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## GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX UP

*Now stands at +24; growing urban-suburban divide*

In its quarterly tracking of New Jerseyans' satisfaction with life in their state, the *Monmouth University Poll* found that the current Garden State Quality of Life Index has ticked up to +24. The initial reading taken in December 2010 was +21, rising to +23 in May 2011 and dropping slightly to +22 in August.

"We have seen some upward movement in the Garden State Quality of Life Index over the past few months, led by increasingly positive views of the state as a whole," said Patrick Murray director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Currently, 2-in-3 residents rate New Jersey as either an excellent (15%) or good (52%) place to live. This 67% positive rating is up from 57% in August and 63% nearly a year ago. It marks the highest positive reading on this question since 68% of New Jerseyans said the same in a 2004 poll.

Positive views of residents' local areas stayed stable, including ratings of one's hometown (73%), environment (72%), crime (62%), and schools (60%).

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
October 2011	<b>+24</b>	+24	+24	+23	+21	+29	+31	+7	+15	+25	+31
August 2011	<b>+22</b>	+25	+19	+27	+19	+21	+26	+9	+9	+22	+32
May 2011	<b>+23</b>	+24	+22	+23	+22	+23	+26	+14	+15	+22	+32
December 2010	<b>+21</b>	+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	
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 score did experience a significant uptick among older residents. It now stands at +29 among state residents age 55 and older, compared to +21 for those 35 to 54 and +23 for those 18 to 34.

There is also a growing disparity between New Jersey’s urban and suburban communities. Last year, the Garden State Quality of Life Index score from residents of urban areas stood at +12 compared to +23 in stable towns and +27 in growing suburbs. The urban score is now -1 compared to +31 in stable towns and +34 in growing suburbs.

The index score among black and Hispanic residents (+7) is now half of where it stood last year (+13). It has increased slightly among white residents (+31 up from +26).

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 latest *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone with 817 New Jersey adults from October 5 to 9, 2011. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.4$  percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

### 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	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
October 2011	15%	52%	24%	8%	0%	(817)
August 2011	14%	43%	31%	11%	1%	(802)
May 2011	14%	45%	29%	11%	0%	(807)
December 2010	17%	46%	26%	10%	1%	(2864)
October 2007	17%	46%	25%	12%	1%	(1001)
August 2004	22%	46%	21%	10%	1%	(800)
May 2003	20%	52%	23%	5%	0%	(1002)
April 2001	23%	53%	19%	4%	1%	(802)
March 2000	25%	51%	17%	6%	0%	(800)
May 1999	22%	54%	19%	5%	0%	(800)
February 1994	18%	53%	22%	7%	0%	(801)
March 1990	21%	47%	25%	6%	1%	(800)
February 1988	27%	51%	17%	4%	1%	(800)
February 1987	31%	53%	11%	4%	0%	(800)
May 1985	29%	52%	14%	3%	1%	(500)
October 1984	29%	51%	15%	4%	1%	(1000)
January 1981	16%	50%	26%	7%	1%	(1003)
July 1980	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:	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
October 2011	26%	47%	20%	8%	0%	(817)
August 2011	28%	48%	18%	6%	0%	(802)
May 2011	33%	40%	20%	7%	0%	(807)
December 2010	27%	46%	20%	8%	0%	(2864)
May 2003	29%	45%	19%	7%	0%	(1002)
April 2001	28%	45%	21%	6%	0%	(802)
May 1995	30%	40%	21%	8%	0%	(802)
June 1994	31%	41%	19%	9%	0%	(801)
September 1988	26%	46%	18%	9%	1%	(500)
October 1984	30%	41%	21%	7%	1%	(999)
June 1980	23%	44%	24%	9%	0%	(1005)
May 1977	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:	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
October 2011	25%	47%	19%	9%	0%	(817)
August 2011	31%	48%	16%	5%	0%	(802)
May 2011	33%	46%	15%	6%	0%	(807)
December 2010	14%	52%	25%	9%	0%	(2864)
April 2001	27%	43%	22%	7%	1%	(402)
September 1988	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	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
October 2011	21%	39%	20%	13%	7%	(817)
August 2011	19%	44%	26%	6%	5%	(802)
May 2011	24%	39%	22%	10%	6%	(807)
December 2010	24%	40%	23%	8%	5%	(2864)
August 2004	24%	37%	17%	12%	9%	(800)
April 2001	21%	43%	21%	6%	9%	(802)
September 1999	18%	44%	21%	9%	8%	(802)
September 1998	20%	42%	23%	9%	7%	(804)
February 1996	20%	40%	20%	11%	9%	(804)
September 1993	16%	36%	29%	14%	5%	(801)
January 1992	15%	38%	26%	15%	5%	(800)
October 1987	14%	46%	23%	6%	11%	(500)
October 1986	15%	40%	26%	10%	9%	(800)
October 1983	16%	43%	23%	10%	8%	(802)
May 1978	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)
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 conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on October 5 to 9, 2011 with a statewide random sample of 817 adult residents, including 714 contacted on a landline telephone and 103 on a cell phone. Sampling and interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.4 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. 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>			
<i>34% Dem</i>	<i>49% Male</i>	<i>28% 18-34</i>	<i>64% White</i>
<i>20% Rep</i>	<i>51% Female</i>	<i>39% 35-54</i>	<i>12% Black</i>
<i>46% Ind</i>		<i>32% 55+</i>	<i>16% Hispanic</i>
			<i>9% Asian/Other</i>

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 New Jersey residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.*

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