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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Thursday, November 3, 2011
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POWER OUTAGES AND FOOD SAFETY

Since many homes have been without power for some period of time, the Putnam County Department of Health is cautioning residents to evaluate food left in refrigerators and freezers. Bacteria can readily grow at temperatures above 41 degrees Fahrenheit in many foods and make people ill. Here are some general guidelines from the NYS Department of Health:

- Foods such as eggs, milk, meats, chicken, seafood, cooked leftovers, gravies, soups, or products with these ingredients, **must be discarded if temperatures exceeded 41 degrees Fahrenheit for more than 2 hours.** If these foods were above 41 degrees for less than two hours and can be cooled to less than 41 degrees within the next two hour time frame, they do not need to be discarded.
- Foods such as fruits, vegetables, juices, cheeses and condiments, may be stored above 41 degrees Fahrenheit for an extended time, but should be checked for appearance, odor, texture and color before being served for consumption.
- Frozen chicken, seafood, meats, cooked leftovers, gravies, soups, or products with these ingredients that have thawed (soft to touch, liquid evident) but have not warmed to above 41 degrees Fahrenheit should be cooked immediately and either consumed, refrigerated or discarded. Semi-perishable foods, i.e., breads, fruits, vegetables, can be cooked and used or refrozen. Refreezing may cause a loss in nutritional and/or taste value.
- **Frozen foods that have completely thawed and have been warmed to temperatures above 41 degrees Fahrenheit should be discarded.**
- **The motto to remember relative to refrigerated or frozen food is: “WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT.”**

Please be advised, the Health Department has been making site visits to area restaurants and other food service businesses to ensure the safety of foods offered at these establishments.

Residents can visit www.fda.gov for more information about food safety following a power outage, or they can call the Health Department at 845-808-1390.

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