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June 3, 2009

## State won't mandate safer circuit breakers

Rule is required in some way in all states but Indiana

*By Robert Annis*  
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A recession isn't the time to mandate two fire-safety devices and saddle homebuyers and builders with additional costs, a state panel decided Tuesday.

The technology, required in some way in every other state, could prevent up to \$1.8 million in property damage a year, according to one panel member.

But installing them in new Indiana homes would cost more than \$500,000 a year.

The state's nine-member Fire Prevention and Building Safety Commission voted unanimously not to mandate arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) and tamper-resistant outlets in new homes as part of the Indiana Electrical Code.

"You can tell someone until you're blue in the face the more expensive arc-fault breaker is the newest and safest thing, but he'll pick the (cheaper) \$6 ground breaker every time," said commission member Burke Jones of the Fair Play Volunteer Fire Department in Madison. "He's got insurance."

Indiana is the only state without any AFCI provisions, said John Gardner, a spokesman for the National Electrical Manufacturers Association. AFCIs are mandatory in at least 27 states and required in limited circumstances -- such as bedrooms only -- in all states but Indiana.

AFCIs shut down power that arcs, or jumps, from its intended path. A home's electrical wiring or any electrical cord that's old, faulty or pierced by a nail or screw can cause an arc and spark a fire.

The nonprofit Electrical Safety Foundation International says arcing causes more than 30,000 U.S. home fires a year, resulting in \$750 million in damage.

Tamper-resistant outlets have internal shutters that readily accept electrical plugs but can prevent children from shocking themselves. More than 2,400 U.S. children are injured each year after sticking metal objects such as keys or paper clips into the sockets, according to the electrical foundation.

"Indiana (often) is behind the times when it comes to life safety," said Pike Township Fire Marshall Steve Jones, a supporter of the mandates. "Indiana routinely ignores parts of the National Electric Code because of the financial concerns of special interest groups, like the builders."

The two safety devices would add \$325 to \$475 to the cost of a \$150,000 home, said Carlie Hopper, Regulatory Affairs Director for the Indiana Builders Association. AFCIs can be up to 10 times more than the cost of a typical circuit breaker; tamper-resistant outlets are about double the cost of regular outlets.

Hopper argued installing the safety devices should be the responsibility of the homeowner.

"At some point, you've got to draw the line," she said. "It's a slippery slope when it comes to building new homes. Once you open the floodgates, you're adding all these devices that add on to the final price of the home."

Although several commissioners said the lack of a public outcry helped them make their decision, Chairman David P. Hannum discounted that reasoning.

"This isn't on the level of the average homeowner," Hannum said. "It's naive to think there would be a public outcry over something in their circuit box."

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June 3, 2009

## Fireworks sales expected to soar

By *JUSTIN L. MACK*  
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Despite the weak economy, Linda Love is looking to start the fireworks season with a bang.

"Usually guys will save up for the Fourth of July, so we are still seeing similar business," said Love, owner of Party at Trav's in Lafayette, which sells fireworks year-round. "What we are seeing is people coming in and buying weekly instead of all at once, but the economy hasn't affected us."

After a fireworks shortage caused some vendors to raise their rates last summer, prices have dropped, allowing Hoosiers to celebrate without breaking the bank.

With cherry bombs and firecrackers being more affordable than they were a year ago, safety officials are reminding people of the dangers of improper fireworks usage.

In 2008, there were 141 fireworks-related injuries including one death reported to the Indiana State Department of Health. Of these injuries, more than 75 percent occurred between June 30 and July 6.

Even with the safety concerns, people continue to spend money on fireworks, making it one of the few industries seeing a sales increase.

Last June, according to the American Pyrotechnics Association, Americans spent \$930 million on fireworks, up from \$900 million the previous year.

The bulk of the sales are consumer fireworks, such as Roman candles, rockets, sparklers, firecrackers, fountains, and other such devices.

Kevin Carter of West Lafayette is a fireworks fan who's glad his favorite sparklers and bottle rockets are affordable during the recession.

"I'm going to buy fireworks for the Fourth no matter what they cost, but last year I didn't buy as much because money was tight," he said while rummaging through the fireworks bin at Pay Less Super Market. "I had to hunt for a while to find the lowest prices before, but this year it hasn't been a problem."

Phil Ramsey, owner of Ramsey Pyrotechnics in Frankfort, said patriotism is the reason people continue to purchase fireworks year after year.

Ramsey, who specializes in selling larger, non-consumer fireworks for special events, said people should expect impressive presentations this summer.

