

News Clippings

October 19, 2009

Emergency Response

Fort Wayne

Allen sits out statewide digital map

[Read the Article](#)

Terre Haute

Homeland Security offers ideas on items to keep just in case

[Read the Article](#)

Terre Haute

Homeland Security urges disaster prep

[Read the Article](#)

Terre Haute

State agency stresses importance of disaster preparedness

[Read the Article](#)

Fire

Indianapolis

Little Nashville Opry Reward Increased

[Read the Article](#)

Nashville

30K reward offered in Lil' Opry fire

[Read the Article](#)

Allen sits out statewide digital map

Project helps agencies plot out economic development, disaster response

Ron Shawgo
The Journal Gazette

The Journal Gazette

Map funding

The IndianaMap is financially supported by the Indiana departments of Homeland Security and Transportation, the state's Geographic Information Office, the Indiana Geological Survey, the U.S. Geological Survey and Indiana University's University Information Technology Services.

Data for the map are contributed by eight state agencies, including the departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Management; 11 federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Indiana counties and others.

A plan that officials say could save lives and improve economic development, disaster response, transportation, water quality and natural resources is receiving near statewide support – but not from Allen County.

Despite an appeal by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and other state agencies for counties to help address what one official calls "our most pressing needs," Allen County has declined.

All of this over some maps.

More than 80 percent of the state's counties have contributed computerized maps to the IndianaMap initiative. The statewide map is free to anyone, accessible on any office, home or field computer and has unlimited uses.

A study last year showed that the freely available electronic maps pay for their expense many times over in statewide economic development.

But for the kinds of maps the state wants – land parcels, addresses, roads and jurisdiction boundaries – Allen County charges \$15,000.

"That's their decision" to charge a fee, said Jim Sparks, who as the state's geographic information officer is compiling the county maps. "I think there are good business reasons not to support that."

It's not that Allen County does not share maps with the state, especially when security or safety is concerned, said Dave Estes, who manages the county's GIS office. But the issue of offering maps up for anyone to use, he said, boils down to politics and a philosophy that is slowly changing.

Although the average Hoosier might never use them, computerized maps touch nearly all facets of their lives and have become essential for many government agencies.

In its simplest form, mapping software can take a list of addresses – or longitude and latitude points – and show them as dots on a map. On top of that, other map layers, such as those showing floodplains, leaf collection routes or the distances tornado sirens are audible, can be added. Think of TV weather maps that overlay storm fronts on a county road map.

The uses are endless, and there are no better maps than those created by local governments, Sparks said.

Computerized mapping, known as a geographical information system, or GIS, links any information tied to land – addresses, property boundaries, crime statistics, utility lines – to a map. Users can analyze data from various agencies at once and see the results in map form. Trends in traffic or crime patterns, for example, can be determined.

For multiple agencies responding to a disaster, the use of a common, updated map is vital.

Indiana's 2008 flooding, for example, took a coordinated response from local officials, volunteers, Indiana National Guard, local and State Police, federal agencies, the Red Cross and animal rescue, according to the non-profit Indiana Geographic Information Council, the statewide coordinator for Indiana geographic information.

The IndianaMap helped coordinate information.

It also is credited with Honda selecting its plant site in Greensburg. The map's aerial photography – taken in 2005 using state and federal money and available for all counties – allowed Fort Wayne to measure impervious surfaces for accurate stormwater bills, resulting in \$88,000 in increased annual revenue. Both examples and many others are from a fall 2008 Indiana Geographic Information Council newsletter.

A study outlined in that newsletter, conducted by the council and a company owned by a former executive director of the group, found that the initial \$8.5 million investment in the IndianaMap has yielded \$1.7 billion in Indiana projects. Of the 314 users surveyed, 90 percent said they could not do their projects without the state map.

Interestingly, Allen County is a paying member of the Indiana Geographic Information Council, the guiding force behind the IndianaMap.

Allen County brought in nearly \$18,000 selling electronic maps last year and an additional \$27,000 in subscriptions for online access to map data, not enough to cover office expenses, according to county officials.

National studies show that income has never been enough to make GIS departments self-supporting. Of Indiana's 92 counties, only three or four still sell maps to support their GIS efforts, the state's Sparks said.

Selling electronic maps "simply didn't work," said Bernie Beier, director of the Fort Wayne-Allen County Office of Homeland Security, who calls GIS critical to agency decision-making.

"I think that whole model is on its last days," he said.

And there are signs Allen County is coming to that conclusion.

IMap, the county's GIS program and a division of the Department of Planning Services, recently installed an online county map that allows users to obtain property tax information through the county treasurer's Web site. The service is free and replaces an online subscription service.

