

THE HOOSIER RESPONDER

MAY 2024



BUILDING BETTER & STRONGER

INDIANA SEES GREAT PROGRESS IN NEW FIREFIGHTER TRAINING INITIATIVE

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- First responder mental health a priority in new video series
- Legislative changes making State Disaster Relief Fund more accessible
- Collaboration efforts strengthening search and rescue skills around the world
- New initiatives enhancing EMS pediatric outcomes
- Secured School Safety Grant: The impact after a decade of protecting schools
- Festival permits to know about during the summer season



CONTENTS

Making State Disaster Relief Funds More Accessible

4



International Collaboration in Search and Rescue

6



Medal of Valor Awards

7

New Initiatives to Enhance EMS Response to Children

8



Handtevy Funding Opportunities

10

Robin Stump Honored as Latest Golden Siren

11

A Decade of Protecting Indiana Schools with SSSG

12



IDHS Grants News

13

NextLevel Firefighting Enhancements

14

Ensuring Safety at Festivals

18



Beyond the Shadow: Total Solar Eclipse Recap

20

Hoosier Homeland Podcast

21



Supporting Firefighters' Mental Health on the Job

22

Upcoming Trainings

25

Upcoming Events

26



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

May continues the busy season for us at IDHS and for emergency management.

We made it through the primary election with only a few hiccups, despite a national concern of cyber criminals looking to wreak havoc on the election. This effort will not slow down through November, unfortunately. We have also been working closely with officials at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway to plan a safe and secure Indy 500 in a few days. Of course, severe weather is always a concern in Indiana in the spring.

Although these events occur every year, there is always a new challenge around the corner as IDHS fulfills its role. It reminds me of the importance of collaboration and relationships, inter-agency cooperation and the appreciation of the various roles of the public safety community. Preparing for the unexpected can only be successful with open communication and a commitment to supporting one another at every level: local, state and federal. Whether it is across the county line or a day trip from north to south across Indiana, we serve the community together.

Additionally, the environment in which public safety personnel serve is changing all the time. Fire territories are merging and growing, creating new challenges for responding to emergencies. This impacts everything from the level of service to response times. The same impacts are felt on the EMS side, and the impact is even greater with the added workforce shortages in the EMS industry. IDHS is working hard to help move the dial on this issue, with some much-needed help from the Indiana General Assembly. The growing costs of disasters across the country due to climate change (as well as a justified commitment to cybersecurity) are reducing the amount of federal funding to invest in emergency management, maybe at a time when we need it the most.

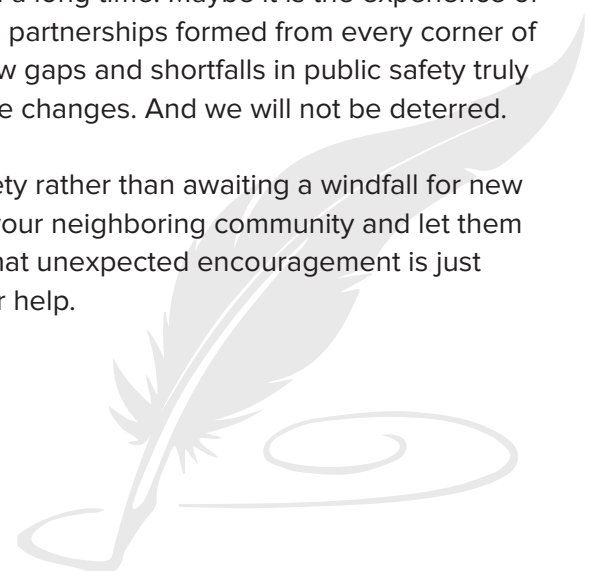
Alas, there is reason to be hopeful.

The public safety community in Indiana is stronger than it has been in a long time. Maybe it is the experience of long-time public servants in leadership roles or maybe it is due to the partnerships formed from every corner of the state. From mutual aid to initiatives to better understanding of how gaps and shortfalls in public safety truly develop, we all have been required to step up and lead through these changes. And we will not be deterred.

I encourage every leader to look at small ways to improve public safety rather than awaiting a windfall for new trucks, additional staffing or the latest and greatest technology. Call your neighboring community and let them know they have your support. On our challenging days, sometimes that unexpected encouragement is just what is needed to serve another shift or answer that late-night call for help.



Joel Thacker
Executive Director





CUTTING THE RED TAPE

MAKING STATE DISASTER RELIEF FUNDS MORE ACCESSIBLE

During the night of March 14, an EF-3 tornado crossed almost all of Randolph County, causing significant damage along a 17-mile path near Farmland, through Winchester and south of Union City.

“We were fairly fortunate,” said Randolph County EMA Chris Shaneyfelt, considering Winchester was the only densely populated area that received major damage.

After the tornado, Shaneyfelt and others from state and federal agencies spent 12 hours inspecting the destruction, finding 400 structures that had been damaged or destroyed. This led Gov. Eric J. Holcomb to declare a disaster area in Randolph County, along with Delaware and Jefferson counties, which also experienced tornadoes the same day. Altogether, more than 60 structures were destroyed and 72 were damaged severely, power outages affected about 10,000 homes and 39 people were injured. One person later died due to his injuries.

Shaneyfelt said the amount of debris that went into creeks and waterways was remarkable. Many homes were stripped to their foundations, as were a restaurant and church. Snapped and uprooted

trees were everywhere. Roads were impassable with downed power lines and other debris.

