Corridor residents and from +4 to +19 in the Garden Core counties. The only region of the state that experienced a significant decrease in quality of life perceptions was the Delaware Valley, where residents registered a +11 index score, down from +18 in September and +25 in April of last year.

GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX											
	NJ TOTAL	GENDER		AGE			RACE		INCOME		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/ Hispanic	<\$50K	\$50- 100K	>\$100K
February 2015	+23	+21	+26	+26	+18	+28	+29	+10	+13	+30	+31
September 2014	+18	+19	+17	+12	+20	+20	+23	+5	+13	+15	+30
April 2014	+25	+24	+25	+31	+20	+25	+27	+16	+17	+24	+33
February 2014	+23	+28	+18	+23	+21	+26	+27	+11	+8	+23	+35
December 2013	+24	+25	+23	+24	+21	+27	+29	+10	+10	+24	+35
September 2013	+26	+26	+26	+27	+23	+30	+33	+10	+17	+25	+42
April 2013	+21	+19	+24	+19	+19	+27	+29	+3	+12	+19	+35
February 2013	+29	+28	+30	+30	+27	+31	+36	+12	+20	+30	+36
December 2012	+30	+31	+29	+30	+30	+30	+36	+14	+17	+33	+38
September 2012	+24	+28	+20	+16	+21	+32	+30	+5	+10	+23	+37
July 2012	+27	+26	+29	+21	+31	+30	+32	+16	+16	+31	+37
April 2012	+31	+33	+28	+25	+30	+37	+36	+19	+24	+28	+42
February 2012	+25	+20	+30	+25	+24	+26	+29	+13	+17	+23	+38
October 2011	+24	+24	+24	+23	+21	+29	+31	+7	+15	+25	+31
August 2011	+22	+25	+19	+27	+19	+21	+26	+9	+9	+22	+32
May 2011	+23	+24	+22	+23	+22	+23	+26	+14	+15	+22	+32
December 2010	+21	+20	+23	+23	+20	+23	+26	+13	+15	+21	+31

GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX										
	REGION							COMMUNITY TYPE		
	North east	Urban Core	Route 1 Corridor	Central Hills	Northern Shore	Delaware Valley	Garden Core	Urban	Stable Town	Growing Suburb
February 2015	+31	+13	+24	+38	+31	+11	+19	+11	+30	+27
September 2014	+23	+8	+12	+42	+27	+18	+4	+10	+22	+19
April 2014	+24	+10	+22	+43	+29	+25	+23	+4	+26	+33
February 2014	+27	+16	+20	+37	+30	+14	+16	+6	+28	+28
December 2013	+31	+15	+26	+40	+25	+14	+17	+5	+29	+30
September 2013	+27	+8	+21	+52	+33	+27	+19	+1	+34	+32
April 2013	+31	+4	+19	+38	+22	+21	+21	-3	+30	+27
February 2013	+31	+17	+35	+37	+36	+25	+23	+11	+33	+36
December 2012	+36	+18	+26	+47	+40	+21	+31	+9	+37	+37
September 2012	+29	+14	+17	+45	+33	+26	+13	-1	+27	+31
July 2012	+37	+12	+30	+37	+34	+22	+18	+8	+34	+34
April 2012	+38	+26	+27	+44	+34	+22	+28	+20	+35	+36
February 2012	+33	+17	+27	+35	+29	+19	+22	+11	+31	+29
October 2011	+31	+6	+22	+45	+35	+18	+23	-1	+31	+34
August 2011	+24	+16	+21	+38	+27	+26	+6	+4	+29	+25
May 2011	+28	+17	+16	+41	+29	+22	+20	+6	+29	+28
December 2010	+26	+15	+22	+38	+23	+14	+17	+12	+23	+27

