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TERRE HAUTE
INDIANA

Indiana Homeland Security Head at VU

Reported by: *Tom McClanahan*
Tuesday, Apr 7, 2009 @05:13pm

The future of some students at Vincennes University could involve homeland security.

That's why it's director came to Knox County to tell them about in person. Joe Wainscott explained the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and it's many features.

The state is divided into ten districts. Terre Haute is in District 7 and it is one of a few that is further along in it's development. It's been an important part of the statewide effort.

According to Wainscott, "Their initial focus was a little more hazmat related, fire related but they have been working to expand that, in fact, they, they've served kind of as our guinea pig on quite a few things so the ideas and some of the challenges that we've been working for, trying to develop our whole district task force concept."

Wainscott added homeland security is ready to assist local agencies as the spring storm season approaches.

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Area firefighters return from 'first-rate' training

Holly Abrams
The Journal Gazette

A handful of regional firefighters recently took part in the National Fire Academy, getting training one firefighter described as "a must" for his colleagues.

Bluffton firefighter Kirk Herring was among four from his department to attend the academy, March 14-15 in Emmitsburg, Md. It was his first time attending, and he took part in a course about fire behavior and battling single-story occupancy fires.

"It was very intense training," he said. "It made me learn a lot about how fire spreads and how it acts in a house."

Herring, who has been a part-time firefighter in Bluffton since June 2008, said he would attend the academy again.

"I would recommend any fireman that has the chance to go," he said. "The outlook of going into a fire – my outlook – has definitely changed."

Mark Dinius, a volunteer firefighter for eight years in Markle, had similar thoughts. He took a course in courtroom preparation and testimony for first responders. He called the academy an "absolutely fantastic experience." "The instructors out there are all first-rate," Dinius said. Dinius was taking another class in Auburn when he learned of the academy.

The education and training is sponsored by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security in conjunction with the National Fire Academy.

Food, transportation, lodging and education expenses were covered.

"The course was invaluable in my opinion," he said.

During the courtroom preparation class, firefighters acted out testifying as instructors posed as attorneys, Dinius said.

About 200 firefighters statewide attended the academy during that March weekend.

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RICHMOND REGISTER

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DHS testing lab in Somerset first to receive accreditation

Special to the Register

April 07, 2009 06:44 am

— A U.S. Department of Homeland Security-funded laboratory in Somerset recently became the first in the nation to receive accreditation by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation for testing emergency response information technology.

The laboratory is part of the National Incident Management System Support Center — a program established between the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Justice & Safety Center at Eastern Kentucky University.

Evaluations conducted at the laboratory aim to verify that systems conform to interoperability standards and can exchange critical messages during disasters.

According to David Barrabee, section chief for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and member of the steering group for this initiative, standards are necessary to ensure safety among emergency responders.

“The application of NIMS standards by public safety entities promotes interoperability and compatibility ... and provides these employees with a safer work environment,” Barrabee said. To achieve accreditation status, the laboratory was required to meet general requirements for the competencies of testing and calibration laboratories, as provided in ISO/IEC 17025:2005. A laboratory’s fulfillment of these requirements means the laboratory meets both the technical competence requirements and management system requirements that are necessary for it to consistently deliver technically valid test results.

Most evaluations conducted at the laboratory today are part of the NIMS Supporting Technology Evaluation Program, which is designed to assist responders when making purchases to ensure products conform to national standards and guidelines.

Since 2005, ECU has worked in partnership with the Science Applications International Corporation, G&H International Services, FEMA and other test and evaluation divisions of DHS on the formation of this program.

Another member of the steering group, Marc Berryman, of the Greater Harris County (Texas) 9-1-1 Emergency Network, stressed the need for testing to ensure that diverse systems will work during an incident.

“As 9-1-1 and emergency communications continue to advance, enabling increased information sharing of all types, it is increasingly important that the equipment and communications networks relied on by emergency response organizations conform to national standards,” Berryman said.

State and local purchasing agencies may request that vendors apply for an evaluation as part of this program through the one of the following Web sites: www.nimsstep.org or www.fema.gov/emergency/nims. Evaluations are conducted at no cost to vendors. The results of

evaluations are made available through the Responder Knowledge Base at www.rkb.us. NIMS STEP is one of many emergency preparedness initiatives operating under the FEMA-EKU cooperative agreement. The Justice & Safety Center at ECU is a federally funded research, technical assistance and training center. The mission of the center is to support the efforts of public safety and security agencies by providing information and access to training, technology and best practices for the emergency response community.

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Power companies, Homeland Security tackling power grid threat

April 8, 2009 10:07 PM EDT

[Emily Longnecker](#)/Eyewitness News



Indianapolis - A report has found that the nation's power grid is facing the threat of foreign spies.

National security officials say there's no immediate threat to our power system. But they say cyber spies have hacked into the national power grid, even leaving behind software that could someday mean lights out for the United States.

The power running to your television or computer comes from the same system powering homes and businesses across the country. The giant grid supplies electricity to everything. National security officials say the grid has been hacked into by cyber spies.

"From a war-fighting point of view and eventually perhaps from a terrorism point of view, cyber attacks are among the fastest growing threats we face," said Stewart Baker, former Homeland Security official.

US officials confirm cyber spies from Russia and China have planted software in the power grid that could disrupt the country's flow of electricity. So far, Homeland Security says it's a problem in theory.

"We have had no denial of service, utility service to an American citizen on the homeland because of an international cyber attack," said Janet Napolitano, Homeland Security secretary.