Also this year, Fort Wayne joined the county board that monitors the iMap office in a joint data-sharing agreement.

The issue of providing free maps is likely to receive a future iMap board vote, said Kevin Holle, geographic information systems manager for the city and a new iMap board member. Holle has an advisory role on the Indiana Geographic Information Council's data sharing committee.

The free online service and expanded iMap board are significant changes in moving toward more open data, said Kim Bowman, director of the joint city-county planning department.

As for the IndianaMap, "Allen County would like very much to participate in it," said Estes, the county's GIS manager.

A county ordinance that sets map fees would have to be voted down by the iMap board. Noting that taxes already largely pay for the GIS office, Estes said whether the county charges for maps or gives them away depends on the political climate.

Asked which he preferred, Estes replied, "Folks pay for it anyway, don't they? ... I don't make the rules."

Allen County Commissioner Linda Bloom acknowledged the income from maps is small and that the newly formed city-county iMap board, which she is on, might eventually take up the issue of contributing to the IndianaMap.

But, she added, it's not a priority to her.

"At this point, no." she said. "We have spent millions on this project over the years."

The state's Sparks believes that all counties will eventually participate in the IndianaMap. Money, he said, is the sticky issue.

"If we were able to get funding to the GIS community," he said, "then I think those kinds of issues would go away."

[Back to Emergency Response](#)



Homeland Security offers ideas on items to keep just in case

Tribune-Star staff report

October 19, 2009 10:25 pm

— In case of emergency or disaster, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security recommends having the following survival loot on hand so you don't have to, well, loot.

- Water, at least a three-day supply.
- Food that requires no preparation, refrigeration, and little water, such as protein bars, canned meats, dry cereal, dry milk, peanut butter, crackers and baby formula, if applicable. Don't forget the manual can opener.
- First aid kit with gauge, bandages, latex gloves, scissors, tweezers, petroleum jelly, eye wash and contact solution, burn ointment, sun screen, hydrogen peroxide, medication, thermometer, anti-diarrheal medication and hand sanitizer.
- Other items such as a battery-operated or hand crank flashlight and radio, cell phone, extra batteries, rain gear, sturdy shoes, tools, blankets, list of emergency phone numbers, important documents, whistle to signal for help and identification.

For more information on emergency preparedness, go to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security Web site at www.in.gov/dhs.

Copyright © 1999-2008 cnhi, inc.

[Back to Emergency Response](#)

WTHI 10

Homeland Security urges disaster prep

Updated: Monday, 19 Oct 2009, 6:15 PM EDT
Published : Monday, 19 Oct 2009, 5:36 PM EDT

- Jessica Hayes

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (WTHI) - Last June's floods caught most in the Wabash Valley off guard. Now, disaster experts caution people to prepare for more than just possible floods.

For instance, a 5.2 magnitude earthquake last April in Illinois was felt in the Wabash Valley. Experts also said we are approaching the 200th anniversary of the last major New Madrid quake. That fault line runs through southern Illinois and produces quakes with magnitudes near 8.0 every 200 to 300 years.

Security experts said people need to keep basic necessities on hand in case any disaster hits.

"Food, water, medicine," said Joe Wainscott, Executive Director for Indiana's Department of Homeland Security. "If you have small children, particularly things like diapers. We ask folks to try to plan for preparing to take care of themselves for at least three days."

Click here if you'd like more information about disaster preparation.

[Back to Emergency Response](#)



State agency stresses importance of disaster preparedness

By Lisa Trigg
The Tribune-Star

TERRE HAUTE October 19, 2009 10:50 pm

— Does your family have an emergency plan?

If not, now is a good time to make one.

If so, is that plan up-to-date, or is it packed in Y2K mothballs?

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security wants everyone to assess their preparedness for a variety of emergencies and disasters, whether it is from earthquakes, tornados, flooding, storms, terrorism or even H1N1.

“It is an individual responsibility,” said Joe Wainscott Jr., executive director of Indiana Homeland Security.

“We like to get the word out for folks to take some time to prepare for events such as fires, floods and tornadoes.”

The June 2008 flooding in the Wabash Valley, as well as other parts of Indiana, crippled many communities, and some families and businesses are still in recovery mode.

The April 2008 earthquake was a reminder that the Wabash Valley is in close proximity to the New Madrid fault.

“We’re approaching the 200th anniversary of the earthquakes of New Madrid in 1811 and 1812,” Wainscott said.

“That was a catastrophic event that rang bell towers as far away as Boston.”

If an earthquake of that magnitude happened today, the damage to southern Indiana would be devastating, he said.

