



The Torch

The official newsletter for Indiana state employees

February 2020

Bob Vollmer, 102-year-old DNR surveyor, announces retirement

Senior state employee plans to read, travel

Want to live to be 102?

Eat a lot of red beets.

Want to work until you're 102?

Work hard, follow the Golden Rule, and – you guessed it -- eat a lot of red beets.

That's the advice of Bob Vollmer, Indiana's oldest (and longest currently-serving) state employee who, after nearly 60 years on the job as an Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) surveyor, decided in January that it was final time to "call it a career."

Living well

Vollmer credits his longevity to the care provided to him in his youth by his parents who ensured Bob and his siblings always received nutritional meals.

"Eat a lot of red beets," Vollmer's grandmother would say. "That's what makes your blood red."

"I thought, 'what a bunch of baloney,'" Vollmer remarked with a nostalgic look in his eyes and a flippantly dismissive wave of his hand at the happy memory.

But eat those beets he did, along

with a litany of other fruits and vegetables. He never once smoked a cigarette, even when it was fashionable to do so ("I always thought [smoking] was so stupid," he said curtly), and he held a job that required him to stay on the move. He was health-conscious long before such a mindset was commonplace, and it's served him well all these years, allowing this man of slight height and build the opportunity to leave an enormous and indelible mark on DNR – and the Hoosier State as a whole.

But reaching 102 might have seemed impossible all those decades ago when war raged in the Pacific and Vollmer manned a machine gun as a member of the U.S. Navy. Out to get mail one day, an avalanche nearly took the distinguished Hoosier several decades before his time. To hear him tell the story of his escape from the snow-slide is to be transported to that long ago and far-away place and time, to become an enthralled observer to a vivid scene Vollmer recalls as freshly as if it had happened only moments before.

He used drops of snow to determine which way would be "out" of the avalanche and went about grabbing snowballs from one side of the icy entrapment and placing

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Bob Vollmer, 102-year-old DNR surveyor, announces retirement



Longtime Indiana DNR surveyor Bob Vollmer will officially retire Feb. 6. Vollmer, 102, spent nearly six decades working for the state of Indiana. He said he plans to read and travel during his retirement.

sity (he'd been encouraged to attend "one of those Big 10 schools" after growing dissatisfied at the University of California – Berkeley) while working and expecting his first child, Vollmer's memories are shared with the enthusiasm that can come only from having experienced so many of the joys – and yes, even the more difficult circumstances – life can bring.

As his final day working for the DNR approaches, the Washington, Indiana native's passion for life and for his work remains inspiring, and though he never fancied himself a Hoosier legend of any sort, time, dedication, and an infectious spirit all his own have made him just that in the eyes of those who know him.

Consummate professional

On the job since the Kennedy Administration, there isn't much Vollmer hasn't encountered, and there's precious little of it he doesn't recall. Vollmer, who was in his mid-forties when he joined Indiana's Department of Conservation at the behest of its then-director has watched the department grow into an agency stocked with conservation-minded professionals

who would do right by Indiana's treasure trove of natural beauty.

Bob Vollmer remembers a time when protecting natural resources in Indiana was far less organized and headed up by people whose expertise might not have meshed with the goal of ensuring Indiana's bountiful resources were well cared-for. All that began to change when DNR was formed in 1965.

He's especially proud that DNR has come to embody the agency envisioned by those who wanted to establish a level of professionalism that had been lacking all those years ago.

Bob said he felt the leadership of the agency's fledgling days would "be very happy" with today's DNR.

Vollmer's role was integral in the agency's mission as well by making certain that property lines were understood and abided by. Managing often delicate situations involving encroachment cases or other property disputes made up a good chunk of his work throughout his lengthy career, though his encyclopedic memory has proven as valuable to his colleagues as Bob's nearly unmatched level of experience.

Dean Illingworth, assistant director of DNR's Engineering Division, remarked that Vollmer, in many cases, knows by heart the exact lines where properties diverge; the markers are permanently etched in the veteran surveyor's memory.

"I asked him, 'How do you know that?' and he just said, 'Because I put it there,'" Illingworth recalled with a chuckle that was equal parts astonishment and admiration.

Vollmer's ability to recollect minute details from days long since passed is yet another reason

them on the other, slowly creating an escape route.

"Rob Peter, pay Paul," Vollmer said as he pantomimed the act that certainly saved his life. "I still don't know what happened to that mail," he joked after a moment.

Storied career

But that harrowing incident is far from the only yarn Bob Vollmer is apt to spin. With a long, distinguished life of service to his country and the Hoosier State, Vollmer has accumulated volumes of stories he clearly loves to share as often as the time to do so presents itself.

