

# The Hoosier Responder



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IERC presented its annual awards on August 21. Winners are pictured above.

## Indiana Emergency Response Conference Announces 2015 Award Winners

The Indiana Emergency Response Conference (IERC) presented its annual awards on August 21, 2015. The conference provides educational opportunities for firefighters, emergency medical services (EMS), law enforcement, hazardous materials professionals and special operations professionals.

Comments are from nomination forms. Award recipients are:

### Fire Instructor of the Year (Individual)

*Andy Ambers, City of Lawrence Fire Department*

Ambers works to ensure that all students attending classes receive plenty of practice at skills, allowing additional time for recruits to address areas that need improvement. His willingness to pass on knowledge, wisdom and passion for the job to any firefighter willing to learn has earned Ambers distinction in his field.

### Fire Instructor of the Year (Division)

*Carmel Fire Department, Training Division*

Carmel Fire Department's training division has provided firefighters with first class training opportunities while

leading two recruit classes over the last year. The department's dedication to a variety of training scenarios led to the creation of "Container City," a two story facility for hose line stretches, search and rescue exercises and other operations.

### Ambulance Provider Public Relations Award

*Memorial Hospital Ambulance Services (Jasper, IN)*

To improve the public's understanding of its emergency medical services, Memorial Hospital Ambulance Services created an education initiative that spans from area schools to community centers and events. The initiative works to disseminate information about services available in the area, and provide answers to common questions.

### Dispatcher of the Year

*Andi Wainscott, Switzerland County Sheriff's Department*

Over a five-hour period, Wainscott dispatched and helped coordinate more than 100 emergency responders and public works staff, including out-of-state resources, to rescue a man pinned 12 feet down in a collapsed trench. Wainscott worked that shift



Patoka firefighters practice in their recently dedicated training center, which contains a stair prop and a window for ingress and egress practice.

## New Training Center Honors Departed Colleagues

The Patoka Township Volunteer Fire Department dedicated a training building on Sunday, August 9, honoring two former members, Chris Peak and Lora Hurst.

Peak, a captain and instructor who passed away on August 9, 2014, was instrumental in the completion of grant proposals, including those that secured two tankers for the department. Hurst, who passed away in February 2013, was a member of the department and a former director of the department's board.

The training center includes a stair prop to allow firefighters to practice advancing hose lines and a window for ingress and egress practice. The Patoka Township VFD is located near Winslow, Ind., and provides fire and emergency medical services to roughly 3,600 citizens.

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## Hoosiers Encouraged to Take Action During Preparedness Month

September is Preparedness Month in Indiana – a month-long effort to educate Hoosiers on how to prepare for disasters and emergencies. This month, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) strongly encourages emergency personnel to spread safety awareness to local citizens and educate them on what actions to take to prepare.

Indiana is threatened by different types of natural hazards each year: thunderstorms, tornadoes, earthquakes or snow storms; and if one of these devastates an area, citizens could be stranded for multiple days without water, heat or electricity.

To prepare for such an emergency, IDHS urges Hoosiers to create a disaster kit. A survey conducted by IDHS in 2013 found that almost half of the households did not have basic

provisions, items like food and water. Even the basic of disaster kits will help if a disaster strikes.

At the minimum, a disaster kit should include a three-day supply of water and nonperishable food for each person in the household. It is recommended to stock a gallon of water per day, per person.

### Disaster Kit Items

Here are some other items to include in a disaster kit:

- First aid kit
- Hand crank or battery operated flash light with backup batteries as needed
- Emergency radio
- Extra clothes (sturdy shoes, long sleeve shirt, jeans, socks)
- Copies of important documents and identification

It is also essential to have a plan in place and know what actions to take when a disaster strikes. Being prepared for a disaster will better the chances of survival. During Preparedness Month, Hoosiers are encouraged to review, or create, plans for all major disasters.

Every household should have a plan for what to do in case of a fire, tornado, earthquake severe thunderstorm, or other natural or man-made disasters and emergencies that could cause prolonged power outages. Know the quickest way out of the house during a fire, and which rooms are the safest during a tornado.

Preparedness Month is not only for families at home. Indiana businesses are encouraged to develop and practice disaster management plans during Preparedness Month as well.

