

# THE HOOSIER RESPONDER

APRIL 2021

**Strong in Mind and Body  
Becoming an Indiana Smoke Diver**

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- New Online Tool Highlights First Responder Jobs
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# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

This week marks an important milestone for IDHS and for Indiana's continuing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Tuesday, April 6, Indiana opened its first mass vaccination site supported by FEMA at the former Roosevelt High School site in Gary, Ind. The program is designed for the long haul, vaccinating an average of 2,000 people each day at the site and another 1,000 Hoosiers at mobile sites across the state. It will occur across eight weeks, with the first three weeks focused on the first Pfizer shot and the second three weeks on the second Pfizer shot. The final two weeks will involve the Johnson & Johnson, single-dose vaccine.



The key to the success of this mass vaccination event is connected to its location and the efforts by FEMA, IDHS and the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) to get the word out to underserved communities within driving distance to the area. When it is all said and done, thousands of Hoosiers will have been vaccinated and done their part to turn the tide of COVID-19.

Gary was selected based on several socioeconomic factors, including that it is within a 30-minute drive to nearly 1 million people. Of those, 59 percent are minorities, nearly 15 percent are elderly and nearly 58,000 residents are below the poverty line. Furthermore, more than 4,000 people are within walking distance to the site, and of those 98 percent are considered minorities.

We are thankful for FEMA's support of this site, which comes after several weeks of planning and preparation from IDOH, IDHS and other state partners.

The real measure of success will be the number of people who show up to get their vaccine. Multiple efforts are underway to ensure people in the area are aware of the event, and the mass transit options in Gary are providing free transportation to and from the site. Social and religious community groups have been part of the planning discussions and should be a tremendous help in getting traffic to Roosevelt High. The location is directly in the center of a dense neighborhood, and the visibility of all levels of government and volunteers coming together to help residents is sure to be impressive.

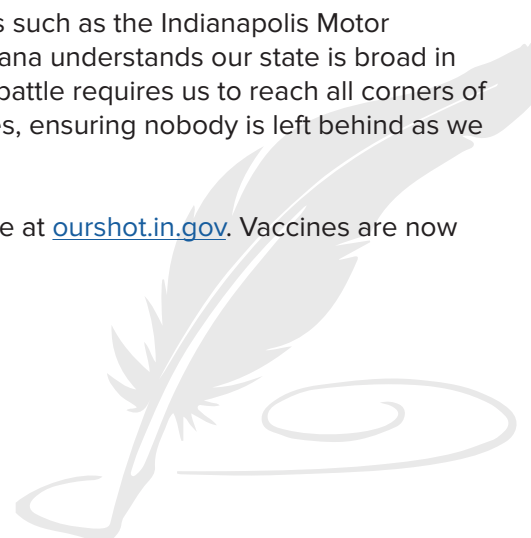
While high-profile events at famous locales such as the Indianapolis Motor Speedway also have been successful, Indiana understands our state is broad in scope and variety. Winning this pandemic battle requires us to reach all corners of the state (urban and rural) and all ethnicities, ensuring nobody is left behind as we grasp control back from COVID-19.

Please do your part and schedule a vaccine at [ourshot.in.gov](https://ourshot.in.gov). Vaccines are now available to anyone 16 years and older.

Stay safe,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Cox'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Steve Cox  
Executive Director



# EMA APPRECIATION WEEK

## WRAP-UP

Indiana's second annual EMA Appreciation Week concluded on Feb. 27 after a week of recognizing the dedication emergency management personnel have shown during the COVID-19 response.

Although the week highlighting these hard-working individuals is over, recognition will continue throughout the year, especially during the upcoming months. Severe weather season can be one of the busiest times for emergency management personnel.

When severe weather rolls through a community, whether it is tornadoes, strong winds, flooding or hail damage, emergency management personnel are on the front line of the response coordinating cleanup efforts. And long past the active disaster, EMAs help their communities recover and plan ways to prevent damage the next time a storm hits.

Often behind the scenes, EMAs put in the long, hard hours to help keep their communities safe.

IDHS is always looking for ways to highlight these individuals, so if you have a story to share about the great work a county EMA does this severe weather season, send information to [pio@dhs.in.gov](mailto:pio@dhs.in.gov) or tag us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#)!

Check out a recap of EMA Appreciation Week on the [IDHS website](#).

## NEW ONLINE TOOL HIGHLIGHTS FIRST RESPONDER JOBS

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) launched a new tool for first responder agencies to share available employment opportunities. The [IDHS Public Safety Job Dashboard](#) displays open jobs and volunteer/internship opportunities. Companies and departments looking to hire emergency management employees, telecommunicators, firefighters, EMS personnel and more are encouraged to submit their openings using the [Public Safety Help Wanted Form](#). IDHS expects traffic to the new tool to increase as the agency raises awareness with local agencies and the public, including regular posts via IDHS social media outlets.





## NONE SHALL PASS: MORGAN COUNTY PROMOTES FLOODING SAFETY

It is a common sight in Indiana: sawhorses and other barriers across a road, a high-water sign placed in front, warning motorists of the danger. It is a significant danger, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reporting more than half of flood-related drownings in the United States occur when a vehicle is driven into flood water.