Whether it's recalling selling his personal airplane to purchase a Lincoln Continental for his first wife Helen, or managing to balance a heavy class load at Purdue Univer-

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Bob Vollmer, 102-year-old DNR surveyor, announces retirement

he's something of a living marvel. Vollmer can recite the preamble to the US Constitution verbatim from memory, and a portion of his retirement time is set to be dedicated to reading more of that storied document. Indiana's constitution is also on Bob's retirement reading list. Even at 102, Bob is eager to learn.

He's stayed up on the incalculable changes in technology that have occurred in more than half a century on the job, and he plans to attend an upcoming surveyor's conference to maintain certifications necessary in his work.

Staying busy

Vollmer's work is the kind that keeps a mind and body busy.

Marching out into the oft-changing whims (and winds) of Mother Nature in Indiana, Vollmer's work was anything but a desk job, though in recent years he's spent an increasing amount of his time operating out of his home office. He also worked one day each week in the DNR offices located on the second floor of Indiana Government Center South in Indianapolis.

No matter where his work took him (90 of Indiana's 92 counties, for instance), or from where it originated, his unrivaled knowledge and expertise are appreciated and will be missed by his present colleagues, many of whom weren't even born when Bob began his surveying career.

The news that the state's senior workforce member had decided to put down his surveying tools for good attracted the attention of numerous media outlets. Illingworth helped coordinate Vollmer's busy media schedule in the days leading up to Bob's retirement. From Indianapolis TV stations to an

Associated Press piece that made it to Time, Vollmer's amazing longevity and lively spirit were profiled across the country and shared with readers throughout the globe.

He's no stranger to popping up in heartwarming stories on the local news, either.

With his voluminous knowledge, boundless spirit, and natural inclination not to mince words, it's easy to see why Vollmer's life and work have captured the attention of so many Hoosiers in the twilight days of his career as a public servant.

But accolades also are nothing new for Bob Vollmer.

He was honored by then-Lt. Gov. Eric Holcomb as a Sagamore of the Wabash in 2016 – one of the state's highest civilian honors. There is also a trail named after Bob in Brown County. When he stepped forward to greet Gov. Holcomb after his name was called at the 2018 Governor's Long-Term Employee Reception at the Indiana Statehouse, Bob received a standing ovation from his colleagues. On that date, Vollmer was recognized for more than 55 years of service to his state.

The words of gratitude and appreciation continued for weeks leading up to Bob's final day working in his Indianapolis office.

Leaving a legacy

Ever loquacious but always modest, Bob Vollmer believes he owes much of his success in his life and career to his willingness to speak out when necessary.

"I think my biggest accomplishment was opening my big mouth," he said facetiously. "I told people the way that it was, gave credit where credit was due."

He was able to speak up when necessary, and that was a vital skill in his day-to-day work trudging through Indiana's exceptionally diverse "great outdoors." Being able to handle situations where residents are angry or upset over property boundary disputes is no easy task, but Bob was always up to it.

"I protected Indiana property," he said, summing up decades of important work in as few words as possible.

In many ways, he attempted to emulate one of his favorite politicians, former President Harry Truman who notably coined the phrase, "the buck stops here." That's Bob Vollmer in a nutshell: no excuses, always professional, never afraid to speak up when the situation calls for it.

As he departs public service planning a possible visit to the family farm on which he lived earlier in his life, perhaps to dig for Native American artifacts as he enjoyed doing many years before, Bob Vollmer leaves a legacy unlikely ever to be eclipsed by another state employee.

Gov. Holcomb took notice of the longtime surveyor's retirement decision when it was made public in January.

"Bob Vollmer, our oldest state employee at 102 years old, has been providing great government service at the Indiana Department of Natural Resources for decades," the governor wrote on Twitter. "I was honored to present him with a Sagamore in 2016 and wish him the absolute best in his retirement."

Story by Brent Brown, Indiana State Personnel Department

ActiveHealth Rewards Center

The Rewards Center in your [ActiveHealth portal](#) is your best way to check your progress on all your ActiveHealth rewards. Check out the Rewards Center to see all available rewards, track your progress towards earning them, and redeem e-gift cards you have earned.

Your ActiveHealth Rewards Center is the best way to track your progress towards completing your 2021 Premium Discount activity. Separate tracking is shown for each available option. Find the option you are working on and click on the “Work on It” link to see what you have completed. The health

coaching activity updates as you complete your individual health coaching sessions. The online education activity updates when you complete Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5. The physical activity option updates daily with your total number of days completed. Remember your device must be synced to the ActiveHealth portal to see the most up-to-date progress.

To earn the 2021 Premium Discount, employees and spouses enrolled in coverage must each complete one of the following three options by September 30, 2020.