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## The Great Central U.S. ShakeOut Earthquake Drill is Oct. 15

It's not too late to sign up for the Great Central U.S. ShakeOut – the world's largest earthquake drill – which will be held on Oct. 15 at 10:15 a.m.

The ShakeOut provides an opportunity to practice proper safety measures in the event of an earthquake, and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) encourages public safety personnel throughout Indiana to register and participate in the drill, and to get their communities involved as well. This includes businesses, nonprofit organizations, schools, churches, hospitals, families or individuals. For resources on how to prepare for or publicize a ShakeOut event, visit [GetPrepared.in.gov](http://GetPrepared.in.gov). Participation can be as simple as practicing drop, cover and hold on, and here's how it works: on October 15 at 10:15 a.m., participants should drop to the ground, take cover under a table or desk and hold on as if a major earthquake were happening.

The days leading up to the ShakeOut are also a great time to emphasize the importance of additional preparedness steps. This includes checking houses, workplaces or schools for potential earthquake hazards, devising an emergency plan or creating a preparedness kit that can be used for a variety of situations, not just earthquakes. For resources on earthquake preparedness, disaster kits or emergency plans, visit [GetPrepared.in.gov](http://GetPrepared.in.gov).

A total of 2.3 million people in the Central U.S. region have registered for the ShakeOut so far, and Indiana is currently in the lead with more than 600,000 registrants, but Illinois is a close second at 530,000. Other states participating in the 2015 Shakeout include Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Iowa, Louisiana, Kansas and Tennessee.

To learn how individuals, families or organizations can participate in the

**Join Us**  
in the  
**World's Largest**  
**Earthquake Drill.**  
October 15, 2015  
[www.ShakeOut.org](http://www.ShakeOut.org)  
**Shake Out**

2015 Great Central U.S. ShakeOut or to register, visit [GetPrepared.in.gov](http://GetPrepared.in.gov).

The ShakeOut is led by local emergency management agencies, the IDHS, the Indiana Geological Survey, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Indiana Department of Education, the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

## Firefighter Line-of-Duty Deaths Honored

On September 1, firefighters from around the state gathered to honor colleagues that have passed away in the line of duty during the Indiana Fallen Fire Fighters Annual Remembrance. This year, five fallen heroes were remembered:

- Steven A. Mitchell, Huntington Fire Department
- Donald M. Hochstetler, Wayne Township Fire Department

- James J. Knesek, Sr., Munster Fire Department
- Tom D. Stevens, Sr., Bright Volunteer Fire Company
- Jamie Middlebrook, New Carlisle Fire Department

“We are all blessed because of their service and their sacrifice,” said Thomas Hanify, president of the Professional Firefighters Union of Indiana, during the service.

Hosted annually since 2004 by the Professional Firefighters Union of Indiana, the service takes place at the Indiana Law Enforcement and Fire Fighters Memorial, located on the Indiana Statehouse campus. Approximately 300 Hoosier firefighters are honored by the memorial, which was dedicated in 2001.

## IDHS Investigator Honored at Fire Investigator’s Conference

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) saw one of its own honored at a recent Fire Investigator’s Conference that was held in Plainfield, IN.

IDHS Fire Investigator Matt Wells was recently awarded the Lawrence William Tuck Fire Investigator of the Year Award by the Indiana Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators (IN-IAAI). The award is given to an inspector who has shown outstanding achievement in both the criminal and civil fields of fire investigation.

“Matt has done an exemplary job for this agency, and more importantly, for this state,” said State Fire Marshal Jim Greeson. “His arrest record speaks for itself, but it’s always nice to see hard-working investigators like him get recognition like this.”

Wells, who has been with IDHS since 2011, has undertaken investigations that led to a total of 17 arrests in 2014 and 15 arrests to date in 2015. IDHS Fire Investigations Chief Bob Dean nominated Wells for the award.



Left to right: IDHS Arson Investigator Fred Sumpter, IDHS Fire Investigations Section Chief Bob Dean, Fred Daffer (IDHS retired), IDHS Arson Investigator Matt Wells, IDHS Arson Investigator Clayton Kinder

## Meth Operations Add Additional Layer of Danger for First Responders

First responders often go into a situation not knowing exactly what they will encounter. Unfortunately, it is becoming more and more common that they answer a medical, domestic or other call, only to find themselves standing in the middle of a methamphetamine operation.