However, sawhorses can be moved, an issue that Morgan County Emergency Management Director Mark Tumey saw often. Ticketing individuals wasn't a strong option since it was difficult to prove who may have moved barriers. Local fire departments

rescued an average of six to eight individuals each year. Then, in 2014, two of his residents died in a vehicle-related flood drowning while on their way home from Monroe County, and he wanted to find a better way to protect his residents.

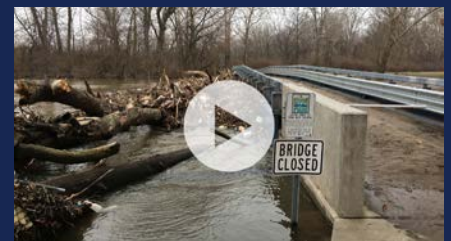
He settled on emergency road closure gates and chose seven of the highest-risk locations.

"I decided that putting together a business case was the best tactic," explained Tumey. "I wanted to have the information and statistics to back up my request and show that this would be a good way to mitigate risk."

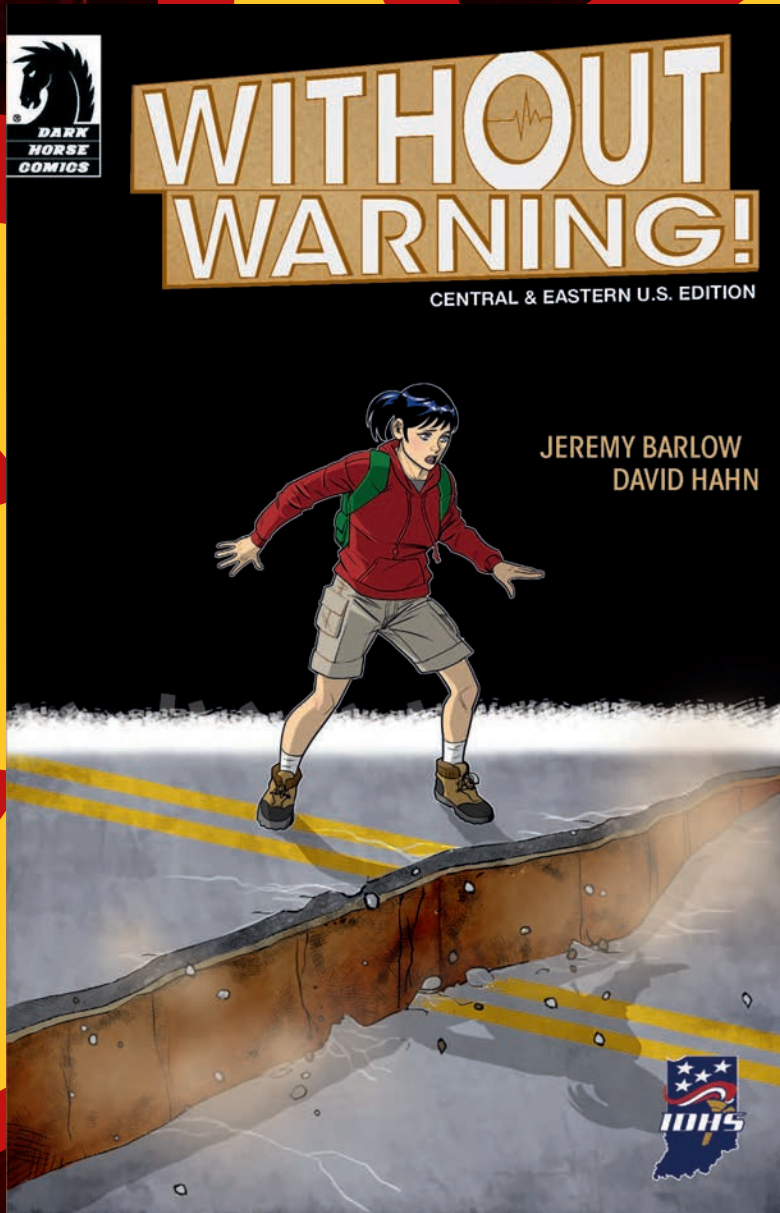
The county provided \$27,000 for the gates, which remain open on a day-to-day basis. When high water threatens, the local fire departments or highway department will lock them closed. Although the installation was intended to be difficult to drive around, people still make the attempt.

However, Tumey has seen an improvement, with only two rescues required this year. "The fact that we've established such good relationships with the fire and police departments, the County Council, that was really the key to making this project work," said Tumey. "I'd like to think we're saving lives with those gates."

The spring season is here, and with it comes increased chances of flooding throughout Indiana. In addition to [purchasing flood insurance](#), it is important for all Hoosier communities to research flooding risks in the area and identify the best ways to prepare. Remember, the best time to prepare for flooding is before it happens. Visit [GetPrepared.in.gov](http://GetPrepared.in.gov) and learn more about preparing for flood risks and other types of Indiana severe spring weather.



# NEW COMIC PROMOTES EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS



In collaboration with six other states, IDHS is excited to announce the new **Without Warning!** comic book that visually discusses earthquake threats in the Central U.S and what people should do before, during and after one occurs. Give it a read!

