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GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE UP AFTER SANDY

Rating of New Jersey as place to live highest in nine years

In its regular tracking of residents' satisfaction with life in New Jersey, the *Monmouth University Poll* finds the current Garden State Quality of Life Index at +30. This marks a reversal of the decline experienced over the prior two quarters and nearly matches the prior high of +31 recorded in April of this year. The current index score is an improvement over results from both September (+24) and July (+27).

A major factor in the index score is residents' overall rating of the state as a place to live. Currently, more than 7-in-10 residents say New Jersey is either an excellent (20%) or good (52%) place to call home, compared to 1-in-4 who rate it as only fair (21%) or poor (5%). This 72% positive rating marks a 7 percentage point increase from September and is the highest rating on this metric since May 2003 when it also stood at 72%.

Positive ratings of one's town as a place to live stand at 74%; of the local environment stand at 73%; of neighborhood safety stand at 64%; and of local schools stand at 61%. These local ratings are no more than one or two percentage points different than the September poll results.

"The jump in positive statewide satisfaction happened not in spite of Sandy, but more likely because of the storm. Poll results we released earlier this month show that New Jerseyans came out of the storm with more positive views of both the state's institutions and their own neighbors. We now see this reflected in a more positive perception of the Garden State's overall quality of life," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

While the Garden State Quality of Life Index score has increased for nearly every demographic group, there are some noteworthy regional differences. The index score among residents of the Northern Shore counties of Monmouth and Ocean – the hardest hit areas of the state – now stands at +40. This marks an increase of 7 points since September. On the other hand, the Delaware Valley – Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester – which largely escaped Sandy's wrath is the only region that registered a decline in the Garden State Quality of Life Index score – from +26 in September to +21 currently.

Other regional scores are +47 in the Central Hills (up 2 points), +36 in the Northeast (up 7 points), +31 in the Garden Core (up 18 points), +26 in the Route 1 Corridor (up 9 points), and +18 in the Urban Core (up 4 points).

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.

GARDEN STATE QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX											
	NJ TOTAL	<u>GENDER</u>		<u>AGE</u>			<u>RACE</u>		<u>INCOME</u>		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/ Hispanic	<\$50K	\$50- 100K	>\$100K
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											
		<u>REGION</u>						<u>COMMUNITY TYPE</u>			
		North east	Urban Core	Route 1 Corridor	Central Hills	Northern Shore	Delaware Valley	Garden Core	Urban	Stable Town	Growing Suburb
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 latest *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone with 816 New Jersey adults from November 19 to December 2, 2012. This sample has a margin of error of ± 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.)

- 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)
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)

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

TREND:	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
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:	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	(VOL) Don't know	(n)
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)
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)
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 conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on November 29 to December 2, 2012 with a statewide random sample of 816 adult residents, including 616 contacted on a landline telephone and 200 on a cell phone. Live interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. and the telephone sample was obtained from Survey Sampling International. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. 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>			
36% Dem	49% Male	28% 18-34	65% White
43% Ind	51% Female	39% 35-54	12% Black
21% Rep		33% 55+	14% 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 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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