Indiana Department of Homeland Security Hazmat Specialist Larry Hamby teaches first responders how to better protect themselves by recognizing the telltale signs of whether or not a meth operation is going on at a location:

- Common household items in uncommon quantities;

- Unusual security measures or ventilation methods in a home;

Certain behaviors and signs people exhibit can be indicators of meth use, including:

- Bad teeth,
- Agitated or aggressive behavior,
- Hyperactivity,
- Paranoia,
- Dilated pupils and
- Talkativeness.

The Indiana State Police reported 106 law enforcement injuries from 2000-2014 from meth lab operations. Most involve exposure to dangerous gases emitted during the meth cooking process. Many of the

chemicals used are corrosive and cause serious burns to sinuses and lungs if inhaled.

“We encourage our first responders to make a quick assessment of their surroundings and adjust their protocol accordingly,” said Hamby. “Oftentimes it’s the local officials who come upon a meth lab. They are to immediately secure the area and wait for hazmat personnel to process the scene.”

Hamby started to see a few meth operations in 1993, and within two years he said “we were finding them literally in the hundreds.” After cold and allergy medications containing

## 2015 IERC Award Winners (Continued From Page 1)

alone, covering the entire county while managing the incident. The victim, while seriously injured, survived.

### **Heroic Rescue Award**

*Shane Hardwick and Troy Wymer, Wayne Township Fire Department (Indianapolis)*

In the late summer of 2014, a crew was dispatched to a motor vehicle crash including entrapment. Crews arrived on scene to find the patient's leg trapped under the engine. Despite the life saving measures in place, the patient was deteriorating quickly. The team decided that a field amputation was required to save the patient's life. Medical control was contacted and granted approval for a field amputation. As soon as the procedure, done with EMS scissors, was complete, the patient was transported to the hospital, where the patient was stabilized and recovered.

### **Basic Life Support Provider of the Year (Fire-based)**

*Vincennes Township Fire District*

This past year, Vincennes Township Fire District implemented a public access defibrillation program, placing a dozen automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in the community, and provided hands only CPR classes taught by EMS staff. The district also added new mechanical CPR devices to frontline rigs to deliver consistent, high quality chest compressions in the rural community. Vincennes Township Fire District also rolled out a complete revision of EMS protocols, allowing the most up-to-date skills to be provided to a patient suffering a medical or trauma emergency.

### **Advanced Life Support Provider of the Year (Fire-based)**

*Richmond Fire Department*

Richmond Fire Department (RFD) was forced to quickly move forward in its Emergency Medical Services plans when the local private provider abruptly left the area. RFD became the advanced life support transport

provider effective July 1, 2014, covering 24 square miles and a population of 36,500. In the past 12 months, the department has responded to approximately 8,000 medical calls resulting in 6,194 emergency transports. In addition, RFD was recently certified as an emergency medical technician training provider and is currently working with local law enforcement agencies to place paramedics on the local SWAT team.

### **Advanced Life Support Provider of the Year (Non-fire based)**

*LaPorte County EMS*

LaPorte County EMS has been working to improve public awareness and education, establishing a relationship with area newspapers including updates, as well as articles and tips to the general public. LaPorte County EMS has also partnered with the High School Health Occupations Student Association program, where they teach students basic life support skills needed daily on the ambulance. At the end of the year, the students take that knowledge and compete with other high schools.

### **Firefighter of the Year**

*Jack Eskridge, Lowell Volunteer Fire Department*

Eskridge has more than 40 years of service to his community, and has held nearly every rank within his department, including fire chief. Over the last five years he has coordinated efforts to raise funds for Hoosier Burn Camp, raising more than \$250,000. Eskridge also works to serve his entire county, organizing activities to raise funds to help support all fire departments in Lake County.

### **Fire Chief of the Year (Volunteer)**

*Jay Price, Black Township Fire and Rescue (Mount Vernon, IN)*

Price is known for service to others, joining the volunteer fire service at a young age and becoming fire chief by the age of 27. In his role as chief, he presides over the day-to-day

emergency operations for the most populated areas of Posey County. He has brought new financial resources into the county in the form of grants and foundation funding. Price is an executive officer that demonstrates a devotion to people who find themselves in need of social or emergency services. These attributes have earned him much respect in the fire service and public safety communities..