\*This comic was adapted from a previous version created by the Oregon Office of Emergency Management and published by Dark Horse Comics. IDHS worked with the Central United States Earthquake Consortium, Alabama, Arkansas, Missouri, North Carolina and Tennessee to create this edition.



# INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO NATURAL HAZARDS

The Indiana Silver Jackets team is a collection of interdisciplinary volunteers who work toward mitigating natural hazards. Issues that may otherwise fall through the cracks find themselves in the hands of the Silver Jackets, whose members come from more than a dozen government agencies and nongovernmental organizations to develop data-supported, comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

River erosion is one of the issues that no agency specifically focuses on, and much less was known about how it manifests around the state prior to the Silver Jackets' work. Coming out of the extensive statewide flooding in 2008, the Silver Jackets were tasked to find a way to mitigate damage for future floods. Team members from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) started looking into river erosion hazards, which can contribute to up to half of the damage-related losses during floods in some states.

Those Silver Jackets members connected with the preeminent river erosion program, located in Vermont. The relationship jump-started their efforts, resulting in the Indiana [Fluvial Erosion Hazard Program](#), a collection of resources to help communities adopt erosion-avoidance strategies, including [floodway and erosion corridor maps](#).

"It is a success when we see people using the information to let residents and developers know what is a hazardous area, and we know a number of counties are doing it," said Bob Barr, a research scientist for the IUPUI Center for Earth and Environmental Science, adding that there are now erosion maps for every county in the state. "We can see when a river is moving 15 feet each year and tell people who are thinking of building something nearby, be aware."

The Fluvial Erosion Hazard Program gained national recognition and implementation, propelling Indiana into a leadership position on that subject, alongside Vermont. Now other states reach out to

Indiana when they want to get started addressing river erosion.

The Silver Jackets' first big success came in 2007 when there was an ice jam causing flooding on rivers in northwest Indiana. USGS workers happened to be in the area performing maintenance on river gages and a Silver Jackets member came up with the idea to use the spot-tracking devices (meant for checking on staff locations for their personal safety) to capture the GPS coordinates of the ice flow so a map could be made. This allowed state emergency personnel to assess the situation on the rivers with minimal staff resources.

Another recognized success is the Silver Jackets' development of a [flood inundation mapping tool](#) with the USGS to formulate river height predictions. Its modeling can now be read in real time online, and it integrates with databases to allow local agencies to quickly determine where to focus flood-fighting efforts (for example, when and where to place sandbags) and to provide

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reliable, post-flood damage estimates (where the damage likely occurred).

That project began when a museum along the White River wanted a tool to know when to close areas of its property when flooding was expected. This came at the same time the USGS and National Weather Service were looking for ways to make use of river gage data and improve flood forecasting. Up to that point, someone would need local knowledge of the terrain to understand what areas would flood and what roads would need to be closed when a river would reach a certain level, according to Scott Morlock, a former Silver Jacket and current USGS regional director.

“Before, you could use a contour

map and do guesstimates, but now with the maps, this allows anybody to have accurate info and look down to a neighborhood view,” Morlock said, adding that Indiana has the largest collection of flood maps nationwide and that the USGS worked nationally to spin up similar mapping efforts.

The Silver Jackets team started out with flood mitigation projects, because flooding is the state’s (and nation’s) leading natural disaster. Today, the team’s projects include all natural hazards. Other past projects have included documentaries on [dam safety](#) and the [Great Flood of 1913](#).

Looking ahead in 2021, the team will be conducting river education workshops. It also

hopes to do a wind-safety project, because [tornadoes are a frequent threat](#) in Indiana, and communications to the public can be improved.

“We don’t think of it until the sirens go off, but those are meant for hearing outside,” said Manuela Johnson, administrator for the State Disaster Relief Fund at the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and the state lead for the Indiana Silver Jackets. “There are other methods of warning that could help people be better prepared and reduce damage from flying objects from their yards like trampolines, chairs and umbrellas.”

Visit the [Silver Jackets website](#) for more information.

## COVID-19 UPDATE FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

### LOCAL REGULATIONS

Beginning on April 6, 2021, counties were responsible for determining capacity restrictions and mask orders for their communities. Reach out to local health officials for more information and clarification on community and county restrictions.

### VARIANT UPDATE

There are currently three major variants active in the U.S., all of which have been found in Indiana. Continue to stay updated on the quantity of variant cases active in Hoosier communities at the [CDC website](#).

### VACCINE EDUCATION

Individuals receiving questions about the COVID-19 vaccinations are welcome to share the public version of the [COVID-19 vaccinations presentation](#), created by IDHS State EMS Medical Director Dr. Michael Kaufmann. Public safety personnel are encouraged to view the presentation via the [Acadis Portal](#) to receive the appropriate credit. The course is titled "COVID-19 Vaccines 101: A Basic Understanding."

### GETTING A VACCINE

The Indiana Department of Health is housing all important vaccine updates online at [ourshot.in.gov](#). All Indiana residents over the age of 16 are now eligible to schedule vaccination appointments. Visit the page to view the COVID-19 vaccine dashboard and access answers to frequently asked questions.

Note: As of publication, only the Pfizer vaccine has Emergency Use Approval (EUA) for individuals between ages 16 and 18. To review EUA information for each of the vaccines currently available in the U.S., visit the [FDA website](#).