1. Complete four individual health coaching sessions (in-person or by phone) through ActiveHealth or

2. Reach Level 5, which is 9,000 hearts, in ActiveHealth’s online portal by completing health education modules and health goals or

3. Record 200 days of physical activity tracking through a device synced to the ActiveHealth portal. Any day with 10,000 steps or 30 minutes of physical activity counts toward the 200 day goal.

Earn \$100 for completing a biometric screening

All three options for completing a [biometric screening](#) are now available! Even better, employees and spouses who are eligible for the ActiveHealth program can each earn a \$100 e-gift card for completing their biometric screening!

A biometric screening is a quick way to check in on your current health. You get instant results and help understanding your key measurements like blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose levels, and body mass index (BMI). You will be asked some questions, weighed, measured, and a blood sample will be taken by finger stick or venipuncture depending on the biometric screening location you choose. It is not a substitute for a regular check-up with a doctor, but is a great way to see if you are on track or need to follow up with your doctor between regular doctor visits.

The biometric screening deadline is November 30, 2020 to earn the

e-gift card reward, so make sure to leave plenty of time for your results to be loaded into the portal. All e-gift cards must be redeemed by December 31, 2020. Keep in mind the biometric screening reward is considered earned when the biometric screening results are visible in the ActiveHealth portal.

There are three ways to get your free biometric screening:

1. Go to an onsite screening at your work location or other near-by work location. See the list of screening dates and locations at investinyourhealthindiana.com/biometric-screening. Schedule an appointment through the link in the biometric screening activity in your ActiveHealth Rewards Center.

2. Go to a partner screening site like CVS Minute Clinic or Quest Diagnostics. Print the voucher or requisition form and locate providers in your ActiveHealth portal.

3. See your doctor for a physical with lab work. Print the Provider Form and make sure your doctor knows what measurements are required. Have your doctor complete the Provider Form. Submit the completed form by secure upload in the ActiveHealth portal or fax.

Questions?

For more information about earning rewards or completing a biometric screening, please check out the resources available at InvestInYourHealthIndiana.com. Or, call the INSPD benefits hotline at 317-232-1167 or 877-248-0007 Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Or email spdbenefits@spd.in.gov.

Honor action with action during Black History Month

February is Black History Month, and throughout this month we will honor people -- past and present -- who have had an impact on society.

The legacies they built on action and integrity will be remembered, but this year I challenge us to do more than remember: We should honor their actions with action.

February 20 marks Social Justice Equality Day, a day dedicated to issues such as poverty, exclusion, gender equality, unemployment, human rights, and social protections. It is impossible for me to tell you how to address these issues over the course of 24 hours, so I won't. Social Justice, just like building a legacy, cannot happen in a day or a month.

We invite you to watch our social media ([Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#))

closely this month as we walk you through the lives and legacies of key figures in black history. We won't just tell you their stories, we will encourage you to take action -- to be part of the social justice movement that made them memorable.

Black history month will come and go. February 20 will soon become the 21st, but our dedication to changing the landscape for those who are depending on our voices to help lift them higher should not be predicated on the calendar.

If we continue to push, then, in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., one day we will "reach the mountain top." We are excited to share this journey with all of you!

By Shayla Pulliam, Indiana State Personnel Department Diversity & Inclusion Manager

Discounts



Monster Jam - Feb. 8 & 9: State of Indiana employees can save on Monster Jam tickets at Lucas Oil Stadium! [Click here](#) for details and discount info.



Mini-Marathon and 5K Discounts

Registration is now open for the OneAmerica 500 Festival Mini-Marathon and the Delta Festival 5K!

Employees can register at discounted team rates [here](#).

More discounts

For a full list of all discounts available to state employees, [click here](#).

A graphic with a blue and red background. The text reads: "THE UNITED STATES IS IN THE MIDDLE OF A CRISIS THAT'S IMPACTING HOOSIER FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES: OPIOID USE DISORDER. NOW OPEN THROUGH FEB. 7, 2021. LEARN MORE". In the center is a circular logo with the word "FIX" in large blue letters, with a red heart shape integrated into the letter 'I'. Below "FIX" is the text "HEARTBREAK AND HOPE INSIDE OUR OPIOID CRISIS". At the bottom right is the logo for the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, with the website "indianastatemuseum.org" next to it.



Artwork by Jerry Williams

IDOC Correctional Training Institute turns 20

Twenty years ago, Reggie Miller was still a superstar with the Indiana Pacers, Shania Twain was on top of the Country Music charts, and the world was breathing a collective sigh of relief that Y2K was just a hoax.