The Garden State Quality of Life Index was created by the Monmouth University Polling Institute to serve as a resident-based indicator of the quality of life offered by the state of New Jersey. The index is based on five separate poll questions: overall opinion of the state as a place to live – which contributes half the index score – and ratings of one’s hometown, the performance of local schools, the quality of the local environment, and feelings of safety in one’s own neighborhood. The index can potentially range from -100 to +100.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone with 805 New Jersey adults from January 30 to February 2, 2015. The total sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, N.J.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some rows may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Overall, how would you rate New Jersey as a place to live – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
February 2015	63%	15%	48%	25%	11%	1%	(805)
September 2014	61%	13%	48%	25%	13%	1%	(802)
June 2014	62%	15%	47%	26%	11%	0%	(800)
April 2014	64%	15%	49%	26%	10%	0%	(803)
February 2014	63%	15%	48%	26%	11%	0%	(803)
December 2013	65%	20%	45%	26%	9%	0%	(802)
September 2013	65%	19%	46%	25%	10%	1%	(783)
April 2013	61%	15%	46%	27%	11%	0%	(806)
February 2013	68%	18%	50%	24%	7%	1%	(803)
December 2012	72%	20%	52%	21%	5%	1%	(816)
September 2012	65%	15%	50%	23%	11%	0%	(805)
July 2012	69%	17%	52%	23%	8%	0%	(803)
April 2012	70%	20%	50%	23%	7%	0%	(804)
February 2012	62%	15%	47%	26%	11%	1%	(803)
October 2011	67%	15%	52%	24%	8%	0%	(817)
August 2011	57%	14%	43%	31%	11%	1%	(802)
May 2011	59%	14%	45%	29%	11%	0%	(807)
December 2010	63%	17%	46%	26%	10%	1%	(2864)
October 2007	63%	17%	46%	25%	12%	1%	(1001)
August 2004	68%	22%	46%	21%	10%	1%	(800)
May 2003	72%	20%	52%	23%	5%	0%	(1002)
April 2001	76%	23%	53%	19%	4%	1%	(802)
March 2000	76%	25%	51%	17%	6%	0%	(800)
May 1999	76%	22%	54%	19%	5%	0%	(800)
February 1994	71%	18%	53%	22%	7%	0%	(801)
March 1990	68%	21%	47%	25%	6%	1%	(800)
February 1988	78%	27%	51%	17%	4%	1%	(800)
February 1987	84%	31%	53%	11%	4%	0%	(800)
May 1985	81%	29%	52%	14%	3%	1%	(500)
October 1984	80%	29%	51%	15%	4%	1%	(1000)
January 1981	66%	16%	50%	26%	7%	1%	(1003)
July 1980	68%	18%	50%	23%	7%	2%	(1005)

2. How would you rate your town or city as a place to live – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	<i>Excellent/ Good</i>	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
February 2015	72%	29%	43%	21%	7%	0%	(805)
September 2014	69%	24%	45%	22%	10%	0%	(802)
April 2014	71%	27%	44%	20%	9%	0%	(803)
February 2014	70%	31%	39%	23%	7%	0%	(803)
December 2013	70%	29%	41%	21%	8%	1%	(802)
September 2013	72%	32%	40%	18%	9%	1%	(783)
April 2013	67%	29%	38%	25%	8%	0%	(806)
February 2013	73%	30%	43%	20%	7%	0%	(803)
December 2012	74%	32%	42%	17%	9%	0%	(816)
September 2012	72%	33%	39%	19%	9%	0%	(805)
July 2012	74%	32%	42%	18%	7%	1%	(803)
April 2012	76%	34%	42%	17%	7%	0%	(804)
February 2012	74%	33%	41%	21%	5%	0%	(803)
October 2011	73%	26%	47%	20%	8%	0%	(817)
August 2011	76%	28%	48%	18%	6%	0%	(802)
May 2011	73%	33%	40%	20%	7%	0%	(807)
December 2010	73%	27%	46%	20%	8%	0%	(2864)
May 2003	74%	29%	45%	19%	7%	0%	(1002)
April 2001	73%	28%	45%	21%	6%	0%	(802)
May 1995	70%	30%	40%	21%	8%	0%	(802)
June 1994	72%	31%	41%	19%	9%	0%	(801)
September 1988	72%	26%	46%	18%	9%	1%	(500)
October 1984	71%	30%	41%	21%	7%	1%	(999)
June 1980	67%	23%	44%	24%	9%	0%	(1005)
May 1977	66%	25%	41%	24%	10%	0%	(1005)

[QUESTIONS 3, 4 AND 5 WERE ROTATED]

3. How would you rate the quality of the environment in the area where you live – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	<i>Excellent/ Good</i>	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
February 2015	72%	27%	45%	23%	4%	0%	(805)
September 2014	72%	24%	48%	21%	5%	1%	(802)
April 2014	76%	27%	49%	18%	6%	0%	(803)
February 2014	73%	29%	44%	21%	6%	0%	(803)
December 2013	69%	27%	42%	24%	7%	0%	(802)
September 2013	75%	30%	45%	18%	7%	1%	(783)
April 2013	70%	27%	43%	22%	7%	0%	(806)
February 2013	71%	26%	45%	24%	4%	2%	(803)
December 2012	73%	25%	48%	20%	7%	1%	(816)
September 2012	72%	30%	42%	20%	7%	0%	(805)
July 2012	74%	30%	44%	19%	7%	1%	(803)
April 2012	75%	30%	45%	18%	6%	1%	(804)
February 2012	77%	29%	48%	17%	5%	0%	(803)
October 2011	72%	25%	47%	19%	9%	0%	(817)
August 2011	79%	31%	48%	16%	5%	0%	(802)
May 2011	79%	33%	46%	15%	6%	0%	(807)
December 2010	66%	14%	52%	25%	9%	0%	(2864)
April 2001	70%	27%	43%	22%	7%	1%	(402)
September 1988	53%	10%	43%	31%	15%	1%	(500)