## STRONG IN MIND AND BODY BECOMING AN INDIANA SMOKE DIVER

It's burn day.

The acrid smell of smoke battles with heavy rain for space in the air above the Emergency Services Education Center at the Wayne Township Fire Department in Indianapolis. Firefighters soberly wait their turn to enter the smoke room, turnout gear becoming more sodden by the moment. A symphony of low-air alerts adds to the tension and stress of the

moment, until the team is given the go-ahead to grab a hose line and enter.

Twenty-eight students started the seventh class of the Indiana Smoke Diver course a few days earlier, beginning with classes discussing self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) usage, nutrition for the week and more. For the first time, the class has partnered with medical group ProTeam to

discuss injury prevention. Physical training is a hallmark of the program, requiring firefighters to work to the brink of exhaustion as a precursor to fire training and drills. This is intense, well beyond the expectations of the everyday firefighter. The program estimates the search drills and air containers used during the six-day course equate to four to six years of fireground experience, according to the Indiana Smoke Diver website.



“We’re teaching people about themselves, how their bodies work, and how far they can push themselves before they give up in a situation where they feel like they need to give up,” said Brian McKee, a firefighter with Wayne Township.

Students’ food and water consumption are closely tracked, and 5,000-6,000 calories are considered the minimum the firefighters need to get through

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each day. But when asked, all say that the mental and physical stressors bring their own benefits: Confidence. Accountability. Personal Growth. Personal and Team Fortitude.

Only 60 percent of program candidates pass the course, providing Indiana one of the highest pass rates in the country. Many who start lack the mental or physical endurance to make it across the finish line, or an injury sometimes forces participants to drop out of the program.

The Indiana Smoke Diver Association provides physical training recommendations and a reading list of materials to help firefighters succeed. The ProTeam partnership provides on-site expertise to help avoid injuries and increase completion.

“The reason we do all the training we do, they’re based off of line-of-duty injuries and deaths,” said Capt.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**6** days of training, **60-HOUR** program

**28** students started  
Representing Indiana, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Washington and Wisconsin.

**17** students finished

**48** instructors  
Representing Indiana, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin.

*\*Class of 2021*



Jacob Younger, an instructor representing Tulsa Fire Department from Oklahoma. “That’s the whole impetus of the program, to plan drills to help with prevention, where we can speed it up and practice these concepts safely and make sure that in the future everyone gets out alive.”

The drills of the program emphasize the day-to-day challenges firefighters face at structure fires, multiple alarm fires or multiple structure fires. Candidates are trained to

understand and manage their physical and mental limitations under safe, but stressful, realistic conditions, according to the program website.

Indiana graduated its first firefighters from the program in 2006. After a grueling week, 17 firefighters recently earned their certification as Indiana Smoke Divers at the Wayne Township training grounds. Division Chief Trevor Hash of the Noblesville Fire Department was on hand to see two of his firefighters graduate.

“They went in excited to conquer the challenge,” said Hash. “When they expressed interest, we jumped at the chance for them to have this training. They’re already excellent firefighters. This will just make them better.”

Learn more at [indianasmokediver.com](http://indianasmokediver.com).

Watch a video about the program [here](#).





## LIFELINE OVER THE PHONE LINE: RECOGNIZING THE WORK OF PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS

Each year during the second week of April, public safety telecommunicators across the country are honored during National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, a weeklong event dedicated to recognizing the challenging, lifesaving services they provide to the American public every day.

In 2020, House Bill 1198 officially changed the classification of Indiana 911 emergency dispatchers from “clerical workers” to “first responders.” During the same year, approximately 1,900 emergency dispatchers responded to more than 3.5 million 911 calls in Indiana. Despite this newfound classification, the work of an emergency dispatcher still is often overlooked or not fully understood.

Ed Reuter, executive director for Indiana 911, said the job responsibilities of emergency dispatchers can easily become mentally and emotionally draining, much like that of fire, EMS and law enforcement first responders.

“Not everyone can do the work of an emergency dispatcher,” Reuter explained. “If you were to interview 100 people for an emergency dispatcher job position, you’d be lucky to find three to five people who could withstand the pressure of someone calling during what might be the worst moment of their life.”

Unlike other first responder sectors, emergency dispatchers often lack the opportunity to decompress their stress while working during a shift.

“They take a 911 call, get all the information they can, dispatch it out and then immediately take another call right after,” Reuter said. “It keeps going and going, and, because of the nature of their work, they often can’t see the outcome of these emergency situations.”

In addition to answering 911 calls, emergency dispatchers also are trained how to provide emergency medical services, such as CPR, over the phone. In Indiana, more than 1,700 emergency telecommunicators are trained in emergency medical dispatch (EMD), the training system designed to teach emergency telecommunicators how to identify a 911 caller’s type of medical or trauma situation.

Anica Seat, emergency telecommunicator for

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Porter County Central Communications, is one of those trained in EMD. During her fourth month on the job, Seat answered a 911 call that put this training into action.

“A 13-year-old boy called and said his mom was slumped over on the couch, and that it didn’t look like she was breathing,” Seat explained. “As soon as he told me that, I went into ‘go mode’ and began following the protocol for high priority situations.”