And for the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) a new era of training was beginning with the opening of the Correctional Training Institute (CTI) in New Castle.

CTI opened in the home of the former state hospital. Clean-up work began in November 1999, since the building had been closed for two years prior to IDOC taking over. With more than 50,000 square feet in both buildings, CTI and the SDC Building located in the back of the property, it was quite an undertaking.

“I thought the first couple weeks, ‘I’m doing good,’” former head housekeeper Susan Kever said of the task. “I’ve got this place pretty well cleaned up. Then I’d find another restroom,” she said with a chuckle. Kever was hired to clean up the two buildings and get them ready for the official opening in January 2000.

Kever’s humorous observation was correct; there are 32 restrooms throughout the facility.

David Vought, curriculum development specialist, who came to Staff Development and Training as a trainer from the Indiana State Prison in 2002, said classes at that time were much larger than they are today, mainly because there was only one academy. Class sizes were averaged 175 to 225 people. He remembers one class size being

nearly 360 people – all located in Classroom C. There were lines of tables and chairs, he said. “The room was completely full.”

At that time, Classroom C which is the largest classroom in the main building, still looked like the gymnasium it once was. There were

would receive three meals a day for a nominal price. Classroom SEC was the dining room at that time.

Instruction was quite a bit different as well, Vought remembers.

“There were no activities,” he



The Indiana Department of Correction’s Correctional Training Institute is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. Seen here is a cherry blossom tree that blooms in the spring, greeting visitors with its rose-colored leaves.

still basketball goals hanging from the ceiling and a stage at the front. Since then the goals have been removed and the stage has been turned into another classroom – the Computer Lab.

“The institute was run much more military-like in the beginning,” Vought said. For example, a string and a metal rod was used to make sure the classroom tables were lined up perfectly. All blinds in the lodging rooms were set at half the window level and all the hangars in the closets had to be pushed to the left when preparing the room for the next group of recruits.

When it opened, the building contained a security office, which is now where the Reflections of Pride Store is located. There also was a full kitchen where participants

recalled. “Information came strictly through lecture, and on Thursday nights there was a mandatory one-hour study session.”

In the beginning, there were no special instructor lodging rooms, and every room had at least two beds. At that time the beds were the old metal-framed twin beds. Today, all beds are wooden-framed double beds.

Todd Tappy, a 39-year veteran of IDOC, said he remembers staying at CTI in the early days. “It had more of a prison setting feel to it then,” he noted. “Now it’s better, to say the least.”

Tappy said he’s always stayed at CTI when he has to be there for

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IDOC Correctional Training Institute turns 20

training. “I enjoy it. We try to promote it because it gives us the opportunity when class is done to bond and tell stories, to get to know people a little bit better.”

Lodging today has a much more hotel-like feel, Tappy added. “Accommodations are pretty good.”

Vought also remembers when the adult and juvenile academies were completely separate. The juvenile academy was held in Classrooms D and E, usually with only one instructor. One classroom was equipped with a camera and a monitor to follow along with the instructor in the other room.

While the facility was always clean, there was not a lot of emphasis put on decorations or comfort, Vought added.

Things have changed quite a bit

since then. “We really try to make the environment as comfortable as possible for staff,” according to SD&T Executive Director Nancy Riley. “We know that staff are away from their family during training.”

Riley was there when the building first opened.

Besides the full size beds, there are side tables and lamps, and large squares of carpet on the tiled floors. There is an exercise room and a break area in all the wings now. Each lodging area has full-sized refrigerators and microwaves. There is also a coffee bar located near the classrooms with free coffee offered all morning. Several lodging suites have been created as well to encourage adjunct instructors to stay during their time at CTI. Each suite is equipped with a small refrigerator, microwave, and its own TV and DVD player.

Today, there is more concern for staff activities after hours. Bicycles were refurbished and donated to CTI to be rented (for free) by staff after hours. There’s even a yoga room created on the second floor of the lodging wing. New technology in the classrooms has created a more conducive learning environment. Wi-Fi has been improved throughout the buildings and there are more security cameras located around the facility to help students feel safe and secure.

“The goal has been to simulate a college campus,” Riley explained. Besides classrooms and dorm rooms there are general areas for staff to congregate, to network, and relax. There are outdoor facilities for both learning and socializing. Grills are located near both buildings and enclosed outdoor learning and recreational areas have been created.

Riley noted that none of the improvements to CTI would have been possible without the help of IDOC’s Construction Services. “They are a large part of the reason we have been able to do what we’ve been able to do,” she said.

Through the years several upgrades and additions have been made including the IDOC Museum, Hall of Honor and Fallen Staff Memorial.



