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Governor Christie Commends Hundreds Of NJ Troopers, Local Officers Returning Home Saturday From Puerto Rico

Friday, December 1, 2017

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Trenton – Governor Chris Christie today commended hundreds of New Jersey State Troopers, local police officers, and civilian officials who will be returning home at 5 p.m. on Saturday at Newark Airport, after serving in support of the New Jersey Puerto Rico Integrated Deployment Effort (NJ PRIDE), which provided first responders and humanitarian aid to victims affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

"I am proud to welcome home this contingent of selfless, brave, and supremely effective troopers, first responders, and civilian staff members, whose expertise and efforts over the past few months directly helped countless hurricane victims in Puerto Rico," Governor Christie said. "Their leadership set the example for other authorities on the ground and supported streamlined recovery efforts with local, state, and federal officials. New Jersey is beyond grateful for their service here and for our family members and friends in Puerto Rico."

NJ PRIDE was a two-month mission which began on September 30, when an advance team of nine troopers arrived in Puerto Rico a week prior to the first deployment, coordinating recovery efforts with local, state, and federal authorities. Over the course of the next two-months, teams of New Jersey public servants were deployed to Puerto Rico in two-week intervals. The NJ PRIDE personnel consisted of 194 State Troopers, 133 local and county police officers, and 20 civilians from various state and local agencies. These members worked together seamlessly as they provided traffic support and embarked on humanitarian missions.

"Demonstrating true New Jersey spirit, dedicated and highly trained men and women from New Jersey left their own families behind to help those devastated by recent hurricanes in Puerto Rico, just as so many traveled to New Jersey in its time of need five years ago after Super Storm Sandy," said Attorney General Christopher Porrino. "Our contingent wasn't simply one team of law enforcement, first responders and civilian staff who stayed a week or two to assist in the immediate aftermath of the storm. New Jersey organized an ongoing deployment of multiple teams that lasted longer than most others in order to start the process of getting the residents, communities, and business back on their feet. As the last of our team returns home, we take this opportunity to thank them for their service and let the people of Puerto Rico know that we will continue to provide our assistance."

Members of the deployment teams also were in constant contact with community leaders to identify areas of need. As a result of these meetings, first responders were able to provide daily outreach by delivering water, food, and other supplies that were needed.

In addition to the numerous humanitarian missions, there were instances where members assigned to the deployment intervened during critical incidents. While directing traffic at an intersection in Caguas, a Middletown Police Officer and a Howell Police Officer subdued a suspect who was holding a victim at knife-point. In a separate incident, a trooper removed an entrapped driver from a car moments after it struck a palm tree.

"The residents of New Jersey know first-hand how difficult the re-building process can be after suffering a natural catastrophe having endured the destruction of Superstorm Sandy five years ago," said Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, Acting Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police. "Our State Troopers, local law enforcement officers, first responders and civilian employees performed admirably in supplying aid and humanitarian outreach to our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico."

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Governor Christie, Attorney General Porrino, and Colonel Callahan thank the members of NJ PRIDE for their selfless efforts, hard work, and dedication in support of the resilient residents of Puerto Rico during their time of need.

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