In the following days, roads were cleared and utility services restored. Neighborhood cleanups were organized or supported by various organizations, including the Red Cross, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, Randolph Central School Corporation and even a large contingent of Amish, who helped remove debris from farmers’ fields.

“Still,” Shaneyfelt said, “some folks are struggling.”

To help the recovery process, state and federal agencies set up shop to connect locals to resources, including applications for financial assistance. Shaneyfelt knows some have already been successful in receiving loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and are happy to get that boost, while others have had issues with their insurance companies. He said some residents did not have insurance, or not enough coverage, including one person who believed he or she had homeowners insurance but really only had renters insurance.

“That is where the [State Disaster Relief Fund](#) can play a huge role, especially when you coordinate it with Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs),” said IDHS Hazard Mitigation and Recovery Director Larry Cassagne. “Insurance is the best way Hoosiers can protect themselves in case of disasters, but when insurance falls short, the SDRF can step in to help Hoosiers get back on their feet.”

When personal insurance and federal subsidies are unavailable or do not apply, Indiana residents and local governments may meet the state’s criteria for disaster relief. The State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) is designed to assist with repairs to houses and buildings, but it also helps governments with public safety response costs and repairs to public infrastructure like roads and bridges.

As disasters become more prevalent nationwide and [federal assistance formulas adjust to raise the threshold](#) that each state must meet to qualify for federal disaster aid, it has become harder than ever for Hoosiers to meet federal requirements for disaster declarations and funding.

To counteract this, new state legislation is improving Indiana’s SDRF program (effective July 1) with changes that make accessing aid quicker and simpler for Hoosiers navigating the recovery process post-disaster. More changes will come as Indiana Administrative Code Title 290 is updated.



In general, the law changes how the SDRF can be used. It reforms the requirements for an eligible entity to receive money from the fund and simplifies the calculations used to determine how much an eligible entity may receive.

A fundamental change is the removal of the requirement that the U.S. SBA must declare a local disaster first to unlock the possibility for individuals to access the SDRF. This will allow SDRF funds to flow more quickly and directly to those who are eligible. Similarly, for Indiana municipalities and counties to receive SDRF public assistance, they will be able to apply based on state criteria instead of FEMA’s criteria.

“We thought, if we have our own program, why is it tied to other programs?” Cassagne said. “One part of the program’s changes that has caused major excitement for me is the potential that we can also do some mitigation measures along with providing financial assistance. We have never been able to do mitigation projects with the SDRF in the past, so we can now explore those possibilities.

“For example, let’s say residents have repeated flooding issues in their basements because the community’s storm sewer system is unable to contain the water and it backs up into homes. Maybe we can fund installing backflow preventers in the line to prevent and limit future damage,” he said.

In 2023, the SDRF assisted eight individuals in southern Indiana with \$71,973 and eight counties with \$810,212.49 in their disaster needs following August severe storms and a tornado. Six of the eight individuals received the maximum \$10,000 in SDRF relief; for disasters July 1 and beyond, the maximum award for an individual will increase to \$25,000. This higher amount considers rises in costs in recent years.

“The maximum \$25,000 for individuals, when you put that together with VOADs and their volunteer labor and donated materials, can almost rebuild things for a lot of people,” Cassagne said. “The increased amount is going to make a big difference.”



BEYOND BORDERS

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION STRENGTHENS SEARCH AND RESCUE EFFORTS

As all first responders know, training is a vital tool in the toolbox of emergency response. But what if your county, state or country lacks the infrastructure to facilitate training classes? What do you do if no one teaches these crucial skills?

In 2008, the IDHS Search and Rescue Program joined forces with South Korean first responders, highlighting the vital role partnerships play in emergency response, both locally and globally. It began with a handler spending four months in Indiana, marking the start of a collaborative effort to enhance skills and save lives across borders.

Following Japan's 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami, South Korea was asked to assist rescue and recovery efforts by bringing cadaver dogs, but it did not have any. That is when it reached out to Lillian Hardy, the IDHS Search and Rescue Program manager, to train a group of dogs and their handlers. "Since then, I've been

traveling to South Korea regularly, starting in 2011 and continuing to this day.

"In 2019, we developed a proclamation to assist, basically a sister city-type relationship," said Hardy. However, the first group could not come over to the U.S. until 2023 due to COVID-19. Despite the challenges, the partnership flourished, with visits



from National Headquarters Rescue 119, part of the Korean Fire Department. Their team consisted of six handlers, six dogs, a trainer and their team doctor.

“The recent trip of the Korean first responders to Indiana was part of a deployment exercise and to train their dogs in cadaver search,” explained Hardy. “The searches they conduct in-country often involve deceased individuals, so they wanted to ensure their dogs would indicate on deceased people.”

During their visit, South Korean first responders received certificates for attending the IDHS cadaver search program, which covers basic through advanced cadaver search techniques for K-9s.

Their efforts have yielded success.

“I was told they have located drowning victims as well as solved some missing persons cases,” added Hardy.

Looking ahead, there are plans for continued collaborative efforts.

“I expect another team from Korea in May, and we’re discussing a team coming in September,” said Hardy.

The IDHS program also has hosted teams from Argentina, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Israel and Canada in the past, illustrating its global reach and impact.

MEDAL OF VALOR AWARDS



The Indiana State Fire Marshal Medal of Valor recognizes recipients for acts of heroism and bravery when they risk their life to protect others or property. In April, State Fire Marshal Steve Jones presented the award to Indianapolis Fire Department firefighters Capt. Mark Baranko and Pvt. Adam Gaudin in a joint ceremony at IFD Station 13.