Riley’s Rally Point allows learners at New Castle’s Correctional Training Institute to enjoy the outdoors while collaborating with colleagues or engaging in learning opportunities.

Historic preservation photo contest kicks off with digital format

Ring in the new year (and decade) by entering a revamped historic preservation photo contest.

The annual contest, organized by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology, has been held since 2005 using a traditional print format to promote Indiana's historic resources. While the purpose remains the same, this year the contest is moving to accepting only digital submissions; printed photos will not be accepted.

As in previous years, all subjects of photos must be of resources that were built or designed (versus natural resources) that are at least 50-years-old and located in Indiana. Photos can be black and white or color and must have been taken within the last two years. Each photographer may enter up to three images. An entry form is required for each photo.

Images should be emailed to aborland@dnr.IN.gov and must be JPEG files that are 10mb or smaller. Participants will only be able to send one photo and one entry form per email. Please do not use screenshots of photos/entry forms, and do not use file sharing applications (like Google Docs).

Participants will need to select one

of five contest categories on the entry form in which to enter their photo: Color, Black & White, Kids (younger than age 18), Artistic, and Altered Image.

Click [here](#) for parameters of the Altered Image category, contest guidelines, and the entry form.

The entry deadline is April 3.

The deadline for entering the Indiana DNR Division of Historical Preservation & Archaeology is Feb. 3. This photo was selected as the winner in the "Most Artistic" category in 2019 and depicts Crown Hill Cemetery's gates and waiting station. The photographer is Frank Sauer.



File your taxes for free!

Was your adjusted gross income \$69,000 or less in 2019?

If so, you may be eligible to file your state and federal taxes for free with Indiana freefile (INfreefile) from the Indiana Department of Revenue (DOR).

INfreefile provides faster refunds, free easy-to-use software, and a secure way to file your taxes. Did you know, filing electronically can save you money, but it also has



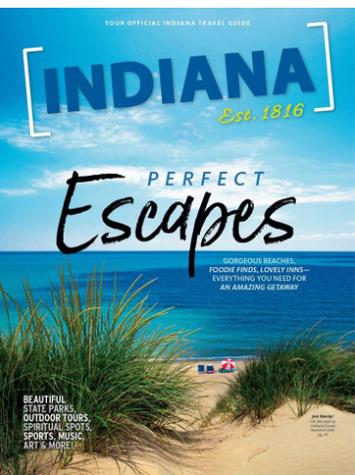
a 98 percent accuracy rate? Our qualified vendors can also help you find deductions and credits you qualify for, increasing the amount of your refund or decreasing the amount you owe. File today at freefile.dor.in.gov.

If you have questions, contact DOR's Customer Service Center at 317-232-2240 or check us out on [our website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

New brochures available from Visit Indiana

Lt. Governor [Suzanne Crouch](#) and the [Indiana Office of Tourism Development](#) (IOTD) announced in January that the cover of the official 2020 Indiana Travel Guide will feature [Indiana Dunes National Park](#).

Indiana Dunes is the state's first national park and the 61st in the nation. The park is 15 miles of sandy shoreline along the southern tip of Lake Michigan. It's the most popular tourist destination in the state.



“The Indiana Dunes attracts almost four million visitors each year,” Crouch said. “While best known for its world-class beaches, the Indiana Dunes also offers prairies, rivers, wetlands and forests to explore.”

IOTD distributes four publications each year: the travel guide, roadway map, golf and travel guide, and festival guide. The cover of each publication features an image of a different Indiana destination.

“The travel guide, roadway map and golf guide are some of Indiana Tourism’s most important tools for prospective travelers to use when planning their Indiana road trip,” said Misty Weisensteiner, director of IOTD. “These marketing materials help us showcase the Hoosier state, its attractions and destinations and tell Indiana’s story to visitors.”

The cover of the official 2020 Indiana Roadway Map, sponsored by [Shelby County Tourism and Visitors Bureau](#), shows the Little Blue River in Shelby County. The Blue River Trail System connects to Blue River Memorial Park, Kennedy Park, and Sunset Park in Shelbyville. The map includes a mileage chart, Indiana State Police and emergency contact information, and multiple advertisements from

some of Indiana’s most popular cultural and tourist destinations.

Indiana is home to more than 400 diverse golf courses. No matter if you are looking for a weekend golf getaway or a week-long stay and play experience, you can start planning with the Visit Indiana Golf and Travel Guide. This year’s cover features Victoria National Golf Club in Newburgh, which hosts the [Korn Ferry Tour Championship presented by United Leasing & Finance](#).

The [Indiana State Festivals Association](#) produces the festival guide. This year, the cover features the beautiful resort community of French Lick West Baden. Whether you’re looking for family fun, outdoor adventure or relaxation, Orange County has something for everyone.