### **Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year**

*Megan Thiele, Decatur Township Fire Department (Indianapolis, IN)*

Thiele is a full time firefighter and paramedic and works part time as Decatur Township Fire Department's public educator. She is involved with the Indiana Safety Educators Section, has taken an instrumental lead validating the IDHS Public Educator Certification, and has assisted the State Fire Marshal with key education programs such as Fire Prevention Week. Thiele also conducts several Safe Sitter Courses annually for the community and assists with the grant writing process within the department so other programs such as Project Lifesaver and the Car Seat Program can continue. Most recently, she took the lead on a "Back to School Supply Drive" and generated enough supplies to outfit 500 students.

### **Primary (EMS) Instructor of the Year**

*Jeff Mason, Ivy Tech Community College (Terre Haute, IN)*

Mason is described as the kind of instructor everyone hopes to have, adapting his teaching style to help all students get the most out of his classes. He teaches to ensure the people on the streets saving lives are well educated and prepared for the worst. Mason is always improving and continuing his education as well, attending classes to become a registered nurse while working as a firefighter and paramedic and teaching full time.

## 2015 IERC Awards (Continued From Page 4)

### **EMS for Children Award**

*Kerri James, Trans-Care Ambulance (Brazil, IN)*

James was nominated after responding to a call with a 14-month-old patient in full anaphylactic shock. James took control and established IVs, monitoring and airway, taking the patient from barely breathing to being discharged from the ER just a few hours later. The nominator, a medical professional and mother, spoke specifically of James' caring and compassion, as James spoke to the mother while working on the patient. James was calm, fast, efficient, and very knowledgeable, and is attributed with saving both a child and a family.

### **EMT-Basic of the Year**

*Jeff Melvin, Harrison County Hospital EMS*

Melvin is an American Heart Association CPR and first aid instructor and has instructed hundreds of people over the years. He is the president of his local fire district board and a volunteer firefighter and car seat technician, always ready to meet with people who need a car seat inspection. He actively seeks out funding for car seats and conducts car seat clinics around the county and provides them free to people in need. He is additionally the president of the Safe Kids Chapter in his county, and has raised thousands of dollars to support his passion for preventing the needless injury and death of children.

### **Paramedic of the Year**

*Kerri James, Trans-Care Ambulance (Brazil, IN)*

On a daily basis, James interacts with numerous EMS personnel and continuously goes above and beyond. Proficient in skills and knowledgeable in the field, James strives to continue her learning and to be even better. She often checks on patients post care, providing the human touch that is often so important in patient care.

### **Medical Director of the Year**

*Dr. Michael Kaufmann, Carmel Fire Department and St. Vincent*

Dr. Kaufmann's dedication has resulted in several new, innovative practices this last year. Under his direction, Carmel Fire Department has embarked on creating a mobile integrated health program, designed to give citizens the medical attention they need, without stressing an already overburdened EMS system. In addition, he has established new policies, procedures, and training for the use of portable ultrasound machines in the field. Finally, Dr. Kaufmann has been a major contributor to the success of the Carmel Fire Department's EMS program and with his continued direction, the department looks forward to the improvements and changes in the next year.

### **Fire Officer of the Year**

*Robin Nicoson, Decatur Township Fire Department (Indianapolis, IN)*

Nicoson is dedicated and respected by

his subordinates and peers. In addition to his current responsibilities as a shift commander, he acts as the department's lead training and safety officer, is the chairman of the safety committee, the lead peer fitness trainer, and runs as a back-up fire investigator when needed. When off-duty, he is the lead instructor for Ivy Tech's Area 31 Fire Science Program and functions in the Planning Section for Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) and Indiana Task Force 1. He is also heavily involved with Indiana Department of Homeland Security's District 5 Training Program, teaching and organizing courses while staying up to date with requirements and changes.

### **EMS Officer of the Year**

*Chuck Valentine, Decatur Township Fire Department (Indianapolis, IN)*

Valentine has served his department for 35 years, currently overseeing the department's EMS Operations, including quality management and assurance. While maintaining his large workload, he makes several hundred runs annually to ensure that EMS is being delivered at a high rate of success. He teaches new EMT students for Ivy Tech Community College and is a member of the Indiana State EMS Commission. Valentine also volunteers his time as a logistics section coordinator for the Hands-On-Training for FDIC and is a part of the EMS Section for Indiana Task Force 1.