"Event organizers have scaled back, but only to a very limited degree," he said. "A lot of these events are saying that they've had to cut back on so many other things but not on fireworks. This is still America, and when we celebrate, we want to do it right."

Doing it right means celebrating safely, officials say.

"Hoosiers need to remember that restrictions are in place regarding the use of fireworks, as well as the possible penalties for violations," said Jim Greeson, Indiana state fire marshal. "We want to stress the personal responsibility of each fireworks consumer. Obey our laws, follow directions for safe use and apply common sense."

State health officials say children and adolescents continue to be the most prone to fireworks injuries. According to the Indiana Department of Health, 62.3 percent of the injuries to children occurred with an adult present.

"Almost half of the total injuries involved children and adolescents, but they make up a little more than one-fourth of the population," said Joan Duwve, medical director for the Indiana State Department of Health. "They don't understand the dangers of fireworks, so it is important that parents are aware of how they can protect their children."

According to Duwve, 65 percent of the injuries were burns to the fingers or hands. Eye injuries were also common making up 25 percent of the total incidents reported. Fireworks use on private property accounted for almost 87 percent of reported injuries.

While the report indicates that the total number of injuries is down when compared to 2007, fireworks enthusiasts should continue to use with care.

"We are still concerned about the number of Hoosiers being badly hurt by fireworks each year, especially children," said Duwve. "Fireworks are not toys and should be handled with great caution."

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## Historical Home In Oakland City Burns Down

Reported by:

*Saturday, Jun 6, 2009 @08:42pm*

The Indiana State Fire Marshall is trying to figure out what caused a historical home in Oakland City to burn to the ground overnight. Fox 7 was on the scene at 3:00 am Saturday morning as the giant home on the corner of Washington and Lincoln turned to ashes. According to officials, when fire fighters arrived on the scene the home was fully engulfed. It took them more than three hours to calm the blaze. Flames were shooting up to 60 feet in the air, but no other homes were damaged. The home was more than 100 years old and was a fixture in the community. It was abandoned about 15 years ago.

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# Camp Atterbury Public Affairs

## One Year Later: Camp Atterbury's Storm of the Century

CAMP ATTERBURY JOINT MANEUVER TRAINING CENTER, Ind. – Look around Camp Atterbury and it's hard to imagine that one year ago, Mother Nature wrote a page of destruction in one of the Army's premiere training center's history books.

The storm, which drew a line of devastation across Camp Atterbury's cantonment area last June, is long gone, along with most of the damages it wrought: broken gas and power lines, dozens of overturned civilian and military vehicles, more than \$50 million in property damage, and miraculously, not one injury.

However, it didn't take long for Camp Atterbury, state and federal officials to turn the tides of the storm's wrath, despite a flood of epic proportions that followed just days after the tornado. And thanks to a combination of inner-agency cooperation and a myriad of reconstruction projects, the post continues to support service members from around the country even better one year later.

"Holy crap, sir, our building's gone!"

Maj. Ken Potchen, last year's director of public works at Camp Atterbury, has experienced his fair share of Indiana's home brew of severe weather. Still, he said that he never experienced any storm like that of last year's F3 tornado, but was nonetheless expecting something big on the horizon the evening of June 3, 2008.

"I was watching the news and saw the storm coming through Camp Atterbury," he said, recalling last year's events. "I knew I had to get to post to assess the damage, and as I was getting dressed, I got a call from a Soldier that lives on post. He said, 'Holy crap, sir, our building's gone!' I knew it was going to be bad."

Potchen wasn't the only one making a beeline toward Camp Atterbury following the storm, though. Post Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Ron Morris said that he too had received word that the storm had cut through the post and was immediately en route to the installation.

According to weather reports from the National Weather Service, the storm touched down around 10 p.m. that evening, and Morris said that he was barely ahead of the storm itself as he made his way toward the aftermath.

"I've never been that close to a tornado," he said. "When I got there, the post was a mess; there were downed power lines all over the place. The gas (from broken gas lines) was so strong it'd make your stomach turn."

As officials and emergency services quickly arrived following the tornado, Morris said that he was focused on one thing; the safety and well-being of those who had weathered the storm. Since Camp Atterbury trains mobilizing units all year round, almost 2,000 Marines were on post at the time, in addition to Soldiers, civilians workers, campers and inmates at the on-post Indiana Department of Corrections facility. The storm had wound its way across Camp Atterbury in such a way that those on post ended up being mere yards from the tornado's path.