All publications are free and can be ordered online at [brochures](#). You can also get them at any Indiana rest area or welcome center or by calling 317-234-2085.

Visit Indiana’s ‘20 IN 20’ highlights must-see, must-do Hoosier experiences

It’s no surprise to Hoosiers that Frommer’s named Indiana among “The World’s Top Places to Go in 2020.”

So, Visit Indiana is unveiling the ultimate 2020 travel experience, called [The 20 IN 20](#). The 20 IN 20 experience will reveal 20 lists of 20 must-see, must-do Indiana experiences, one at a time, all year long.

“These lists will take you all over the state to see and enjoy new

spots or old favorites,” said Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch. “Make this the year you really explore the Hoosier State.”

“The first list celebrates our small towns and communities,” said Misty Weisensteiner, director of Indiana Office of Tourism Development. “We want you to experience the hospitality and charm in one of Indiana’s small towns.”

A few must-see small towns in-

clude Franklin, Corydon and Whiting. Franklin was named in Visit Indiana’s 2019 Best of Indiana people’s choice campaign as Best Main Street. Officials said new businesses to the downtown area, including restaurants and shops, are helping the area thrive. You can commemorate Indiana’s first state capital in Corydon. There you can follow the development of Indiana from a territory to a state, shop on the historic square or visit a nearby

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Visit Indiana's '20 IN 20' highlights must-see, must-do Hoosier experiences

cave. Whiting, located along Lake Michigan's south shore, is home to summer concerts, the Northwest Indiana Oilmen baseball team and the National Mascot Hall of Fame. They also have the famous, Pierogi Fest®, which has been featured on Oprah.com, the Travel Channel and the Food Network. You can see the full list here. These 20 cities and towns are all home to 25,000 people or less.

"As a new year bonus, Visit Indiana is unveiling a second list," said Weisensteiner. "As an agricultural state, Indiana is lush with the bounty of farm-fresh ingredients, making the culinary scene across the state simply incredible."

Home to delicious menus and incredible atmospheres, these 20 eateries are truly destination dining experiences. A few must-try experiences include St. Elmo Steak House, South Side Soda Shop and FARMBloomington. St. Elmo Steak House has been a landmark in

downtown Indianapolis since 1902. It's known for its great quality food and its famous shrimp cocktail and spicy horseradish sauce. St. Elmo uses more than 6,500 pounds of fresh horseradish each year. The legendary eatery is no stranger to publicity and has accolades from all over the country, but there's only one St. Elmo.

Food Network recently named the South Side Soda Shop in Goshen one of the "Best Diners in the Country". The 1950's retro soda shop is known for its Green River sundae float and its cheesesteak sub. The South Side Soda Shop has been featured on Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives, twice. FARMBloomington and Chef Daniel Orr have been featured in Food Network Magazine. Chef Orr is known to take a sophisticated spin on regular dishes and create crowd-pleasing recipes. He uses locally grown and sourced foods. Read about all 20 dining destinations [here](#).

Visit Indiana is dedicating a microsite to The 20 IN 20. Visitors can sign up for an email alert to know when the next list is going to be revealed. When you visit a destination from any of the lists,



post your photos on Instagram with #The20IN20 for a chance to win a giveaway. Visit Indiana will randomly draw 20 winners every other month. Winners will receive one of the following custom items: beanie, golf umbrella, beach towel, or stadium blanket. Begin your decade with a true adventure in 2020 by completing at least 20 of our 400 must-see Indiana experiences!

Crouch announces 21 communities to receive more than \$12 million

Lieutenant Gov. Suzanne Crouch and the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) announced Jan. 9 that 21 rural Hoosier communities will receive more than \$12.3 million in federal grant funding.

"I'm thrilled to kick off the new year by awarding these 21 rural communities with over \$12 million in grant funding that will take them to even greater levels," said Lt. Gov. Crouch. "This funding will support projects that are crucial to their continued economic development efforts, and will ultimately improve the quality of life for residents

throughout the community."

The state of Indiana distributes Community Development Block Grant funds to rural communities to assist units of local government with various community projects such as: infrastructure improvement, downtown revitalization, public facilities and economic development.

"This was the first round to fully utilize the new [Indiana Electronic Grants Management System](#) as announced last year by Lt. Governor Crouch," said Jodi Golden, executive director of OCRA. "This

new system has streamlined the application and funds distribution process and we are excited for how it will continue to help us improve the quality of life for Hoosiers across the state."

The first round of the 2020 CDBG program begins Feb. 24, with proposals due at 4 p.m. April 3 and final applications due at 4 p.m. May 22.