## EMAI 2015 Conference Approaching

The Emergency Management Alliance of Indiana (EMAI) and the Indiana Emergency Response Commission will co-host the 25<sup>th</sup> annual EMAI conference – "Decision Making – Under the Influence" – from Oct. 20-23 in Indianapolis.

The conference features a lineup of speakers from various agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the National Weather Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as Indiana Department of Homeland Security Director David Kane.

The EMAI, which consists of 15 board members from across the state, works to advance the emergency management profession in Indiana.

The organization serves as a widespread network of emergency management personnel that fosters a collaborative and supportive professional environment.

The conference will take place at the Marriott East in Indianapolis. Registration is now open. For more information, visit [indianaema.com](http://indianaema.com).

## Meth Operations (Continued From Page 3)

ephedrine became available over the counter, the meth industry appeared on the scene and continued to grow, Hamby said.

Indiana has been first in the number of meth lab takedowns for the last three years in a row. Hamby says there's still a lot of work to do. Unfortunately, only one in five meth labs are discovered, so Hamby says there is a real hidden danger out

there. He also mentioned extra care needs to be given to emergency runs in extended-stay hotels.

“Just recently in Peru, Indiana, a long-standing meth lab was uncovered in a 1940s-era motel. Two adjoining rooms had been a meth lab for some time, to the point remediation of the property was impossible,” said Hamby. The motel had to be torn down. Remediation

costs, if the work can be done, can run about \$10,000 per 2,000 square feet, according to Hamby.

“Used to be, about 70 percent of the meth labs were discovered during fire runs,” he said. “Now we are seeing more ‘one-pot operations.’ They can be harder to spot, but first responders must be diligent, hazmat-knowledgeable and aware of their surroundings.”

## State Inspectors Important Part of Safety at State Fair

Inspectors with the state fire marshal and building commissioner helped make the Indiana State Fair a success for employees, the more than 900,000 patrons, vendors and others.

Inspectors issued permits for amusement rides, the overall venue and buildings. Evaluations included:

- Amusement rides: properly maintained paperwork for training, maintenance and repair; rides operating safely and within manufacturer's specifications.
- Buildings, tents and other structures, including, as appropriate: Proper exiting, allowed number of people, electrical use, stove hood usage and safety, fire suppression and other safety measures.

The fire marshal and the state building commissioner are part of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

“The state fairgrounds is a year-round facility, so we're there often,” said Dave Smith, code enforcement section chief. “We're part of a larger overall safety picture, and during the state fair especially, inspectors work long hours.”

Beginning shortly after last year's fair, inspectors, in tandem with state fair staff, evaluated the overall safety

picture from 2014 and began making a plan for 2015. Then weeks before the fair, inspectors began meetings and education.

Amusement rides are a big part of the state fair experience for many. That's where Tom Hendricks and his team of amusement ride inspectors come in.

In addition to regular meetings throughout the year, directly before the fair started, all 48 rides were inspected. Any violations – which were mostly minor -- were usually fixed before we were done with that ride's inspection, said Hendricks, section chief for elevators, escalators and amusement rides.

Once the fair starts, amusement ride inspectors interact mainly with ride ownership, management and operators. “Inspectors do spot checks throughout the fair,” said Hendricks. “While the rides are running they also assess the operator's actions. We observe how they're taking care of riders; making sure they're checking all restraints before the ride begins, are attentive during the ride and get everyone off safely.”

Both code enforcement and amusement ride inspectors were on site during fair hours of operation, and were on-call when the fair was closed to handle any matters that



IDHS inspector Fred Whitaker performs a ride inspection before the Indiana State Fair began welcoming more than 900,000 patrons and vendors. Both code enforcement and amusement ride inspectors were on site during fair hours of operation. Inspectors do spot checks throughout the fair.

came up during overnight and early morning hours.

Smith and Hendricks both said the state fair is a team environment where ongoing relationships are important, and partnerships with the fair's public safety team, facilities personnel and vendors help make the fair compliant with Indiana's laws and helps keep visitors safe.