Pvt. Gaudin pulled two people from a burning apartment building, by himself, in a short amount of time. Capt. Baranko rescued a woman from the second floor of a house fire, when he was off-duty.

Other Recent Recipients

- 2024: Capt. Matt Siebott, Ellettsville Fire Department, for assisting in the resuscitation of an injured police officer in a vehicle collision, when off-duty
- 2023: Randy Fultz, Indiana Department of Transportation, for attempting to rescue a fire victim and attempting to extinguish a house fire, as a passerby
- 2022: Jacob Tyler McClanahan, Ramsey Volunteer Fire Department, posthumously awarded for assisting a stranded motorist, when off-duty

CHILDREN IN FOCUS

NEW INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE EMS RESPONSE TO CHILDREN

Without question, when a 911 call involves a child, the pressure increases for the first responders heading to the scene. Emergency medical services (EMS) personnel feel the urge to make sure they get these calls right. Along with the stress of responding to an injured and scared child comes the challenge of ensuring the child gets proper care.

The majority of the 911 calls EMS crews receive are for adults. Paramedics are confident in knowing what to do with adults, but that confidence may falter with kids because many paramedics do not get the practice of responding to 911 calls involving children every day.

“The problem as a medic is that you learn to care for adults and then learn the pediatric equivalent. Then the pediatric runs you do are going to be 10-15 percent or less of your run volume. So, you aren’t using it on a daily basis,” explained State EMS Director Kraig Kinney.

“We know at the two-month mark, responders lose their cognitive skill set. If they are not actively treating children day in and day out, there can be a

little bit of reservation,” explained Margo Knepfelkamp, Indiana EMS for Children program manager.

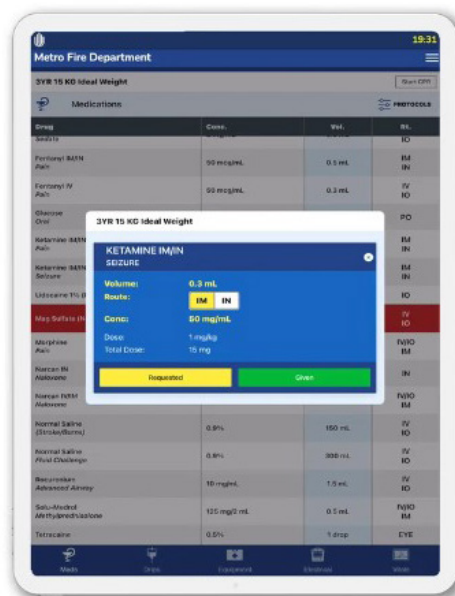
To build provider confidence during these high-stress calls, two resources are being utilized to improve patient outcomes.

IDHS Partnership with Handtevy

In April, IDHS announced a partnership with Handtevy – Pediatric Emergency Standards, Inc. (Handtevy). The partnership offers partial funding to Advanced Life-Saving EMS organizations to utilize Handtevy’s phone app, which provides information on pediatric medical guidance.

Paramedics can use this app to look up local child response protocols (approved procedures) and receive guidance on the proper dosage of medication needed and how to provide it.

“Let’s say they tell you that mom believes the child is dehydrated and may have the flu. Then you could look at dehydration, find your protocol



As part of the partnership, IDHS will organize classroom sessions with Handtevy to teach providers how to use the app effectively. More information on those classes will be coming soon.

and it's going to tell you the types of fluid to give the patient. It will recommend the size of IV that you start and how much fluid you're giving," described Kinney.

Kinney explained the Handtevy app has been the most beneficial in child cardiac arrest scenarios because the health condition is time-sensitive and requires specific medications.



Medication dosages usually are based on a weight estimate, but the app can make recommendations based on the age and height of the child. Participating agencies will receive a measuring tape as part of the partnership. If paramedics are at the child's side, they can measure the child and the app will give medics an idea of weight and height.

Kinney hopes this program will show EMS organizations, especially rural responders, that this

a good tool to have on hand to increase paramedic confidence levels when responding to a young child.

"If this is something we can show them is a good cost-benefit, then that would help with their outcomes. Frankly, rural responders are less likely to have pediatric responses due to the volume of population, so we think it could do a lot of good," said Kinney.

The IDHS-Handtevy partnership will last two years. There are ongoing discussions to decide the best path forward after that time.

Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project

For the past several years, the [EMS for Children Program](#) has been sending out a survey to gain knowledge of how EMS organizations across the country are prepared to respond to 911 calls involving children.

This year, EMS for Children is turning the survey into a [Prehospital Pediatric Readiness](#) assessment to offer more insights and resources to EMS organizations.

"This assessment has been built upon for years because we know that we are ill-prepared for children," explained Knefelkamp. "We know kids are not being medicated. We worry about seizures and other conditions getting the proper medication."

The new assessment was launched on May 1, 2024. Based on the answers submitted, organizations get an immediate gap analysis showing the areas they can improve. An email will follow, providing the



Children programs across the country can develop programming so we can help build that provider’s confidence so they are prepared to take care of children,” said Knefelkamp.

The assessment is open through July 31, 2024, and takes about 30 minutes to complete.

The information gained from the Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project tied together with the IDHS-Handtevy partnership means Indiana is on the right track to improve 911 responses to children, according to Knefelkamp.