As she collected information from the boy, Seat discovered he was calling from an inactive cell phone. This means he could call 911, but she would be

## DID YOU KNOW?

Indiana emergency dispatchers can also receive and respond to emergency service requests via text message. In 2020, Indiana emergency dispatchers received more than 13,000 911 text messages from Hoosiers in need of emergency services.

unable to call him back if the call disconnected. Seat then began instructing him how to perform CPR on his mother.

“I had him place her on her back, told him where to place his hands and counted over the phone with him as he did the chest compressions,” Seat said. “It’s usually easier to explain

CPR to children than adults, as adults often get hysterical, whereas children don’t always fully understand what is going on.”

The boy successfully performed CPR until first responders arrived, and they rushed his mother to the hospital, where she later made a full recovery.

This is just one of an infinite number of possible emergency scenarios dispatchers can encounter while answering 911 calls.

“I like being able to say I’m a dispatcher, and I like helping people,” Seat said. “I know this job isn’t something anyone can do, but I’m so thankful that I can do it.”



Anica Seat, displaying the Life Saver Certificate she received for her efforts during the 911 call with the 13-year-old boy.

### NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK OBSERVED: APRIL 11-17, 2021

Visit [www.npstw.org](http://www.npstw.org) for more information on National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.



## EDUCATIONAL TOOL HIGHLIGHTS PROCESS FOR SAFE PUBLIC FIREWORKS DISPLAYS

Indiana law requires the Indiana State Fire Marshal to issue permits for all public fireworks displays, yet many communities do not understand their responsibilities at the local level to ensure celebrations are safe according to industry standards.

Even though the State Fire Marshal may approve a permit, it is required for the local fire marshal or local fire chief to inspect the fireworks launch site before the event. Should something significant be out of place, the local fire department has the authority to shut down a public display as well.

“All departments prioritize safety during these displays, but we’re seeing a gap in the number of physical inspections being done at the local level,” said Indiana State Fire Marshal Joel Thacker. “What we’re providing for the fire service is the framework to help them complete their requirements to ultimately keep their communities safe by enforcing standard practices

and codes associated with fireworks.”

A new virtual training presentation now exists in [Acadis](#) to remind local fire chiefs of the rules associated with the various types of fireworks. This tool can be accessed on the [Acadis](#) site, and it should be shared with local rescue teams to protect the public, Thacker said.

“From the type of shell you’re using to the distance between your fireworks launch site and public viewing areas, all of these standards are laid out,” said Mark Hart, a Zionsville firefighter with more than 20 years of expertise in fireworks displays. Hart also works for a professional fireworks company.

“Many local fire chiefs, especially in the more rural and volunteer areas, just aren’t aware of their responsibilities and the need for them to inspect these sites personally.”

A few of the standard rules for fireworks operators include: must be at least 18, show some degree of experience with fireworks display and receive a permit from the Indiana State Fire Marshal. A local fire inspector is required to meet with the operator on site and discuss the launch area and safety plans associated with any accidents.

Another challenge relates to the type of site plan necessary to safely launch a fireworks display. Some submitted plans do not include shell information while others do not submit a detailed drawing of any landmarks in the launch zone. All these details are critical to a safe event.

“At the end of the day, the goal is to have a fun and safe fireworks display. We are all on the same team here when it comes to safety, and a few operating changes can make a big difference where fireworks are concerned,” Hart added.



# A DAY TO REMEMBER: TELLING THE STORIES OF HOOSIERS DURING 9/11

This September marks 20 years since the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. Almost 3,000 people were killed, including 400 first responders who were on scene in New York City. Thousands more responders and survivors have developed 9/11-related cancer and other illnesses, adding to the number of line-of-duty deaths.

Numerous first responders from Indiana helped at the sites of the terrorist attacks, and many more responders and emergency management personnel worked hard here in the Hoosier State to protect life and property. Some may even have entered the career field because of 9/11.

To pay homage to Hoosier men and women who played an important role in and after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security will be publishing a special 9/11 20th Anniversary edition of The Hoosier Responder later this year. The Public Affairs staff also will be working on related media projects to help tell the stories of Hoosiers during the trying times of September 2001.

If you have a story to share, please go to [Remembering 9/11](#) and let IDHS know.

## 9/11 20TH ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE PROJECTS

IDHS wants to hear your 9/11 story.

- Did you travel to New York, Pennsylvania or Washington, D.C., in response to the terrorist attacks?
- Were you serving as a first responder or in emergency management in Indiana on Sept. 11, 2001, and the days after?
- Did 9/11 influence your choice to enter a first-response or emergency management career?
- Did you respond on 9/11 as a member of the military or National Guard and later enter the field of public safety in Indiana?
- Do you know of a K9 or K9 handler from Indiana that helped respond on 9/11?
- Did you participate in the response as a member of a Volunteer Organization Active in Disasters (VOAD)?
- Do you know someone who fits one of these categories, or do you have another 9/11 story with an Indiana connection that needs to be told?
- Is your organization planning a 9/11 20th Anniversary event?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, go to [Remembering 9/11](#) and let IDHS know.



## PURDUE GLOBAL OFFERS VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS DEGREE PATHWAY

Story by Tom Schott, Purdue University

A new partnership between Purdue University and the Indiana Volunteer Firefighters Association (IVFA) provides a pathway for prospective firefighters to pursue a bachelor's degree and advance their careers.