## Low Interest Disaster Loans Available in 27 Counties

Low interest disaster loans have been made available for residents, businesses and non-profit organizations in 27 counties that suffered damage during June in July.

Governor Mike Pence successfully sought the loans, which are available through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

The following counties are eligible: Adams, Allen, Bartholomew, Blackford, Brown, Clark, Delaware, Grant, Hendricks, Huntington, Jackson, Jay, Jefferson, Jennings, Johnson, Marion, Monroe, Morgan, Owen, Putnam, Randolph, Ripley, Scott, Switzerland, Wabash, Wells and Whitley.

Governor Pence directed the Indiana Department of Homeland Security to work with U.S. SBA to secure the low

-interest loans following the recurring thunderstorms that moved through much of Indiana in June and July.

Those suffering damage to personal or business property must return applications by October 19, 2015. The deadline to return economic injury applications -- which includes, for example, payroll, working capital and other business financial commitments -- is May 18, 2016.

### How to Apply for SBA Loans

Applicants may apply online using the Electronic Loan Application via SBA's secure website at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>.

Additional details on the loan application process can be obtained by calling the SBA Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (800-877-

8339 for the deaf and hard-of-hearing) or by sending an e-mail to [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov).

For more information about the SBA's Disaster Loan Program, visit <http://www.sba.gov/disaster>.

### Loan Amounts

Disaster loans up to \$200,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace disaster damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for up to \$40,000 to repair or replace disaster damaged or destroyed personal property.

Businesses and private non-profit organizations of any size may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace disaster damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory, and other business assets.

## Other SBA Declarations for Small Businesses, Non-Profits

### SBA Disaster #: IN 14426

Who: 88 Indiana counties (all except LaGrange, Perry, Spencer and Steuben)

What: Economic Injury Disaster Loans to be used for payroll, working capital and other financial commitments that could have been paid if not for the disaster.

Why: Result of the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture declaring a disaster in Indiana because of excessive rain and flooding beginning May 1.

Deadline: April 12, 2016

### SBA Disaster #: IL 14427

Who: Benton, Gibson, Knox, Lake, Newton, Posey, Sullivan, Vermillion, Vigo and Warren counties.

What: Economic Injury Disaster Loans to be used for payroll, working capital and other financial commitments that could have been paid if not for the disaster.

Why: Contiguous to counties in Illinois that received a disaster declaration as a result of excessive rain and flooding beginning on June 1.

Deadline: April 12, 2016

### SBA Disaster #: KY14419/14420

Who: Clark and Jefferson counties.

What: Economic Injury Disaster Loans to be used for payroll, working capital and other financial commitments that could have been paid if not for the disaster.

Why: Contiguous to counties in Kentucky that received a disaster declaration as a result of severe storms and flooding on July 11-20.

Deadline: May 12, 2016

Other restrictions may apply. Visit [www.in.gov/dhs/3852.htm](http://www.in.gov/dhs/3852.htm) for links to individual declarations.

## IDHS Partnering With Owen County First Responders

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) has been working alongside first responders in Owen County to investigate a deadly fire that killed a family of three on August 4.

The Franklin Township Volunteer Fire Department (FTVFD) was first on scene at the fire in Freedom, Ind. Following its arrival, FTVFD requested State Fire Marshal fire investigators, who have been assisting with the investigation since then.

It is unknown whether or not smoke detectors were present at the time of the fire. The investigation is ongoing.

## Preparedness Month (Continued From Page 2)

Businesses are at risk of natural disasters as well as accidental and criminal acts such as fires, hazardous material spills and terrorism.

### Business Readiness

IDHS suggests that businesses create a custom disaster plan based on the protection of human life, protection of property and protection of business continuity. These disaster plans should be comprehensive, well-communicated to employees and practiced regularly.

Making emergency preparedness plans may seem awkward, or even frightening, but they can increase confidence in one's ability to survive natural and man-made disasters and emergencies. Being a little prepared is better than not being prepared at all.

Hoosiers can also get involved during Preparedness Month by learning first aid. In an event where emergency personnel cannot reach you quickly, being able to administer first aid could save someone's life.

First aid classes are offered by many different sources throughout Indiana.

