FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 24, 2012

Get ready, hurricane season is upon us

Norristown, PA (August 24, 2012) – Hurricane season began June 1, and so far the East Coast of the United States has been spared any activity. However, with Hurricane Isaac projected to begin impacting Florida’s Gulf Coast and possibly the Republican National Convention next week, and two other potential hurricanes far out in the Atlantic, it seems to be an appropriate time to begin thinking about precautions that should be taken.

The Montgomery County Department of Public Safety (DPS) is keeping an eye on Isaac’s. The county’s Office of Emergency Management is currently in a standby mode, and will be issuing more information as the situation warrants.

While it’s still too early to know what effect, if any, Isaac will have on Montgomery County, it is not too early to begin taking precautions especially around the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee upon us.

“There is a comprehensive list of preparedness information on the DPS website: www.dps.montcopa.org on the Office of Emergency Preparedness page,” pointed out Josh Shapiro, chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners. “We also have information and links available on DPS’ Facebook page: Montgomery County Department of Public Safety.

The county Department of Public Safety will also use Twitter to distribute, monitor, and exchange information with the public before, during, and after any storm. The DPS Twitter handle is @MCpublicsafety. All residents are urged to like and follow DPS.

The weather forecast this weekend into early next week calls for relatively nice conditions, and that is the perfect time to take these preventative measures:

1. Clean your gutters and downspouts. Chances are the biggest threat from Isaac will be heavy rain. Making sure the water has a clear path to travel away from your home is very important.

2. Start bringing any loose outdoor items inside. The winds likely won’t be a big problem with Isaac, but it’s always a good idea to bring things like lawn ornaments or trash cans inside. Of even more importance this year is eliminating any type of container that can fill up with water. Standing water can quickly become a mosquito breeding ground. And with the recent nationwide outbreak of West Nile Virus, we need to take every precaution.

3. Secure your property. Take an assessment of the trees and shrubs in your yard. Are any of them dying? Dead trees are more susceptible to wind damage. Are any limbs a threat to your power lines? It might be a good idea to have a professional contractor check them out. Or, contact your utility provider.
4. **Put together an emergency kit.** It should have enough supplies to last you and your family for three days. Some of the basic items include: bottled water, non-perishable food, first aid kit, flashlight, radio, batteries, medications, baby formula, and copies of important documents. A detailed list of emergency kit essentials can be found online at the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety Facebook page.

5. **Put together a communications plan.** Does everyone in your family have a cell phone? Do you know each other’s phone number? There’s one certainty when it comes to cell phones – the batteries always lose their charge! That’s why you should make a written list of all the numbers you might need, just in case you don’t have a way to recharge your phone. It’s also a good idea to designate a rendezvous point in case your family members are away from the house and disaster strikes. One option is another family member’s house. Or consider someplace more public, like a shopping mall.