More than 80 percent of the fire service across Indiana consists of volunteer firefighters, those public safety professionals who put themselves in harm's way to protect and serve the public with little or no compensation. This new partnership will provide students a [free portfolio assessment and capstone course](#) (\$1,500 value) for up to 250 IVFA members who live in Indiana and enroll in the program.

"The role of a first responder today is more challenging than ever before," said Joel Thacker, Indiana State Fire Marshal. "This partnership between the IVFA and Purdue Global will help public safety personnel obtain

the necessary education and training to meet the challenges now and in the future."

The program launched on March 1. The Purdue Global course waivers are available to the first 250 IVFA members who are Indiana residents, complete a Purdue Global portfolio development course and submit a portfolio for review by Jan. 30, 2022, enroll in Purdue Global and enter their bachelor's degree capstone course no later than Dec. 1, 2026.

"The Indiana Volunteer Firefighters Association welcomes the partnership between our association and Purdue Global," IVFA President David R. Israel said. "As we attempt to recruit new and younger members, this opens even more doors of opportunity. Our hope is that this might be the benefit that will attract our needed future, new and younger members to serve as

volunteers in public safety."

The portfolio waiver is valued at \$1,500 and is open to the first 250 eligible members who submit their credentials for either Academic Prior Learning Portfolio (EL206) or Pathway to College Credit – Portfolio Development (LRC100) for assessment.

To qualify for the bachelor's capstone tuition waiver, eligible individuals must first submit an experiential learning portfolio.

"We are proud to join forces with the Indiana Volunteer Firefighters Association to do our part in recognizing the tremendous sacrifice made by these selfless heroes across our state," Purdue Global Chancellor Frank Dooley said. "These men and women sacrifice so much to serve their communities. We look forward to welcoming them to the Purdue family and seeing them realize career progression and personal growth."

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## IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSISTANCE

In 2020, Ivy Tech Community College partnered with the IVFA to launch a [scholarship program](#) to cover student tuition and fees for two years for those interested in becoming a firefighter or EMS responder.

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security also serves as a partner in the program.

Both the Purdue University and the Ivy Tech programs are designed to increase recruitment to the fire service and provide pathways to grow careers.

The Ivy Tech program initially received \$250,000 in funding support during the launch. Students can attend part-time or full-time, and there is no credit-hour requirement per semester. Students also can pursue a degree at any Ivy Tech campus.

[Read more about the program.](#)

# TRAINING FIRST RESPONDERS TO BE LEADERS

When firefighters aspire to become chiefs, they understand that being the top fire official for a department involves much more than running hose and putting water on structures. Yet, some new chiefs discover the hard way they were much better equipped to fight fires and save lives than manage people and direct policy.

Many chiefs learn on the job how to be leaders, which can be a difficult process full of personalities and sometimes politics — not exactly familiar territory for some public safety personnel. A new program established by the Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy will address this gap to prepare fire executives for all the challenges of leadership and the realities of running a business that serves the public.

[Indiana House Bill 1270](#), if approved by the General Assembly and signed into law, will create the Fire Chief Executive Training Program, a mandatory

program for new fire chiefs to complete within the first year of appointment. Chiefs of volunteer departments will be exempt from the mandatory program but are encouraged to attend if possible.

“Today’s fire service is not the same as it was 20 years ago or even five years ago,” said Wade Walling, director of the Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy. “A fire chief needs to have a solid foundation of knowledge, skills and abilities to be effective at running a fire department. The course is designed to provide those well-rounded skills to help someone new to the job be successful.”

The six-day program will be available to chief officers, management-level personnel, volunteer fire chiefs and other leadership personnel. Only career fire chiefs will be required to complete the course beginning Jan. 1, 2022.

The course combines three National Fire Academy courses

that hit on challenges, administrative and contemporary issues, as well as multiple Indiana-specific topics.

The course will be free to attend and feature instruction from Academy staff, elected leaders and firefighting leaders across Indiana. Registration will be through the Acadis Portal, with the inaugural class to begin in August 2021.

Indiana has a well-established leadership program for police chiefs, and this new program is considered long overdue for the fire service, according to Joel Thacker, Indiana State Fire Marshal.

“We want to train the best firefighters we possibly can in Indiana, but we’re also in the business of training leaders who impact their community,” Thacker said. “Learning these skills early in their career can help fire chiefs better face challenges down the road.”



# Grants

## GRANT UPDATES

IDHS has opened the [Nonprofit Security Grant Program \(NSGP\) for 2021 Grant Applications](#). The NSGP is a competitive grant program intended to provide federal funding for physical security enhancements and other related activities to nonprofits for potential terrorist attacks.

IDHS also has opened priority funding applications and non-priority funding applications for the [FFY2021 State Homeland Security Program grant](#).

Application information, including the notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) and supporting documentation, is available online [for NSGP](#) and [for SHSP](#).

All proposals and budgets, including any specific requirements discussed in the grant NOFO, must be submitted to [grants@dhs.in.gov](mailto:grants@dhs.in.gov) by 5 p.m. EDT on April 23, 2021.

### PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL GRANT SEASON

The beginning of the year is also a good time to update Indiana bidder and vendor numbers and verify that federal DUNS and SAM registrations are current. Many of the IDHS grants require at least two, and in some cases all four, of these registration numbers.

Organizations should also access their IntelliGrants accounts and verify all pertinent administrators to ensure continued communication.

### STAY IN CONTACT

IDHS Grants Management updates are announced through email as part of the agency's GovDelivery platform. Individuals interested in receiving updates are encouraged to sign up for the agency's mailing list and verify their contact preferences are up to date through the [Grants Management webpage](#).

For more information, or to request assistance, [submit a Grants Management Support ticket](#). Staff will respond in 48 to 72 hours.



# HAZMAT HAPPENINGS

## EXERCISE PROPOSALS

The deadline for 2021 exercise proposals is May 1, 2021. The Indiana Emergency Response Commission has announced that local emergency planning committees (LEPCs) that are not able to complete an exercise in 2021 would not be penalized, although LEPCs are encouraged to consider virtual options such as tabletops, seminars or workshops for 2021.

LEPC exercises are not required to be HSEEP-compliant, although it is encouraged and allows communities to build toward more involved exercises in 2022 and beyond.

# RECOVERY RECKONINGS

## UPDATES FROM IDHS PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Public Assistance (PA) program continues to accept both requests for public assistance (RPAs) and project application submissions associated with the COVID-19 disaster event, also known as DR4515. Each of these can be submitted through the [FEMA Grants Portal website](#).

To date, more than **\$15 million** in project applications have been obligated for reimbursement, and an additional **\$18 million** in project applications are being reviewed by FEMA. It is expected that more project applications will be submitted in the coming weeks and months, as this disaster event is still considered ongoing. Obligated project applications have included expenses such as personal protective equipment, vaccine activities and other emergency protective measures.

New users can still register their organizations directly on the Grants Portal site and submit their own RPAs for consideration. Applicants who have questions about the PA program can visit the [IDHS PA Program webpage](#) for more information, or contact IDHS PA staff at [pa@dhs.in.gov](mailto:pa@dhs.in.gov).

# BUSINESS CONTINUITY AWARENESS WEEK



MAY 17–21, 2021

Business Continuity Awareness Week (BCAW) 2021 is coming up May 17-21. This year's theme, "Business Continuity Starts with You," emphasizes the importance in educating and empowering employees regarding how their employer's plans will operate in case of a crisis and how to safely mitigate risks threatening normal business operations.

## INVESTING

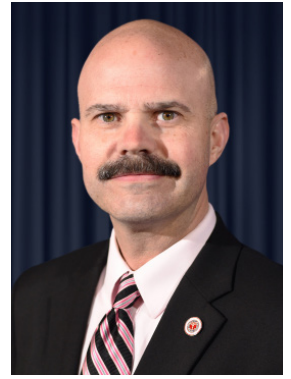


## CONTINUITY

For more information on how to get involved in BCAW 2021, visit <https://www.thebci.org/>.

# MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL

March 23 marked my one-year milestone serving as Indiana State Fire Marshal, completing a challenging but inspiring twelve months. I am proud to have worked alongside so many dedicated people across the state who — despite COVID-19 — continue to provide a needed service to their communities. As hard as it has been at times, the public safety community has fought through the pandemic to protect and serve Hoosiers in tremendous ways.



Traveling to more than half of Indiana's 92 counties in the past year, I often heard about the training needs and policy changes with the potential to enhance service delivery. For example, first responders in rural areas across Indiana have a great need for mechanical aids to CPR, which have the potential to offset the very limited staffing for some of these crews. This information was presented to the EMS Commission, which voted and approved for this skill to be added to the EMR level. Grants are available to many small departments for these aids to help them better serve their communities.

We all should be feeling more hopeful with the return of spring; yet, we need to remain focused on doing our part to protect ourselves and others. This includes getting vaccinated, wearing masks when necessary and social distancing. Although we continue to see low rates of hospitalizations and deaths, we are reminded by the recent passing of Kokomo Capt. Marty Meyers, who died last month from COVID-19 complications. This virus is still very much real, and the family and friends of Capt. Meyers know that better than anyone. In his memory, and for their sake, please use caution to stop the spread.

Our staff remains busy serving Hoosiers as well. The massive undertaking of the entire NCAA tournament being held in Indiana called for a lot of work from our Code Enforcement staff to ensure compliance and safety at the many venues used during the tournament. [Code Enforcement conducted fire-safety inspections with facilities and their staffs.](#) Radiological response personnel also worked with federal, state and local law enforcement to monitor for potential threats. This behind-the-scenes work paid off, as the tournament was a success with no relevant incidents.

IDHS will continue to work for all Hoosiers, both in the pandemic response and while performing its regular duties. I look forward to seeing more of you in the coming months to share some of this good work and better learn how we can collaborate more to improve public safety across Indiana.

Stay healthy and safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel Thacker'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light gray feather graphic that extends from the bottom right towards the center of the page.