"Our camp grounds were full of campers, and the tornado shifted its course about 200 yards from where they were staying," Morris said. "The true miracle was that no one was hurt. If you look at the incredible damage, it certainly gives you a sense of awe."

Potchen agreed. "I think we were very blessed, considering our troop concentration at the time," he said. "If that storm shifted just a little, there could have been some serious issues."

Bryan Pearson, the superintendent for Camp Atterbury's Indiana Department of Corrections, said that security concerns among his inmates were never compromised despite moderate damage to his

facility's outer fence line and recreation yard. In fact, he didn't realize that the damage was so profound since no issues were reported to him during the storm.

"There were no injuries, everyone was accounted for, and for the most part, inmates stayed calm during the process," he said.

Additionally, more than a mile of Camp Atterbury's outer fence line perimeter was damaged from the twister, but Potchen said that security was never breached due in part to the quick response they soon received to construction and rebuilding efforts.

#### Assessing the damage

After safety concerns and accountability among troops and others had been addressed, it was then time to pick up the pieces. Potchen said he immediately contacted power companies to deal with the broken gas and power lines, as well as the post provost marshal to prevent anyone from traipsing through the immense amount of debris and heavily-damaged buildings.

"People had a strong desire to go in and get their stuff, so we had to put out [announcements] to prevent that," Potchen said.

Among the damage was, ironically, the complete decimation of the installation's Directorate of Public Works' buildings and equipment. Despite the losses, Potchen said he assembled assessment crews and equipped them with pens and forms similar to rental car agreements.

"Instead of a drawing of a car on the worksheet, we have a drawing of a building," he said. "Damage is noted and estimated cost is established."

In addition to the immediate mobilization of Soldiers both on- and off-post to address clean-up efforts, most of Camp Atterbury IDOC inmate population was called in to assist.

"As soon as we got the request, we began assembling teams," Pearson said. "We're always trying to assist the community, and I think it's more rewarding for the [inmates] and staff when it's in a time of need."

#### The 500-year flood

It seemed that nature didn't want to let up on its assault on Camp Atterbury and surrounding communities. Five days after the tornado, record flooding throughout southern Indiana created an unwanted water world for many Hoosiers. For an already battered Camp Atterbury, flooding to the post and the nearby residential area of Prince's Lakes was the icing on the cake.

"I think we received about 11 inches of rain in about four hours," Potchen said. "I imagined it as a 100-year flood, but certainly many people thought it was a 500-year flood."

"It was unbelievable that the flood followed so quickly after such devastation," Morris added.

While water covered some roadways on post, it was the dam bursting near the small sub-division at Prince's Lakes that left more than 125 people stranded, prompting immediate evacuation of residents in and around the area. Morris praised the concerted efforts of both local and post emergency services that worked together during the entire process.

"To be able to come through this like we did... really speaks about the strength and partnerships we have with the community," he said.

#### Rebuilding bigger and better than before

As assessment teams worked all night and into the next day following the tornado, it became clear that emergency appropriations were quickly warranted. Potchen said that \$10 million was committed to Camp Atterbury by the United States Property and Fiscal Office for emergency contracting, and by

that evening, \$20 million was made available to combat Mother Nature's wrath. In total, Camp Atterbury has so far received more than \$10 from Army Lease Proceeds, \$5.7 million from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Installations and Housing), more than \$800,000 from the U.S. Army Installation Management Command and more than \$22 million from the National Guard Bureau.

Potchen said that thanks to help from those agencies along with Indiana Congressmen Mike Pence and Steve Buyer, who visited Camp Atterbury following the tornado, more than 98 percent of the damages were repaired and even improved within four months of the catastrophe.

"[The tornado's damage] was very inconvenient, but we ended up with a lot of new roofs, new windows and more energy efficient renovation to some of these buildings that have been around since the 70's," Potchen said. I'm reluctant to say this, but from a facility standpoint, we're better off than we were."

Today, estimates of the property damage stand at around \$50.3 million from the more than 50 buildings damaged, in addition to more than \$780,000 in equipment and logistical damage.

"We still don't have a final cost assessment, since we're constantly turning over stones to find damage," Potchen said. "It's a natural process of rehab."

"The construction is ongoing, but significant amounts of repairs and improvements are complete," post deputy commander Morris said.