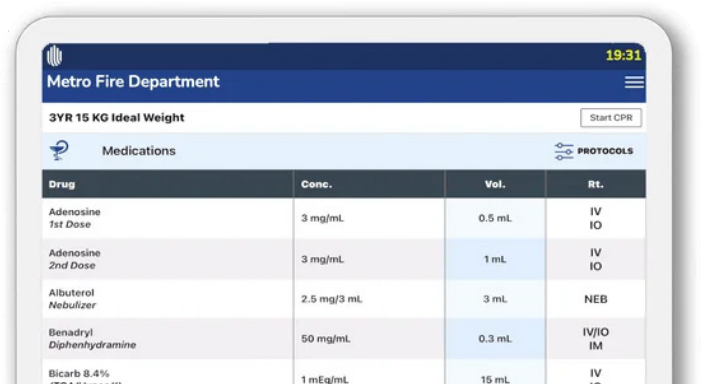
organizations with resources to address the gap areas. For example, if an agency notes that it does not have a policy on treating seizures or resuscitating a child, the assessment will provide resources to help create those procedures.

“Ideally, every agency in the state that responded to 911 would fill this out,” said Knefelkamp.

This assessment also allows EMS for Children to identify areas across the state and nation that need attention. EMS for Children will then decide what it can do to help. That could mean creating new programs or bringing additional training to certain areas.

“This assessment that launched May 1, is going to measure and collect that baseline data to see where we are at in our state so that EMS for

“I’m so excited to see that 70 agencies are going to be participating in Handtevy and just knowing that those kiddos that are injured have appropriate medication dosing, because children have special needs when it comes to equipment, when it comes to medications, when it comes to how they even think about what is happening to them and being scared. All these tools and resources will help make that care that much better,” said Knefelkamp.



INTERESTED IN HANDTEVY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES?

The list of agencies being enrolled in the Handtevy partnership was derived from the initial interest survey in 2023. Those organizations are being contacted with additional instructions.

Agencies that did not participate in the May 2023 survey but are interested in future funding opportunities can [apply here](#) to be considered. To be eligible, your agency must be a new Handtevy customer and able to commit to procurement before Jan. 1, 2025. Funding decisions will be prioritized based on the order of commitments received.

INDIANA EMS LEADER ROBIN STUMP HONORED AS LATEST GOLDEN SIREN

The road to success can be long and winding, or it can be slow and steady. For Indiana EMS Section Chief Robin Stump, she found her calling early in life and spent the next 40 years helping others realize theirs.

Among peers, co-workers and family members, Stump was honored recently with the Indiana EMS Association (IEMSA) Golden Siren Award for a lifetime commitment to emergency medical services and others who followed in her footsteps.

“It is so exciting to see Robin recognized for her contributions to EMS by the community,” said Kraig Kinney, Indiana EMS director. “She has been with state EMS for nearly 40 years and is a pillar of the EMS division. She leads by example and is vital to state EMS operations.”

Stump started working in EMS as a secretary in the state certification area and earned her EMT certification in 1991. She was promoted to a district manager position, providing field support to EMS agencies across Indiana, later becoming the district supervisor and section chief. Through the years, countless EMS officials, paramedics and others committed to saving lives and serving communities were impacted through Stump’s work.

The Golden Siren Award is a lifetime achievement award from IEMSA. A recipient must have more than 25 years in the Indiana EMS industry as a licensed field provider,



dispatcher, manager or even medical director. The service-focused award honors mentors and leaders in the field.

“Robin has been a constant, reliable EMS contact within the state office for decades. When people are not sure on an issue, they say, ‘Let’s contact Robin Stump,’” said Mike Garvey, former Indiana EMS director.

“Robin has been a staple of Indiana EMS for as long as I can remember,” said Lee Turpen, a member of the Indiana EMS Commission. “Her background knowledge of EMS in Indiana is unsurpassed. There is probably not an issue that she has not seen or provider that she has not assisted toward creating positive outcomes.”

Other Golden Siren Award winners included:

- Dr. James Nossett
- Melvin Tucker
- Jerry Miller
- Bryan Peterson

A DECADE OF PROTECTING INDIANA SCHOOLS

STATE-SUPPORTED GRANT PROGRAM OPENING SOON

As students are getting ready for summer break, school districts across the state are planning for the next academic year to help students succeed in a safe and secure environment. The Secured School Safety Grant (SSSG) plays a major role in helping Indiana students, staff and parents feel protected each year since its creation in 2013.

The SSSG program will accept applications starting June 3, 2024, for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) awards. The application period will close on July 1, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. ET. The SSSG program is a dedicated state fund that provides matching grants to school corporations, accredited non-public schools, charter schools and coalitions of school corporations. All public and private schools are eligible to apply.

The program was created in 2013 and issued its first round of awards in 2014. To date, \$163 million in state funding has been distributed

directly to schools as matching grants. For FY25, \$25 million has been allocated to support the program. Future allocations will be determined in the next state budget cycle. The program was created to help schools of all sizes address security concerns, and it incorporates a tiered system of matching grants based on school enrollment (average daily membership).

Nearly \$30 million in funding was approved for schools in [FY24](#).

Most schools have used the program to place School Resource Officers (SROs) or qualified law enforcement in schools to provide security and oversight. However, the program has grown through the years and now supports a dozen eligible categories, including the purchase of equipment and technology, active warning alerts systems and visitor management systems. Other acceptable uses include training and the creation of a student and

parent support service. To apply, all schools must have a working contract with a local mental health service and have completed an on-site vulnerability assessment.