Joel Thacker  
Indiana State Fire Marshal



# UPCOMING TRAININGS

## APRIL

04/13	Advanced ICS Command & General Staff	BROWNSBURG
04/13	Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents	CRAWFORDSVILLE
04/16	CERT Train-the-Trainer	INDIANAPOLIS
04/17	Ground Search II (Operations)	BRAZIL
04/23	Basic Tracking/Trailing Tech. for K-9s	BRAZIL
04/24	Intermediate Tracking/Trailing Tech. for K-9s	BRAZIL
04/28	Advanced ICS Command & General Staff	MARTINSVILLE

## MAY

05/14	K-9 Pretest	BRAZIL
05/15	K-9 Credentialing	BRAZIL
05/21	Basic Land Cadaver Search Tech. for K-9s	BRAZIL
05/22	Intermediate Land Cadaver Search Tech. for K-9s	BRAZIL

Register for classes on the [ACADIS Portal](#)

# ONLINE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMS

The IDHS EMS Section has established the **IDHS EMS Leadership Series**, designed to provide new EMS directors or operations officers important training to better interact with the EMS Commission, IDHS and the EMS legal requirements in Indiana.

The first two offerings of the new EMS Leadership Series are now available in [Acadis](#):

- [EMS Organization Director and Operations State Responsibilities Overview](#) (“Operations” in Acadis) targets any operations level position or above for administrative coverage of rules, requirements for reporting various matters and general overview of relevant EMS certifications, education and operations.
- [So Ordered ... the EMS Complaint and Disciplinary Process](#) (“Complaints and Disciplinary Process” in Acadis).

Future offerings will include EMS Training Officer, EMS Training Institutions and EMS Supervising Hospitals.

## RECORDED MEETINGS

Additionally, IDHS has converted Teams meeting video into [Acadis](#) content, so certain meetings can viewed in your Acadis account and counted for EMS continuing education credit. The EMS Education Workgroup and the EMS Commission meetings are being added to Acadis.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## DONATE LIFE MONTH

**OBSERVED: APRIL 2021**

This year's theme of "Garden of Life" showcases everyone's opportunity to foster and enhance communities by becoming a registered organ, tissue and eye donor. In March, a [Greenwood man was identified](#) as the first person in the state to receive a double lung transplant as a result of battling COVID-19. Messaging on how to register as an organ donor can be shared on social media and at community outreach events.

For additional ways to participate during Donate Life Month, visit [donatelife.net](https://donatelife.net).

## NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK

**OBSERVED: APRIL 11–17, 2021**

Emergency responses often begin with a call to 911, and public safety telecommunicators are always ready 24/7 on the other end of the phone line to help connect EMS, firefighters and law enforcement with those in need of emergency services. National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week is dedicated to honoring the work of public safety telecommunicators and recognizing their vital role as first responders.

Visit [www.npstw.org](https://www.npstw.org) for more information on National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

## BUILDING SAFETY MONTH

**OBSERVED: MAY 2021**

The annual international campaign strives to promote the need for adopting modern, regularly updated building codes. Every week of Building Safety Month has a theme highlighting a key safety area that is impacted by building codes.

For more information on the weekly themes and how to participate, visit [iccsafe.org](https://iccsafe.org).

## MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

**OBSERVED: MAY 2021**

For more than 70 years, Mental Health Month has shared the importance of placing value in caring for one's mental health. The month's theme of "Tools 2 Thrive" aims to provide individuals with practical tools that can help improve mental health.

Visit [mhanational.org](https://mhanational.org) for more information on Mental Health Month.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## ARSON AWARENESS WEEK

**OBSERVED: MAY 2–8, 2021**

Each year during the month of May, the U.S. Fire Administration chooses one week to highlight the importance of learning more about arson fires and how to help prevent them.

For more information on Arson Awareness Week, visit [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov). A host of safety resources are available at [GetPrepared.in.gov](http://GetPrepared.in.gov) as well.

## EMS WEEK

**OBSERVED: MAY 16–22, 2021**

The annual National EMS Week honors the dedication of EMS personnel and spreads awareness of medical safety. On each day, a different theme will highlight specific areas of the EMS field such as National Stop the Bleed. Consider encouraging community members to enroll in a Stop the Bleed or CPR course.

Visit [acep.org](http://acep.org) for more information on the daily themes.

## BUSINESS CONTINUITY AWARENESS WEEK

**OBSERVED: MAY 17–21, 2021**

Business Continuity Awareness Week 2021 highlights the importance of collaboration with the theme of “Business Continuity Starts with You.” This year’s theme emphasizes the importance for employees to understand their employer’s plans in case of a crisis and understanding how to safely mitigate risks threatening normal business operations.

To learn more about continuity of operations/government, visit [in.gov/dhs](http://in.gov/dhs).

## NATIONAL DAM SAFETY AWARENESS DAY

**OBSERVED: MAY 31, 2021**

In remembrance of the May 31, 1889, South Fork Dam failure in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, that killed more than 2,000 individuals, National Dam Safety Awareness Day encourages the public to learn about how they can prevent future dam failures. IDHS encourages areas to focus on low head dam safety as residents begin their summer activities.

To learn more about dam safety, visit [GetPrepared.in.gov](http://GetPrepared.in.gov).

*The Indiana Department of Homeland Security works 24/7  
to protect the people, property and prosperity of Indiana.*



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Indiana Department of Homeland Security  
302 West Washington Street  
Indiana Government Center South  
Room E208  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317.232.2222 or 800.669.7362