"It's never a good feeling when you have news like this. The good news, though, it has been identified, it hasn't effected the electrical grid and that's being taken care of," said John Erickson, Indiana Homeland Security.

Indiana's Department of Homeland Security says they're aware of the situation.

"We're taking a real hard look at the cyber security," said Erickson.

Officials with Duke Energy told Eyewitness News on the phone:

"We are aware of this, but we also have very comprehensive security measures to ensure that our power grid is protected," said Rita Sipe, Duke Energy.

Are you ready?

Homeland Security has a [checklist](#) for an emergency kit that's recommended in case of a natural disaster, power failure or other emergency.

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Fire Rages At Furniture Store

No Injuries Reported

POSTED: 10:13 am EDT April 8, 2009

UPDATED: 5:54 pm EDT April 8, 2009

LAPEL, Ind. -- A large fire raged Wednesday morning, gutting a furniture factory in Lapel in Madison County.

Flames shot high into the air from Hickory Furniture Designs, in the 100 block of West 14th Street.

Slideshow: Fire Tears Through Furniture Store

There were no reports of injuries in the blaze, which began at about 9:15 a.m. About a dozen workers inside tried to put out the flames themselves before they called 911, 6News' Jennifer Carmack reported.

Firefighters poured water on the flames from large cranes, but it appeared that a large portion of the factory had been heavily damaged.

"It was a big ball of fire and it was high as the old furniture store here. It just took off right away," said neighbor Stanley Kilburn.

By 11:30 a.m., white smoke poured from the factory, as most of the fire had been doused.

Witnesses said they heard a series of explosions when they came out to watch the fire burn.

"When I first got here, an explosion from a propane tank went off. It blew the door off," said witness Zach Baird. "It was about 50 feet up, the flames."

The town's water supply ran low as crews battled the blaze. Water was brought in from a nearby rock quarry to supplement the supply.

The State Fire Marshal's Office is investigating the blaze, but said Wednesday that it does not appear suspicious in nature.

Owner Brad McQueen said the store has been in the building for seven years and employed 12 people. He said they plan to rebuild.

"I hope they can recover. It was a nice little job for people around here," Kilburn said.

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Couple escapes fire in former LaPorte bike shop

By **Stan Maddux**
Times Correspondent | Tuesday, April 07, 2009

Maddux

LAPORTE | A smoke detector failed to go off but a LaPorte couple still managed to escape a raging fire at a former bicycle shop.

"We're just lucky," said Dennis Vanmeter, 56, who made his way down the stairs of the old two story structure with his girlfriend, Paula Schultz.

According to investigators, the man and woman were asleep in their second floor apartment in the 200 block of Pine Lake Ave. about 11 p.m. Monday when Vanmeter got up to get a drink.

He noticed light from underneath a door on top of a stairway leading to the attic.

Vanmeter said he opened the door and saw the attic was on fire.

"We got out before it got real smoky but it was getting there," said Vanmeter.

The cause of the fire was not known and the Indiana State Fire Marshal's Office was called to assist with the investigation, said LaPorte Assistant Fire Chief Dino Smith.

Smith said the fire was contained to the attic and roof but there was smoke and water damage elsewhere.

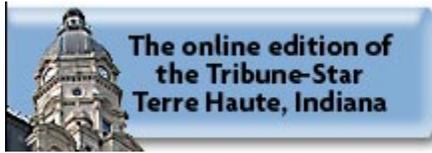
Vanmeter said there was a smoke detector in the apartment but apparently the battery was dead.

Late in the morning on Tuesday, Vanmeter was waiting for permission to go back inside to retrieve any belongings that might have survived the blaze.

"I've lost about everything," he said.

There were no other occupants in the building, which several years ago housed the Bike Stop Cycling.

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Electrical problems blamed for fire at Greene County Rehabilitation Center

The Tribune-Star

April 06, 2009 11:10 pm

— Electrical problems in an attic have been ruled as the cause of a fire Saturday at the Greene County Rehabilitation Center in Bloomfield, the Bloomfield Fire Department reported.

Firefighters responded about 5:19 p.m. and could seek smoke coming from the roof line and eaves on the north side of the building. A sprinkler system activated, but water caused a large portion of the ceiling to fall into the building, said Fire Chief Skyler J. Pittman.

The sprinkler system also sounded a fire alarm and 22 people inside the structure were able to quickly evacuate the building. “There are 45 people who live there, but only 22 at the time of the fire and everyone was out,” Pittman said.

The Indiana State Fire Marshal’s office determined the fire started in an electrical junction box in a ceiling directly above a laundry room. Faulty wiring caused “a large amount of [electrical] arching” resulting in the fire, Pittman said.

“There was a substantial amount of water, smoke and heat damage to the north wing” of the building at 150 N. Seminary St. in Bloomfield, Pittman said.

Five fire units responded to the blaze. Pittman said it was difficult to access the fire “due to its location in the attic. We had to cut a hole in the roof,” he said.

Firefighters were on the scene for six hours. Two firefighters suffered heat exhaustion and fatigue and were taken to the Greene County Hospital, where they were treated and released. A third firefighter was taken to the hospital after returning to the fire department complaining of chest pain and elevated blood pressure, but he also was treated and released, Pittman said.

Gus Matthias, owner of the rehabilitation center, said Monday he will not reopen the center, which was heavily damaged in the fire. Matthias said patients “have been sent back to the county of their origin, some have gone back to probation officers, others to community corrections and some have been referred to outpatient programs and some are going back to jail.”

Matthias said patients from Monroe, Morgan and Lawrence counties have been transferred to his Bloomington facility, called Sunrise Counseling.

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