### IDHS Readiness Survey

IDHS is conducting another survey this year in an attempt to understand the needs of the population and how the agency can help educate Hoosiers on what actions to take should an emergency occur.

Be sure to take the quick survey on the agency's [website](#) under the "Featured Topics" section. All who participate can be entered to win a free all-hazards/weather radio.

Preparedness Month is a nationwide effort led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. For more information on how to prepare for disasters, visit [GetPrepared.in.gov](http://GetPrepared.in.gov)

### Help IDHS With Survey:

As part of Preparedness Month, IDHS is gathering information on Hoosier preparedness. The outcome of the survey will help provide a greater understanding of how to improve preparedness levels across the state. County EMAs and other emergency professionals can help by sharing the link: <http://goo.gl/forms/PJ5dBfvpd8>.

## IDHS Trains Broadcast Engineers for Disaster Situations

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) hosted a class for members of the Indiana Broadcasters Association (IBA) in an effort to provide better access to media facilities in Indiana that have suffered damage due to various disaster-related events.

The goal is for media to remain in working order or have as little downtime as possible so they can

continue to provide important messaging to the public. This entails getting repair staff and engineers into affected areas as quickly as possible, while maintaining safety.

The training was in response to a request from the IBA members.

Phil Brown, the Assistant Division Director of Response and Recovery with IDHS, taught the class, which

took place on August 21 and was facilitated by the Ivy Tech campus located in Peru, IN. The class covered topics such as traffic safety, emergency operations center (EOC) capabilities, communications, declaration processes and various emergency management tips. The information covered outlined ways for broadcasters to effectively maintain and operate facilities while doing so in a safe manner.

## Hoosiers Deployed to California and Idaho Wildfires

Indiana first-response professionals traveled to western states over the last several weeks to shadow colleagues battling major wildfires and to bring their front-line learning experiences back home.

The five-day deployments were coordinated by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS), and were the first educational opportunities offered through the Fire and Public Safety

Academy Training System, which went into effect July 1, 2015. The first team arrived in California, Aug. 18, and returned to Indiana Aug. 23. The second team departed Sept. 2, and returned to Indiana on Sept. 7.

"These trips are valuable learning opportunities for local first responders," said Jim Greeson, Indiana State Fire Marshal. "The ability to train and learn at this level is a rare event, and we are glad to

provide the experience to these individuals."

### California Team

The four were:

- Michael Heatt, battalion chief with the Lafayette Fire Department.
- Jason Hunt, chief of the French Lick Fire Department.
- Amir Mousavi, assistant chief of

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## Wildfires (Continued From Page 8)

the New Chapel Fire Department and director of safety for the City of Jeffersonville.

- Donald Watson, northeast emergency medical services coordinator for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

They were stationed at the River Complex fire, west of Redding, Calif., between San Francisco and the Oregon state line. As of Aug. 31, the fire had affected 68,933 acres of mountainous land in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, and was 38 percent contained, according to the [InciWeb](#) site of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

“It was great to see how so many resources can be coordinated to effectively respond to an incident,” said Mousavi. “So much preparation and effort was put into ensuring appropriate resources are on hand to set a camp that was relatively comfortable, clean and equipped with necessary resources. These things were important for morale and the safety and health of employees and responders.”

### Idaho Wildfire

The five Indiana first-response professionals in Idaho were:

- Scott Isaacs, Indianapolis Fire Department.
- Tom Ecker, Madison County Emergency Management Agency.
- Chantel Henson, White County Emergency Management Agency.
- David Stanley, Lafayette Fire Department
- Donald Watson, Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

They will be stationed at the Tepee Springs Fire, approximately 120 miles north of Boise, Idaho. As of early in September, the fire had affected 93,103 acres in the Payette National Forest, and was 30 percent contained,



Amir Mousavi, director of safety for the city of Jeffersonville, stands in front of a U.S. Department of Forestry helicopter in California on Aug. 21. The helicopter was grounded due to low visibility.

according to the [InciWeb](#) site of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

### General Deployment

Deploying emergency responders for operational and training experiences is an essential part of Indiana’s All-Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT) program. The Indiana groups are considered Type 3 AHIMTs, which focused on supporting and observing the more experienced Type 1 and Type 2 wildfire teams. The assignments provide professional development opportunities for Indiana first responders, and also support other states during large-scale emergencies.

