



Photos provided courtesy of Monmouth County Park System

Earth Networks Helps Monmouth County, NJ Ensure Safety During Annual Outdoor Fair

BACKGROUND

Every July, the Monmouth County Fair in Freehold, New Jersey opens for five days to welcome tens of thousands of visitors. Outdoor activities include an opening night fireworks display, an active carnival midway with rides and games, stages featuring live bands and performances and an extensive agricultural fair with 4-H events and exhibits.

CHALLENGES

Held entirely outdoors, the fair creates a unique series of challenges for officials. "Because the fair is all under tents, there is no place for people to shelter during bad weather," explains Andrew Spears of the Monmouth County Park System. When severe weather approaches, officials need to cancel the fair and evacuate all visitors and staff – a process that can take up to an hour. Having the lead times needed to effectively clear the fairgrounds is crucial.

Like many public administrators, Monmouth County officials proactively reevaluated its emergency operations and response plan in the aftermath of the tragic 2011 Indiana State Fair stage collapse due to sudden high winds that killed five and injured dozens. "We knew that thunderstorms were typical for us in July, and we knew we needed to be decisive and move forward quickly, because waiting is not the best option," says Spears.

SOLUTION

Monmouth County selected Earth Networks, the owner of WeatherBug® and operator of the largest weather monitoring and lightning detection networks, to provide the following:

- **Meteorological Support Services:** Earth Networks' professional meteorologists were available to county officials by phone 24/7 to provide breaking updates on changing weather and forecasts for specific, local areas.
- **StreamerRTSM,** a web-based weather visualization and alerting application for monitoring storm cells, lightning and changing conditions. StreamerRT combines real-time data from neighborhood-level stations from more than 35,000 locations – including over 10,000 stations that are exclusive to Earth Networks.

RESULTS

The Monmouth County fair experienced a very challenging week of weather with multiple rounds of thunderstorms. Fortunately, the emergency response plan for severe weather was in place, and officials had the resources necessary for quick decision making.

"Having live access to a meteorologist allowed us to get very detailed, site-specific information about how the impending storms might affect us, while StreamerRT proved to be extremely reliable and provided real-time data on thunderstorm movement, lightning, wind gusts, and weather watches and warnings," says Spears.

"We made the decision, based on StreamerRT data and consultation from Earth Networks' meteorologists, to close the fair on two occasions due to approaching thunderstorms. We made the right call both times and evacuated all guests from the grounds in a timely fashion."

The county continues to utilize StreamerRT for ongoing weather monitoring to ensure safety during a variety of other outdoor activities, including its summer camps, nature and boating programs, and recreational locations, including an oceanfront beach.



StreamerRT contains nearly 100 layers of real-time weather information for tracking dangerous weather.