For more information, visit www.in.gov/ocra/cdbg.htm.

Indiana Bond Bank's 'Flipping Finance Challenge' returns this month

Sign-ups open for 'Snow Day' collaborative event to help Hoosier communities meet challenges

February has a tendency to bring out the worst of winter in Indiana.

It's often an interminably gray, dreary span of freezing rain, buckets of snow, harsh winds, arctic temperatures, and a bizarre reliance on Pennsylvanian groundhogs with questionable meteorological knowledge. For many Hoosiers cabin fever is apt to set in, and outside the frosted window panes of home, signs of spring may be few and far between.

But none of that can eclipse the childhood thrill of the snow day – a delightfully unexpected “bonus” period of time more or less free from the bonds of any ordinary weekday doldrums. It was a day where the possibilities seemed endless and the snowdrifts and wintry winds were beloved elements of true wonderlands, not adult inconveniences. It was a day with a blank slate of possibilities; anything could happen. All you had to do was dare to dream.

That boundless energy and sky-is-the-limit thinking may be rekindled Feb. 28 and 29 at the [Indiana Bond Bank's](#) second annual “Flipping Finance Challenge”

(FFC). The [FFC “Snow Day”](#) is an “18-hour design sprint and innovation summit” with the goal of generating new solutions for a laundry list of real community is-

sues related to public finance. And much like last year, the approach is anything but typical.

“Flipping Finance Challenge is founded on the radical belief that ordinary Hoosiers - with diverse skills, minds and education – have the power to generate creative solutions to community challenges,” said Mark Wuellner, IBB executive director.

FFC is stocked with new additions in 2020.

For the first time, the event will be conducted in two Indianapolis locations – the [VisionLoft Event Center](#) and Market Tower Collaboratory. “Space is a critical component of creating an innovation environment. With VisionLoft and the Collaboratory we have found two unique spaces in Indianapolis that have the right mix of utility and comfort for our innovators to thrive”, noted Brian Carman, IBB program development director and FFC2020 lead organizer.

Registration is free, and open to all. No pre-requisite knowledge or background is required to participate. Participants may register individually and work alone, form a team organically on-site, or register with a pre-set team.

All involved are encouraged to attend a 6 p.m. dinner Friday, Feb. 28, and the following morning’s solution and pitch presentations which begin at 8 a.m. Both will be at the VisionLoft Event Center and both, like everything else with FFC 2020, are entirely free. Register individually [here](#).

At FFC2020, the City of Bloomington, Jay County and Starke County have loaded a “challenge bank” with 24 unique challenges faced by their communities. The challenges may be found [here](#). At the event, innovators have the freedom to



Indiana Bond Bank executive director Mark Wuellner (left) and program development director Brian Carman (right) are gearing up for the quasi-agency's second “Flipping Finance Challenge.” Registration is now open. Participants may earn prizes while helping Hoosier communities tackle complex financing challenges from numerous perspectives.

pick a challenge which resonates with them, interact directly with community leadership, and then create a solution.

“What’s great about FFC is that there are no prescribed solutions,” said Carman. “Last year, for example, three teams separately picked the same challenge. And they approached it from three different perspectives, reaching three totally different solutions. The best part was they were all complementary - the community could have walked away and implemented all three of them,” said Carman.

Get all the details you’ll need prior to registering [here](#).

The Indiana Bond Bank’s mission of delivering targeted financial solutions to local challenges “custom developed to help Indiana commu-

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Indiana Bond Bank's 'Flipping Finance Challenge' returns this month

nities grow and prosper" is echoed in the ingenuity on display at FFC.

The Indiana Bond Bank serves all units of government, as small as townships to as large as state agencies, as well as school districts, libraries, fire districts and more. The diversity amongst its customers brought the realization that sometimes more money or a new program is not the answer to every local challenge.

"Our debut Flipping Finance Challenge was really sparked from the culture created by State Treasurer Kelly Mitchell that emphasizes collaboration, bias toward action and a drive to help Hoosier communities thrive."

The [2019 program debut](#) brought about three dozen "innovators" to downtown Indy to help the City of Gary, the Eastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (EIRPC), and the Town of McCordsville tackle some ongoing challenges that ranged from a city's outside perception to a regional housing issue.

Treasurer Mitchell, Wuellner, and Carman are hoping the energy and innovation they saw last year snowballs into an equally successful event later this month. They – and all involved – know that no problem of the magnitude presented by the three participating agencies of government can be solved in a day, but by leveraging the brainpower of ordinary Hoo-

siers, topic experts, finance gurus, and participants who never stop dreaming big, positive change will take root. After all, when so many people from so many different backgrounds put their heads together, good things are bound to happen.