Wainscott, along with Gerri Husband, assistant director of field services, visited Terre Haute on Monday not to worry or scare anyone into taking action.

The advice they offer will make surviving an emergency less stressful.

If an area is hit by an earthquake, tornado or flooding, they point out, that emergency may also impact the very people who have been trained to provide emergency services, including firefighters, police officers and ambulance services.

“The emergency responders may not be able to respond for a while,” Wainscott said. “That’s why we want folks to take a minute to prepare themselves and their families.”

He suggests that families sit down together to make plans, such as where to meet outside the home in case of a fire, where to go in case of a tornado, what to do if away from home or at work when disaster strikes.

“Having a plan is essential,” he said. “It allows people to respond more appropriately.”

And that preparedness goes for businesses as well. A high percentage of businesses who never recover from a disaster were not prepared for one in the first place, he said.

For families, an essential piece of preparedness is to have a disaster kit that includes water, food,

first aid items and other gear.

“One of the innovative ways to do it that I’ve seen,” Wainscott said, “is to get a 33-gallon trash can with wheels, pack it up with items and tape it closed to keep animals out of it. Then it can be grabbed and wheeled along with you.”

Neighbors should also be ready to help one another. People who have elderly or disabled neighbors should introduce themselves and how they can best provide assistance in case of an emergency.

Another key part of disaster preparedness is to work with and support local emergency management agencies and community response teams.

Indiana has 10 field district services coordinated to provide a second tier of response when emergencies occur. District 7 includes Clay, Greene, Owen, Parke, Putnam, Sullivan, Vermillion and Vigo counties.

“We have field staff in each of the 10 districts,” Husband added, “so we have different levels of expertise available.”

Some of that expertise is in emergency services, some in hazardous materials, and some in the areas of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives.

But the local response is the best response in a disaster, and Wainscott said that the better people can take care of themselves in the initial days after an emergency, the better off they will be. As seen in past disaster responses, such as Hurricane Katrina or 9/11, federal and state responses can be slow and originate far from the disaster area.

“From our perspective,” Wainscott said, “all disaster incidents are local. Our goal is to come in when local resources are overloaded.”

The current “disaster” facing Indiana is the H1N1 outbreak. While it may not fit the public image of a disaster, an outbreak has the same impact on a community.

“H1N1 is not going to go away any time soon,” Wainscott said. “It may be around for weeks after it peaks, and it will go back into a third cycle.”

While the severity level of H1N1 has been mild so far, the number of cases is increasing across the nation. Wainscott encourages everyone to get vaccinated for both the seasonal flu and H1N1 as the shots become available.

Anyone wanting more information about disaster preparedness, including an online family preparedness plan that covers topics such as contacts and meeting locations, pets and evacuation routes, should go to the Indiana Homeland Security Web site at www.in.gov/dhs.

Lisa Trigg can be reached at (812) 231-4254 or lisa.trigg@tribstar.com.

Copyright © 1999-2008 cnhi, inc.

[Back to Emergency Response](#)

WIBC 93.1FM

Little Nashville Opry Reward Increased

By Don Riley

10/19/2009

The reward has increased to \$30,000 for information leading to the conviction of those involved in setting the fire that gutted the Little Nashville Opry in Brown County in September.

The venue's insurance provider, Indiana Insurance, announced a \$25,000 reward Monday. That's in addition to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security's offer of up to \$5,000 for any information given on their arson hotline, 800-382-4628.

The September 19th fire started around the stage of the Little Nashville Opry and caused \$3-million dollars damage to the music hall that had been a Brown County fixture since 1975.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the State Fire Marshal and Brown County Sheriff's office are investigating the blaze. A team of ATF investigators determined the Opry fire was intentionally set.

[Back to Fire](#)

[30K reward offered in Lil' Opry fire](#)

Updated: Monday, 19 Oct 2009, 2:33 PM EDT
Published : Monday, 19 Oct 2009, 2:33 PM EDT

NASHVILLE, Ind. (WISH) - The reward for information in the Little Nashville Opry arson investigation just got a big boost.

The Opry's insurance provider is joining forces with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security to offer a total of \$30,000 for information that leads to an arrest in the case.

"Intentionally set fires are a serious crime that can put innocent citizens and rescue personnel at great risk," said Indiana State Fire Marshal Jim Greeson. "I urge citizens to report any suspicions or information regarding the Little Nashville Opry Fire so we can hold criminals accountable for their violent and costly actions."

Last month, federal and state investigators confirmed the September 19 fire that destroyed the Nashville landmark was intentionally set.

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security set up an arson hotline (800) 382-4628 to encourage tips.

[Back to Fire](#)