

**ESSEX COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIVINCENZO INVITES PUBLIC
TO 10th ANNUAL ESSEX COUNTY HOLIDAY LIGHTS SPECTACULAR
AT ESSEX COUNTY TURTLE BACK ZOO**

Public Will Enjoy Free Admission to See 50 Figures Illuminated by 100,000 Lights
**PSE&G, Covanta Energy, Essex County Parks Foundation
and Zoological Society of NJ are Sponsoring Annual Family Event**

West Orange, NJ – Essex County Executive DiVincenzo invites the public to spend part of their holiday season at the *10th Annual Essex County Holiday Lights Spectacular* at Essex County Turtle Back Zoo. **Free admission** is being offered at The Holiday Lights Spectacular, which will be held as follows:

Dates: **Friday, Saturday, Sunday, November 18, 19, 20, 25, 26 & 27**
Friday, Saturday, Sunday, December 2, 3 & 4
Daily from Friday, December 9 to Tuesday, January 3
Times: **5 to 9 p.m. each night**
Place: **Essex County South Mountain Recreation Complex**
Essex County Turtle Back Zoo
560 Northfield Avenue
West Orange, NJ

The Holiday Lights Spectacular will be closed on December 24th and 25th.

“We invite the public to make this Essex County holiday tradition your family tradition! Turtle Back Zoo will be turned into a Winter Wonderland, with extraordinary seasonal lighting exhibits and costumed characters. Stroll the landscaped paths of our Zoo and admire the illuminated images of everything from toy soldiers to penguins,” DiVincenzo said. “We are offering free admission to make this exciting attraction available to everyone. We also are encouraging our visitors to bring non-perishable food items, non-perishable pet food, new unwrapped toys, and new and gently used winter coats to help our families in need,” he noted.

About 50 animal and holiday-themed figures will light up the winter night in Turtle Back Zoo and the surrounding Essex County South Mountain Recreation Complex. Over 100,000 lights will illuminate figures of bears, tigers and elephants, along with holiday lights designed to look like wooden soldiers, stars and winter scenes. Several animal exhibits will be open, including the Sea Lion Sound, Essex Farm, Tam-ring Gibbons Reserve, Tropical Currents Aquarium and the Reptile Building.

Myrtle the Turtle, the mascot of Turtle Back Zoo, and several of his winter friends will be on hand to greet visitors at the Zoo. In addition, several themed weekends have been scheduled as follows:

- November 18, 19 & 20 – Super Hero Celebration
- November 25, 26 & 27 – A Royal Holiday
- December 2, 3 & 4 – A Frozen Princess Ball
- December 9, 10, 11, 16, 17 & 18 – The Dark Side Weekends

Admission is free. The Zoo is collecting non-perishable food items; new, unwrapped toys; and new or gently used winter coats. Items will be donated to several organizations that provide

assistance to the needy. Last year, from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, about 25 tons of non-perishable food, 15,480 toys and 6,280 winter coats were collected for the less fortunate.

The Essex County Holiday Lights Spectacular is sponsored by PSE&G, Covanta Energy, the Zoological Society of New Jersey and the Essex County Parks Foundation. Hot chocolate and other refreshments will be available for purchase. For more information, please call Essex County Turtle Back Zoo at 973-731-5800 or visit www.essexcountynj.org.

During regular operating hours in the winter, Turtle Back Zoo is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Through November 30th, regular admission is \$11 for children and senior citizens, \$14 for adults and free for children under 2 years. Winter rates go into effect on December 1st, when admission is \$10 for children and senior citizens, \$12 for adults and free for children under 2 years. For additional information, please call 973-731-5800 or visit www.essexcountynj.org.