

## First FEMA trailer for N.J. Hurricane Sandy victims arrives in Monmouth



PHOTO: The first FEMA trailer for Hurricane Sandy victims is delivered to a Monmouth County mobile home park on Saturday morning.

*(Photo by Rob Spahr / NJ.com)*

By Rob Spahr / NJ.com on December 15, 2012

EATONTOWN – Crews from FEMA delivered the first manufactured home for New Jersey's Hurricane Sandy victims to a Route 35 mobile home park on Saturday morning.

The two-bedroom, one-bathroom unit – which comes equipped with kitchen appliances, furniture and other necessary household items – was moved into place in the Woodlawn Village community shortly after 9:30 a.m.

It was one of 50 mobile homes that have been staged at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson since early November, Monmouth County's FEMA spokesman Chris McKniff said.

Since Hurricane Sandy hit, FEMA has disbursed \$55 million in housing assistance and received 20,000 applications for housing assistance in Monmouth County, of which 9,800 people have been deemed eligible so far. Statewide FEMA has disbursed \$272 million in housing assistance to nearly 50,000 eligible households.

"It's still a fluid process, as we wait for people to go through the claims process with their insurance provider," McKniff said. "But I fully expect that number to grow."

FEMA officials did not disclose information on the family that will be moving into the trailer, except to say that they were likely displaced from a nearby community and that they would be able to stay there for up to 18 months from the date of disaster declaration, which was Oct. 30.

Brett Hansard, a representative from FEMA's Public Affairs office, said the newly relocated mobile home would still need to be hooked up to utilities and properly secured on the pad site before the family could move in.

"We're hopeful that process will only take a few days," said Hansard, adding FEMA plans to move two more trailers to Woodlawn Village in the coming days.

McKniff said that FEMA's first objective was to provide storm victims with rental opportunities, but that available rentals seem to be running out.

"So we've been working diligently to identify mobile home parks like this, where we could place units," he said. "It's not like we can just move a bunch of trailers into a field. There has to be infrastructure and utilities in place to support it, and there are federal, state and local guidelines we have to follow."

Hansard said FEMA is working with the state Department of Community Affairs to find similar locations where additional trailers can be placed, and also to make housing units available on Fort Monmouth.

There are currently 45 housing units on Fort Monmouth that have been identified for use by storm victims, which Hansard said could start becoming available as early as next week. And he said FEMA is working with the state to make additional properties on the former military base available.

"Today was just one piece of the big housing puzzle," Hansard said. "Hopefully we'll be able to start getting some other pieces into place soon."