Since the destruction, only two military construction projects remain before restoration from the tornado is complete, Potchen said. One is a \$10.1 million project to construct a battalion-sized dining facility capable of feeding up to 800 people at a time, thus replacing the previous facility that could only hold 200. The second project is a new, \$12.2 million reconstruction of Camp Atterbury's DPW area.

Looking back, it seems that despite the horrendous amounts of damage and debris created from the tornado, operations continue to move forward at Camp Atterbury. Save for the occasional construction teams adding green, steel roofing and new windows to buildings throughout post and a single, tattered warehouse near the DPW area, all evidence of last year's disaster has been erased. Morris applauded the tremendous efforts from the engineers, construction companies and emergency responders and said that in fact, Camp Atterbury has since emerged better than before.

"We've taken our lessons learned and improved from them," he said. "After all was said and done I really gained peace of mind through the performance of our installation and the contractors that assisted with the reconstruction efforts."

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June 6, 2009

## Flood's effects linger a year later

*By Jason Thomas  
jason.thomas@indystar.com*

How do you put a dollar figure on a natural disaster that is not expected to happen again for another 500 years?

One year ago tomorrow, the worst act Mother Nature ever inflicted on Johnson County -- and the costliest disaster ever in Indiana -- struck with torrents of rain, causing epic flooding and heartache for thousands of residents.

In 2008, during a 24-hour period from June 6-7, more than 7 inches of rain fell in Franklin. The soil already had been saturated by rainfall that was 180 percent higher than normal in April and May.

Flooding was most severe in Franklin, but other parts of Johnson County also experienced damage. In the aftermath, the Federal Emergency Management Agency doled out more than \$6 million in assistance to 1,294 county residents. Local government agencies have been earmarked more than \$9.8 million in federal aid for everything from replacing entire buildings to office furniture and equipment.

Images of rising water and rescue efforts are burned in peoples' memories.

"I think in everyone's mind, a scar will always be there, what they went through, and the devastation that it did to the county," John Price, a member of the County Commissioners, said this week. "All in all, I think the recovery has been a united effort from a lot of good citizens."

## The work continues

Franklin Mayor Fred Paris expects his city to be mostly recovered within the next 18 to 24 months -- possibly a full three years after floodwaters swooped up police cruisers and deposited them in Province Park, several blocks from police headquarters.

During the flood, Youngs Creek crested at more than 2 feet above its January 1952 record.

"A year later, you say, 'Wow, how could this possibly have happened?'" said Paris, who estimated Franklin could top \$20 million in damages and rehabilitation. "The other thing that crosses your mind is how unbelievably difficult it is to pick up all the pieces."

The city is working to move the police department back to its headquarters near South and Main streets, a process that could cost \$1 million. The flood a year ago sent nearly 2 feet of water into the building, and forced the department into a temporary location on Hurricane Road.

With an eye toward the future, Paris is seeking federal funding for a \$100,000 study through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to examine water flow and watersheds in Franklin.

His long-term goal is to build a flood-diversion ditch that would divert Youngs Creek west of the city and prevent it from flooding downtown. Paris would seek federal dollars to help cover the estimated \$5 million price tag.

## Fixing the county

Johnson County officials also are working to rebuild infrastructure.

One road -- County Road 150 South -- still is closed. Permanent repairs on another 10 roads are expected to go to bid this summer, according to county Highway Director Gary Vandegriff.

Damage to roads and bridges totaled nearly \$1.5 million; the county received just over \$1.1 million in federal aid, leaving it to cover more than \$344,000 in repair costs.

"The flood had a significant impact both financially and to the functionality of the county road system," Vandegriff said. "A year later, that impact is still apparent because of the remaining permanent repairs that have to be made."

The County Commissioners in the coming weeks will discuss how to replace the Oren Wright office building, west of the courthouse in Franklin. The structure was inundated with 5 feet of water during the flood and was demolished.

Federal aid will cover about \$3 million of the estimated \$4 million cost. Options including building a new facility, or adding on to the existing Courthouse Annex, which houses county offices.

Whatever the solution, Price said it could be 12 to 15 months before some county workers -- including those in the prosecutor's office -- have permanent offices again.

## Lessons learned

Forrest "Tug" Sutton, Johnson County's emergency management director, made some changes within his department to deal with future disasters.

More phones were added, a team of volunteer liaisons was established and a volunteer coordinator was put in place.

He still thinks about June 7.

"It sends a shiver through you, it really does," Sutton said.

