

# **Earthquake Fact Sheet**

## **Indiana Department of Homeland Security**

**[www.in.gov/dhs](http://www.in.gov/dhs)**

### **What is an Earthquake?**

- An earthquake is caused by the sudden release of energy that originates from rock in the Earth's crust being under so much pressure, that it breaks.
- The direction of the energy may be horizontal, vertical or a combination.
- The broken masses of rock grind past one another. The break or area of contact between the two masses of rock are called a fault.

### **What is Indiana's Earthquake Risk?**

- Seismologists believe that there is a major earthquake in Indiana's near future.
- Seismologists and geologists from the U.S. Geological Survey, various universities in Indiana, and geologists of the Indiana Geological Survey are in collective agreement that the Lower Wabash Valley of Indiana and Illinois is capable of producing large and damaging earthquakes at virtually any time.
- Because great periods of time pass between occurrences of damaging earthquakes in this region, it is easy for Hoosiers to become complacent and consequently inadequately prepared.
- In the last two centuries, earthquakes with epicenters in Indiana have been relatively minor events.
- One of the worst Earthquakes in U.S. history occurred in the Midwest, along the New Madrid Fault Line which runs from east-central Arkansas to southern Illinois.
- Today, geologists predict an earthquake of this magnitude could occur again.

*Information was gathered from various sources, including the Indiana section of the U.S. Geological Survey.*