For full details and to apply to the SSSG program, visit the [SSSG webpage](#).

Take advantage of the robust resources available at the [Indiana School Safety Hub](#).





More than two thirds of fatal fires occur in homes with no working smoke alarms. Let's change that and **GET ALARMED**.

GetAlarmed.in.gov



IN OTHER IDHS GRANTS NEWS

NONPROFIT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM

The Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) application period will close to applications at 5 p.m. ET on Thursday, May 30. The NSGP is a competitive grant program intended to provide federal funding for physical security enhancements and other security-related activities to nonprofit organizations that are at risk of a terrorist attack. The NSGP seeks to integrate the preparedness activities of nonprofit organizations with broader state and local preparedness efforts.

View the Notice of Funding Opportunity and application details on the [NSGP webpage](#).

STATE HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM

The State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSP) application period will close to applications at 5 p.m. ET on Thursday, May 30. The SHSP grant assists state, local, tribal and territorial efforts to build, sustain and deliver the capabilities necessary to prevent, prepare for, protect against and respond to acts of terrorism.

View the Notice of Funding Opportunity and application details on the [SHSP webpage](#). Applications must be submitted to IDHS via grants@dhs.in.gov.

A large blue shipping container is being lifted by a crane at a construction site. The crane is white with "WILLIAMS" written on its boom. Two workers in green safety gear are on a lift platform, one near the container and another further back. A yellow banner on the truck reads "OVERSIZE LOAD". The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

NEXTLEVEL FIREFIGHTING ENHANCEMENTS

NEW FACILITIES OFFER BIG BOOST FOR HOOSIER FIREFIGHTER TRAINING

Firefighter training in Indiana will surpass a significant milestone this summer as some of the first new physical training sites will open, part of the IDHS Hub-and-Spoke regional training model.

The first four selected sites (Corydon, Wabash, Rensselaer and Linton) are either nearing completion or under construction at the time of publication. On June 18, Gov. Eric J. Holcomb has planned a dedication ceremony at the Wabash site to announce the next five locations selected for regional sites. All site selections intend to offer physical skills training from the Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy (Academy) within 30 miles of any fire department.

The Corydon location, owned by the Harrison Township Volunteer Fire Department, was the first to be completed. A local dedication ceremony is planned for late June, with a full slate of training to begin in the fall, said Chief Jon Saulman.

“This is a historic time for the Indiana fire service,” said Steve Jones, Indiana State Fire Marshal. “The majority of fire departments in Indiana are run by volunteers, and they don’t have the time or ability to pay and travel long distances for training. This Hub-and-Spoke model offers a regional system that makes it convenient and realistic to offer high-level, consistent training for Firefighter I and Firefighter II training requirements.”

Indiana is home to some world-class training sites, although they are privately owned and charge departments for use. The sites constructed as part of this \$7.7 million investment will be locally owned but available to any regional department for training.



“We’re more than excited to have the opportunity to be home to one of the state training sites,” Saulman said. “That has always been the drawback for most firefighter training in this area: the lack of opportunity for realistic training. This is going to be a big factor in closing the gap for new guys in our area.”

The new sites will include live burn capabilities. They also will be locally owned and maintained, although the Academy is leading the construction. Sites were selected primarily based on geography to eliminate several “training deserts” that existed across Indiana. Moving fire crews and heavy apparatus long distances for training purposes is not feasible; however, closer locations allow more firefighters to be trained and equipment to be placed back in service much sooner.

Firefighter training in Indiana is funded solely by a public tax on the sale of fireworks. That revenue supports limited staff for the Academy, helps to purchase and maintain training equipment and allows the Academy to host training courses across the state. More than 2,000 firefighters receive skills training each year.

The Hub-and-Spoke initiative marks the first time the Indiana General Assembly has allocated funding for firefighter training and safety. Gov. Holcomb included the program as part of his 2023 legislative agenda, ultimately helping to secure \$7.7 million for training sites and \$10 million for new personal protective equipment (PPE) strictly for volunteer firefighters.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEERS

The last several weeks have been like an early Christmas for 66 volunteer fire departments across Indiana. The \$10 million PPE investment allowed for 946 sets of turnout gear (PPE) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). The gear distribution was prioritized based on fire territories with the poorest tax base, therefore having among the lowest budgets for fire safety.

“Our guys are ecstatic,” said Jason Green, chief of the Dunreith Fire Department in Henry County. “Anything we can do for the volunteer firefighters in the state — all of them are on a very limited budget — it’s always a good day. We’re humbled and grateful for the support.”

Dunreith has about 18 active volunteers. Their equipment averaged about nine years old. When he shared the news with the crew, he said the support from the state will help them showcase their commitment to their community.

“As a volunteer department, this is going to be our finest hour,” Green recalled.



946 SETS OF PPE & SCBA DISTRIBUTED TO 66 VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS



The Indiana Department of Administration selected MES Fire as the vendor for the PPE distribution. MES has been traveling the state to the selected recipient departments, fitting each individual firefighter for new gear and equipment.

Tony Pesaresi, chief of the Kewanna/Union Township Fire Department in Fulton County, also has a department of about 18 active volunteers. His department did not need SCBA tanks, but the PPE donation was a welcomed addition.