A type 1 team handles larger, more complex incidents and has more

members. Type 3 teams handle smaller, more localized incidents and have fewer members.

“Incident Management Teams are an integral part of emergency response,” said Joe Romero, Director of Planning and Assessment. “Experiencing a large emergency and the scale of response necessary will allow these responders to better prepare, train and identify limitations.”

In 2014, IDHS also deployed two teams to wildfires in Alaska. In 2013, IDHS deployed a team to the Aspen fire in California.

# WebEOC: What It Is and Why All Counties (and Communities) Should Be Using It

WebEOC (Web Emergency Operations Center) is Indiana's online disaster information management system. It's a message board that allows emergency management officials and first responders to instantly share information with each other, make requests across jurisdictions and help document damage incurred and assets used during crisis response. In the aftermath of an emergency, WebEOC serves as a record of what took place.

## WebEOC Concentrates Information in One Spot

"WebEOC creates a common operating picture, so everyone understands what's happening during an incident," said Joe Meluch, Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) State EOC shift manager. "It takes all that information and feeds it into one location, so it's not a hunt for 92 or more different pieces of information that are kept different ways – there's one standard method."

## The Problem

Not enough counties and communities contribute to WebEOC. Meluch estimates that only half of Indiana's counties are active contributors. This leaves emergency management officials with an incomplete operating picture, impedes coordinated responses between counties, as well as significantly slowing of coordinated responses between counties and the state. Additionally, this makes it more difficult for the state to document damage and expenses after a disaster when seeking federal funds.

## How to Get Involved with WebEOC

There are two WebEOC levels: the state level and the IDHS district level. At the district level, anyone with access to WebEOC can contribute.

Access is typically given to those in public safety and can include individual police officers, health workers or firefighters. Counties can then filter through posts on the district board and decide what to push to the state board.

There are WebEOC administrators all over the state who can clear people for access, typically county EMA directors are administrators. To get involved with WebEOC, go to <https://webeoc.in.gov/eoc7/> and click "New User" to apply for an account.

## WebEOC Helps Coordinate Emergency Response

WebEOC can make response more efficient and effective. When local responders aren't sure what state agencies or assets they need, they can use WebEOC to communicate with the State EOC, which can then direct any available and appropriate state resources.

But WebEOC is not limited to state responses: counties can use it to help other counties.

For example: if there's an incident in Henry County requiring outside assistance and the emergency responders on scene are using WebEOC, all of the surrounding counties can get information about the incident simultaneously. Henry County doesn't have to repeat the information multiple times to any counties they're contacting to get assistance. This saves precious time, and it also allows nearby counties to be proactive.

## WebEOC Helps Document Damages and Expenses for Disaster Declarations

When public safety officials contribute damage and response reports to WebEOC, IDHS can document those expenses, which could lead to federal assistance funds

helping communities, counties and citizens rebuild.

On August 18, local, state and federal officials began conducting joint preliminary damage assessments in 29 counties to evaluate damage caused by severe weather and flooding from June and July, but they can't inspect or document damage that was never reported.

"If we don't know about (deployed assets or damage incurred), it's hard to say how much it cost or to include it in an incident," said Meluch. "If we don't know about it, we can't collate the cost back into the (disaster) declaration that we're sending to the president."

## What to Report to WebEOC

While the State EOC appreciates all information sharing, a few examples that are of particular interest include:

- Damage caused by severe weather;
- Incidents involving interstate closures;
- Hazmat incidents;
- Large fires involving more than one department;
- Active shooter incidents;
- Dam or levee problems or issues;
- Industrial accidents;
- Explosions of any kind; or
- Major electrical power interruptions.

For a more complete resource, please visit the [What to Report to the State EOC Reference Page](#).

## Mission

*The Indiana Department of Homeland Security will provide statewide leadership, exemplary customer service, and subject matter expertise for the enhancement of public and private partnerships and the assurance of local, state and federal collaboration to continually develop Indiana's public safety capabilities for the wellbeing and protection of our citizens, property and economy.*

## Contact

*The Hoosier Responder* is a publication of The Indiana Department of Homeland Security. Please direct any questions or comments to the IDHS Public Information Office at (317) 234-6713 or [pio@dhs.in.gov](mailto:pio@dhs.in.gov).

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