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## One year later: Martinsville still recovering from flood

Posted: June 4, 2009 01:42 PM EDT

Updated: June 4, 2009 02:58 PM EDT

[Kris Kirschner](#)/Eyewitness News



Inside a flood-damaged home

In some parts of Martinsville, it's like a ghost town. The deserted homes are chilling reminders of an historic disaster.

Morgan County - It's been a year since floodwaters ravaged central Indiana communities, forcing people out of their homes. For more than a hundred homeowners in Martinsville, the recovery efforts are still underway.

"Severe weather that comes through has a whole new meaning for people," said Joe Mills, long-term recovery team.

The town is now defined by a disaster the likes of which had not been seen before that weekend in June of 2008.

"It really just caught us so off guard," said Kenny Hale, Morgan County planning director.

The rains that fell a year ago came so fast central Indiana communities like Martinsville had little time to react. In a matter of hours, neighborhoods were underwater, residents evacuated and homes were lost.

Bryon Lucas' home was among them.

"When I left that morning, nothing but mud puddles. When I got back to my house it looked like it was sitting in the river," said Lucas.

A firefighter, Lucas helped with rescue efforts. Then he got a call his own home was underwater. A year later, his home of 15 years remains deserted.

"It seems like our life's been kinda on hold because we haven't been able to make any plans or anything," he said.

His is a story shared by dozens of homeowners in and around Martinsville.

The damage to one neighborhood spans about four blocks. Each home was filled with about three to five feet of water during the flood. All but one are now vacated part of a buyout with the state.

Morgan County Planning Director Kenny Hale says while nearly all the bridges are repaired and business open, there are still more than 100 damaged homes and homeowners in limbo.

"There's just so much documentation. It takes a lot to get through it," said Hale.

Joe Mills is part of the Long Term recovery team formed after the flood. He hopes his work will

be wrapped up by the end of the year.

"We're still getting people in our office who are discovering damage they didn't know they had," he said.

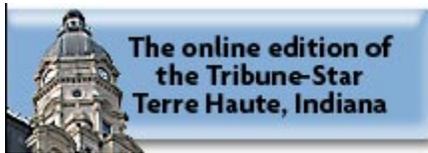
While some forced out of their homes likely won't return to this community, Bryon Lucas plans to ride out this storm.

"I was born and raised here. I don't plan on leaving," he said.

In a short time, disaster hit. The recovery is a much longer process. Some of the changes are here to stay.

There are still about 150 Morgan County homes in the process of a buyout with FEMA and the state. County officials estimate the overall costs from the flood total about \$3 to \$4 million.

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**TribStar.com**



## Program set up to buy flood-damaged homes

By Arthur Foulkes  
The Tribune-Star

TERRE HAUTE June 04, 2009 11:21 pm

— Area residents whose homes were destroyed or badly damaged by last year's flooding may be able to sell their properties through a state, local and federal disaster mitigation grant program. The program, founded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and local sponsors, would pay homeowners for property in flood-prone areas. The government then would demolish the homes to reduce the number of potential future flood victims.

More than 20 area residents, many from the West Terre Haute village of Toad Hop, attended a meeting Thursday evening at the Vigo County Annex.

Under the program, a homeowner would agree to have his home considered for government purchase. At least two real estate appraisals would be done on the property, and the average appraised value would be the property's selling price, officials at the meeting said. Homeowners can back out of the agreement even after paperwork is signed, they said.

"It's all voluntary," said Terry Jones, a planner with the West Central Indiana Economic Development District, who spoke at the meeting.

The federal government would cover 75 percent of the purchase price of the properties. Local communities must raise the remaining 25 percent, Jones said.

Sale prices would be based on the estimated value of the property on the day prior to the flood, officials said. If flood insurance money was paid to the homeowner but not used to make repairs on the home, that money would be subtracted from any sale amount, said Jan Crider, an official with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, who also spoke at the meeting.

"We will work with you" in applying to sell your home, Jones told residents at the meeting. He noted that participation in the program is not guaranteed.

Owner-occupied homes are the first priority of the program, Crider said. Homes that are occupied by the owner only part of the year are the next-highest priority. Rental properties and commercial holdings are at the bottom of the priority list, she said.

"First [in line] is the guy with no place else to go," Crider said.

The process of selling a property through this grant program can take at least eight months, she said. "It's not a fast process."

Anyone interested in taking part in the program can contact Jones at the WCIEDD at (812) 238-1561; Jeremy Weir at the Vigo County Area Planning office at (812) 462-3354; or the Vigo County commissioners at (812) 462-3367.

Questions also can be sent by e-mail to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security at the following addresses:

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