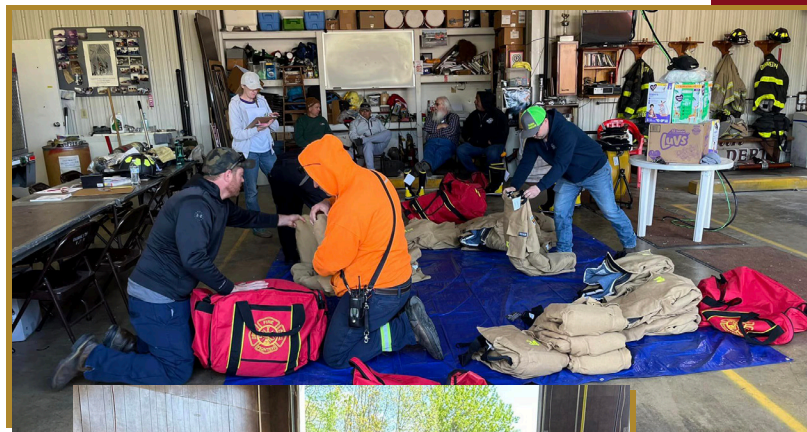
“We were thrilled at being part of this program,” Pesaresi said. “At the price point of today’s equipment, this is a real shot in the arm for our department.”

Pesaresi has been in the fire service for more than 30 years, and the struggle for volunteer departments to equip and protect their firefighters while they protect their communities has always been a challenge. It will continue to be moving forward.

“IDHS and the State Fire Marshal’s Office had to make some tough choices for where to send this initial shipment of PPE,” Jones said. “Even though we had \$10 million, we’re talking about a set of equipment that totals about \$12,000 each.

“We’re proud to impact 946 firefighters and 66 departments across Indiana, but the state comprises nearly 600 volunteer fire departments,” Jones added. “We see the challenges ahead and look forward to working hard on behalf of all Hoosier firefighters to help fill those gaps.”

The Indiana General Assembly operates on a two-year budget. Next year is another budget session, and IDHS intends to request additional funds to pass through to the fire communities that need it the most.





FESTIVAL FEVER

ENSURING SAFETY AT FESTIVALS

As the spring season moves into summer, communities across Indiana gear up for various festivals and events. From lively concerts to thrilling amusement rides, these gatherings offer abundant entertainment for locals and visitors alike. But, behind the scenes a meticulous process unfolds every year to ensure the safety of attendees.

“Amusement rides can be categorized into different classes, with the kiddie and major classes being the most common for festivals in Indiana,” explained IDHS Chief Inspector Matt Cronley. “For most small amusement ride companies, dealing with these classes means a straightforward process as it’s just the same application process, like what we

require for the application, and it’s the same inspection process.”

Obtaining amusement and entertainment permits for festivals in Indiana is a critical step in ensuring public safety. The owner of the property or the operator of an event must apply for these permits well before the first planned event. This allows for the necessary life safety inspections of the venue to be performed, protecting public safety.

Cronley emphasizes the dual permits required for festivals, “so if it’s a festival, they will need two permits. You’ll need the permit for the amusement ride. But you’ll also need a permit for the event, which is your [amusement and entertainment permit](#). And then, if you have any associated rides, you’ll have a separate [amusement ride permit](#).”



Regarding the inspection process, Cronley highlights efficiency, stating, "Once the application is completed, it will land in our office. We could typically have a review process done in 48 hours or less, and we can complete the inspection the same week." Once an application is completed, the next step is the in-person inspection.

Ben Cronk, an inspector with the Elevator and Amusement Rides Section at IDHS, explains that "inspections for a festival are a multifaceted process." Each inspection includes "meticulous checks of each ride to ensure it meets stringent safety standards set forth by the state. This

safety. "By conducting thorough inspections before events, we can identify and address potential hazards, mitigating risks for attendees," he said.

When asked about inspectors' challenges, Cronk highlighted the complexity of coordinating with venue owners and event organizers. Communication is vital.

"Ensuring that all parties are aware of safety requirements and timelines is crucial for a smooth permitting process," he said.

For the festival, two separate teams are dedicated to ensuring safety standards, Cronley explained.

installed correctly according to the manufacturer's instructions, providing a comprehensive safety check," Cronley said.

When asked about navigating safety regulations, Cronk emphasizes the need for thorough preparation. "We leave no stone unturned," he said. "From accessing necessary permits to conducting site inspections, we prioritize compliance with safety regulations to uphold the trust of our community."

While local and state officials work long hours to keep Hoosiers safe during festival season, it is important to remember the crucial role of the public in maintaining safe rides for everyone.

"Every amusement ride has a green sticker with a phone number attached. If someone is at one of these events and becomes concerned with, say, a ride operator or feels like people are deliberately trying to break the rules or get around safety constraints or safety concerns, they can call the IDHS Amusement Ride Hotline at 1-888-203-5020 to report this information," explained Cronley.

As festivals and events continue to thrive in Indiana, ensuring the safety of attendees remains paramount. Through collaboration among inspectors, local officials and event organizers, stringent safety standards are upheld, creating a vibrant and secure environment.



includes examining mechanical components, structural integrity and operational protocols."

Cronk underscores the importance of proactive measures in safeguarding public

"The amusement entertainment side focuses on aspects like bleachers, stages, tents, tripping hazards and food prep areas. The amusement ride team, on the other hand, ensures that any regulated rides are

BEYOND THE SHADOW

The Total Solar Eclipse was one of the most anticipated events of 2024, and the natural phenomenon did not disappoint for Hoosiers. Mostly clear skies provided a good view of the sun's corona as the moon's shadow passed over Indiana. Many out-of-state visitors diverted from their original destinations and poured into Indiana for the event.