4. How would you rate the job your local schools are doing – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TREND:	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
February 2015	61%	21%	40%	24%	8%	7%	(805)
September 2014	60%	21%	39%	24%	9%	7%	(802)
April 2014	63%	24%	39%	22%	9%	6%	(803)
February 2014	61%	22%	39%	22%	10%	7%	(803)
December 2013	60%	20%	40%	23%	12%	5%	(802)
September 2013	62%	24%	38%	21%	7%	9%	(783)
April 2013	59%	21%	38%	27%	9%	5%	(806)
February 2013	64%	24%	40%	20%	7%	9%	(803)
December 2012	61%	21%	40%	23%	7%	9%	(816)
September 2012	61%	27%	34%	21%	10%	8%	(805)
July 2012	61%	22%	39%	20%	11%	8%	(803)
April 2012	63%	23%	40%	21%	7%	8%	(804)
February 2012	68%	26%	42%	16%	8%	8%	(803)
October 2011	60%	21%	39%	20%	13%	7%	(817)
August 2011	63%	19%	44%	26%	6%	5%	(802)
May 2011	63%	24%	39%	22%	10%	6%	(807)
December 2010	64%	24%	40%	23%	8%	5%	(2864)
August 2004	61%	24%	37%	17%	12%	9%	(800)
April 2001	64%	21%	43%	21%	6%	9%	(802)
September 1999	62%	18%	44%	21%	9%	8%	(802)
September 1998	62%	20%	42%	23%	9%	7%	(804)
February 1996	60%	20%	40%	20%	11%	9%	(804)
September 1993	52%	16%	36%	29%	14%	5%	(801)
January 1992	53%	15%	38%	26%	15%	5%	(800)
October 1987	60%	14%	46%	23%	6%	11%	(500)
October 1986	55%	15%	40%	26%	10%	9%	(800)
October 1983	59%	16%	43%	23%	10%	8%	(802)
May 1978	52%	12%	40%	25%	12%	11%	(1003)

5. How safe do you feel in your neighborhood at night – very safe, somewhat safe, or not at all safe?

TREND:	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Not at all safe	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
February 2015	62%	33%	4%	0%	(805)
September 2014	58%	36%	6%	0%	(802)
April 2014	66%	30%	4%	1%	(803)
February 2014	67%	28%	6%	0%	(803)
December 2013	60%	33%	7%	0%	(802)
September 2013	65%	27%	7%	1%	(783)
April 2013	66%	28%	6%	0%	(806)
February 2013	63%	30%	6%	1%	(803)
December 2012	64%	29%	6%	1%	(816)
September 2012	65%	25%	6%	0%	(805)
July 2012	60%	32%	7%	1%	(803)
April 2012	64%	31%	5%	1%	(804)
February 2012	62%	32%	5%	0%	(803)
October 2011	62%	31%	7%	0%	(817)
August 2011	63%	31%	6%	0%	(802)
May 2011	68%	27%	5%	0%	(807)
December 2010	59%	35%	6%	0%	(2864)
February 1993	42%	44%	13%	0%	(801)
October 1987	51%	36%	11%	2%	(499)
October 1984	53%	36%	9%	2%	(500)
May 1981	43%	43%	13%	1%	(497)

[Note: All trend results prior to 2005 come from Rutgers University's Eagleton Poll.]

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from January 30 to February 2, 2015 with a statewide random sample of 805 adult residents, including 605 contacted via live interview on a landline telephone and 200 via live interview on a cell phone, in English. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

<i>POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)</i>			
38% Dem	49% Male	28% 18-34	64% White
43% Ind	51% Female	39% 35-54	12% Black
19% Rep		33% 55+	15% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other

Region is defined by county boundaries: Northeast (Bergen, Passaic), Urban Core (Essex, Hudson), Route 1 Corridor (Mercer, Middlesex, Union), Central Hills (Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset), Northern Shore (Monmouth, Ocean), Delaware Valley (Burlington, Camden, Gloucester), and Garden Core (Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Salem, Sussex, Warren).

It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect them. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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