More than 150 agencies partnered to plan and prepare so Indiana was ready in case emergencies developed. As the classic emergency management line goes, "Plan for the worst, but hope for the best." On April 8, the eclipse dazzled without major incident.



TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE IN INDIANA BY THE NUMBERS

360,000

Page views for eclipse2024.in.gov in the six months leading up to and including the eclipse day, which peaked at 47,200 views.

4,600

Volunteer hours worked by more than 800 volunteers at Indiana DNR properties

96

Vehicle crashes investigated by Indiana State Police, more than the recent daily average (63). More than double the usual number of state troopers were patrolling, so many might have taken reports that normally would be covered by other police agencies.

75

Years until the next total solar eclipse occurs in Indiana

57

Consecutive hours that the State Emergency Operations Center was activated to Level III in support of the eclipse

46

Number of states represented by visitors to Indiana DNR properties to view the eclipse. Visitors also came from the Virgin Islands, Philippines, United Kingdom, Germany, Norway and Portugal.

36

Eclipse-related missions managed through the State Emergency Operations Center

10

Indiana DNR campgrounds fully booked prior to eclipse weekend

8

Indiana DNR properties that reached capacity for day-use parking. Eight state forests also received an estimated 3,474 visitors combined.

0

EMS or mass care requests to the State Emergency Operations Center

Sources: IDHS, DNR, State Police



LISTEN TO THE IDHS PODCAST

Step into the awe-inspiring world of celestial wonders with the latest *Hoosier Homeland* podcast episode. Experience live coverage from the total solar eclipse and journey through the excitement, stories and breathtaking moments shared by enthusiasts who came to Indiana from across the country.

Listen online at on.in.gov/hoosier-homeland or subscribe to the podcast using one of the podcast services below:





THE STRENGTH IN VULNERABILITY

SUPPORTING FIREFIGHTERS' MENTAL HEALTH ON THE JOB

As Pike Township Lt. Troy Clements describes it, firefighters are problem solvers. When someone calls 911, they expect the firefighters to come to help them and solve whatever crisis is occurring.

Firefighters, like all first responders, pride themselves on their ability to help others. But what happens when the firefighters get back to the station? How do they process what they saw or the decisions they had to make?

“We don’t want to expose our families or the people to the things we see at work or the situations we get put in because we want to protect them, but without being able to off-gas that, it sends you down a dark road,” said Clements. “We just need help with learning that it is OK to ask for help to learn how to process things.”

Firefighter mental health is a rising topic across the state, one that State Fire Marshal Steve Jones hopes to keep going.

“The most important thing to me is taking care of our firefighters across the state of Indiana. One of my

priorities is addressing the mental health challenges that we face in the workforce. You have a challenging job, and it is essential to take care of yourself, not just physically but mentally as well, to ensure that we can enjoy life, our job and the good things that come with it,” said Jones.

“When I went on the job in 1982, we talked about line of duty deaths. ‘Look around the room and let’s try not to be one of those guys.’ Now what we’re telling recruits is you’re more likely to lose a classmate to suicide than a line of duty death,” said psychotherapist, consultant and former firefighter Dr. Robert Smith.

Suicide in the fire service is not uncommon. Clements says he’s known four firefighters who took their own lives, and said he’s dealt with the signs of struggling with his mental health.

“I couldn’t sleep, a lot of nightmares, a lot of flashbacks. I thought it was part of the job that we had to work through,” Clements described. He started drinking alcohol excessively, because it was one of the only things he found to numb the problems he had.

“My bucket got full, and I unleashed some serious yelling and screaming at my family and coworkers. People that I really just loved and cared about, and I was just very angry at all of them. And they had nothing to do with it.”

Clements sought treatment at a center where he could talk to people dealing with the same struggles. It made a world of difference.

“One hundred percent different. I feel 10 years younger. Mentally, I feel 10 years younger.” Clements explained. “It was like the weight of the world was lifted off of me.”

Clements shared his story to help remove the stigma about asking for help, “so that it’s not so taboo that this really strange situation or chaotic situation bothered you because that’s a big part of being human. It’s human to be bothered by that.”

Asking for help can be tough for people who think of themselves as problem solvers, not the problem.

“We’re called to fix problems and we learn how to do it very well. At the same time, we don’t really focus on how to take care of ourselves,” said Smith. “Having downtime, unplugging from the job, finding something that brings you joy, those things are part of the resilience attitudes

and behaviors that we need to lower our risk of post-traumatic stress and disorder.”

Marshal Jones is passionate about promoting the importance of mental health and is actively trying to sway the stigma surrounding getting help when firefighters need it. Jones, Smith, Clements, IDHS Executive Director Joel Thacker and Professional Firefighters Union of Indiana President Tony Murray are creating a video series to start breaking down the barriers surrounding this topic.

The series begins production this month and will include a panel discussion on the state of mental health in the fire service, the experiences Clements and others have gone through, programs available to career and volunteer fire departments, signs of distress to look for and more.

“The fire service should not just be a workplace, but a true brotherhood where we care for each other both on and off the job,” said Jones.

STARTING THE MENTAL HEALTH JOURNEY

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. It was established in 1949 to increase awareness of the importance of mental health and wellness in Americans’ lives and to celebrate recovery from mental illness.

All first responders are encouraged to watch Marshal Jones’ mental health video series. The group will be covering a variety of topics, including:

- The state of mental health in the firehouse
- Programs available for first responders
- Spotting the first signs of a mental health crisis

Dr. Smith also has a [series of articles](#) on his website discussing firefighter mental health, resilience and post-traumatic stress.



MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL

A few weeks ago, I was proud to stand alongside our staff as we met and interacted with dozens of firefighters and EMS workers who stopped in to see us at FDIC. It's always an exciting few days, and our team is still buzzing from all of the energy and positivity provided by the annual conference.

FDIC — featuring all levels of technology, equipment and training to help make our jobs safer and more effective — serves as a reminder of the great momentum we have in the Indiana fire service. The energy is unmistakable. We are nearing completion of the first phase of regional training sites and many departments are being fitted for new PPE. The Hub-and-Spoke initiative is in full swing and impacting departments statewide.



Our path is charted. Now, the work begins in earnest to achieve the success we know is needed for Hoosier firefighters. We must work together and remember our commitment to serving the public, including the other firefighters and departments doing the job every day. This common goal drives our training and supports our pride in the service we provide Hoosiers. Remember, public safety is our priority, and it takes a team effort to get there.

So, what's next on the horizon?

We are close to announcing the next few locations for new training sites, continuing the \$7.7 million initiative to add regional, physical training sites within 30 miles of all Indiana departments. The experience providing these services to high-need areas of the state truly has been rewarding. We are not able to fulfill all the requests received, and we know there is more need across the state. However, we are thankful for the impact we are already seeing and feeling from the effort.

The same can be said about the PPE distribution. If you follow our social media from the Academy or IDHS, you no doubt have seen photos of volunteer firefighters being fitted with new turnout gear and SCBA. The \$10 million allocated to this program will bring 946 full PPE sets to 66 departments across Indiana. These departments were selected among the poorest 1 percent of departments and in the highest need of replacing equipment. Some have been wearing the same torn and tattered gear from 20 years ago.

Without question, not everyone will receive what they need. We see that and certainly understand what lies ahead. IDHS and the State Fire Marshal's Office are committed to partnering with you to encourage more legislative support in the future to expand these projects. Our unified support will determine our fate.

Thank you for all you do,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Stephen Jones
Indiana State Fire Marshal



UPCOMING TRAININGS

MAY

MAY 28	Fire - Non-Traditional Courses	LIGONIER
MAY 31	Fire - Non-Traditional Courses	KNOX
MAY 28-JUNE 22	Fire Inspector II	NEW CARLISLE

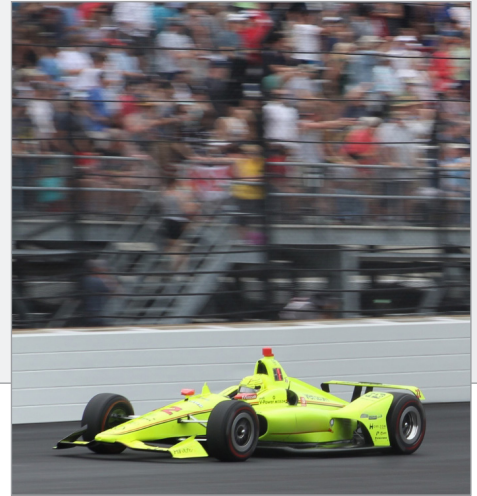
JUNE

JUNE 3	Fire - Non-Traditional Courses	LAFAYETTE
JUNE 13	Fire - Non-Traditional Courses	GEORGETOWN
JUNE 18-20	Active Threat Integrated Response Course (PER 340)	LIZTON
JUNE 22	Fire - Non-Traditional Courses	CRAWFORDSVILLE
JUNE 29-31	Vehicle Rescuer Operations	ANGOLA
JUNE 24-JULY 14	EMS - Advanced Emergency Medical Technician	CLARKSVILLE

UPCOMING EVENTS

EMS WEEK MAY 19-25

Recognizing the crucial role of emergency medical services personnel, this week celebrates their dedication to the job. It highlights their contributions to public health and safety in Indiana.



INDY 500 MAY 26

One of the most prestigious motorsport events worldwide, the Indianapolis 500 brings international attention and economic impact to Indiana, showcasing the state's rich racing heritage.

MEMORIAL DAY MAY 27



DAM SAFETY AWARENESS DAY MAY 31

This day focuses on raising awareness about dam safety and the importance of maintaining and monitoring dams. It underscores the significance of dam infrastructure in Indiana's water management and public safety efforts.



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH MAY

This observance sheds light on the importance of mental well-being and encourages support, understanding and access to resources for individuals facing mental health challenges across Indiana.

BUILDING SAFETY MONTH

MAY

Promoting safe and sustainable building practices, this month-long event emphasizes the role of building codes and regulations in safeguarding communities in Indiana against structural hazards.



PTSD  **AWARENESS MONTH**

PTSD AWARENESS MONTH

MAY

Recognizing the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder on individuals and communities, this observance promotes understanding, support and access to treatment resources for those affected in Indiana.

NATIONAL CPR AND AED AWARENESS WEEK

JUNE 1-7

This week encourages CPR and AED training across Indiana, potentially increasing survival rates in cases of cardiac emergencies.



LIGHTNING SAFETY WEEK

JUNE 23-29

Highlighting the dangers of lightning and the importance of lightning safety measures, this week aims to educate and protect residents of Indiana from lightning-related hazards during the peak storm season.

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



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