"In 2019 the Flipping Finance Challenge moved the needle on innovation in public finance," added Brian Carman, IBB Program Development Director. "At FFC2020 we want to change the entire game."

Register to change the game [here](#).

Story and photo by Brent Brown, Indiana State Personnel Department.

Indiana receives National Association of Medicaid Directors Spotlight Award

Program recognized for 'ERMA' solution

A "cutting edge solution" that streamlines Indiana Medicaid processes led to special recognition

for Indiana's Medicaid program last fall.

Indiana Medicaid was one of two recipients of the inaugural Spotlight Award from the National Association of Medicaid Directors (NAMD). The honor recognizes state Medicaid programs for "innovative solutions driving toward improved operations, demonstrating cost savings or improving health outcomes," according to the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA).

Indiana was recognized for its Enterprise Relationship Management and Administration (ERMA) solution, a "cutting edge solution that seeks to empower employees to focus less on antiquated processes, cumbersome documentation, and workload management and instead enables team members to rely on a central

and single platform to improve operations and efficiencies," according to information from FSSA.

The recognition stems from the efforts of Marty Black, FSSA/Division of Strategy and Technology (DST) project manager, and the Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning (OMPP) team.

Several of those making the most of ERMA in their work were lauded as well including Monica Griffin (Hoosier RX), Lisa Retzner (Estate Recovery), Hannah Burney and Julia Feagans (Policy Consideration), Carey Michels (Waiver Amendment), Amy Owens (Rule Promulgation), and Gabrielle Koenig (State Plan Amendments). Others deserving of thanks were former Deputy Director Shane Hatchett and DST team members Angie Chaffee, Derrick Cash, and Jared Linder.

OMPP staff say the next step is "rolling out the ERMA solution to more and more OMPP team members."



Indiana Medicaid Director Allison Taylor (third from right) holds the Spotlight Award OMPP received in November from the National Association of Medicaid Directors. Seen here with Taylor are (left to right) Nonis Spinner, Meredith Edwards, Dr. Maria Finnell, Kathy Leonard, and Natalie Angel.

CHE celebrates 30th anniversary of 21st Century Scholars program

Celebration planned for Feb. 11 at Indiana Statehouse

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE) will mark the 30th anniversary of the 21st Century Scholars program with a special celebration at the Indiana Statehouse.

CHE declared Feb. 11 as 21st Century Scholars Day “with the goal of celebrating the successes and impact of the Scholars program,” said Jess Nejad, CHE assistant communications director.

The event takes place from 1 to 4 p.m. in the north atrium of the Statehouse. A “State of Higher Education” address is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m., followed by a reception provided by Ball State University.

The address is part of what CHE describes as “an ongoing public engagement effort designed to promote college completion and increase the education level of all Hoosiers.” The celebration doubles this year as “the unveiling of Indiana’s next strategic plan for

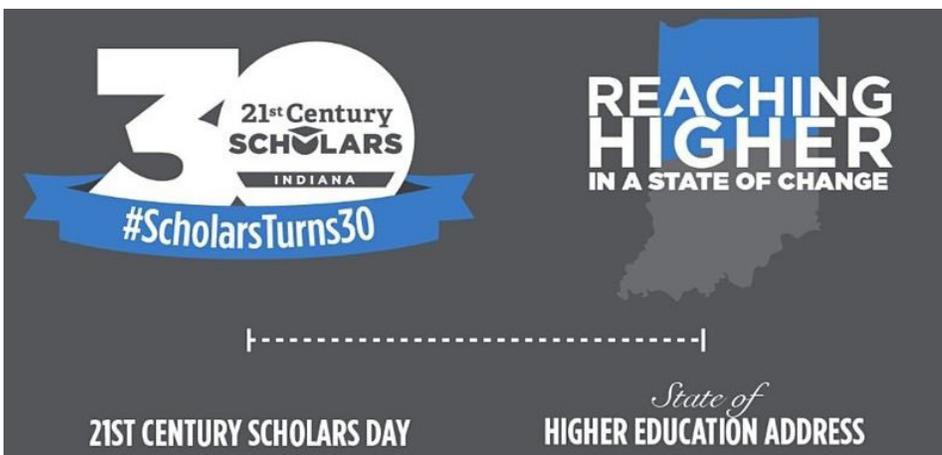
higher education, ‘Reaching Higher in a State of Change,’” according to CHE.

Nejad said those who have been part of the program, which aims to make post-secondary education more affordable, are among those invited to attend.

“We know that several state employees are alumni of the program or have children currently enrolled in the program and we would love for them to be in attendance, as well as any other program supporters,” she said.

According to the celebration’s Eventbrite page, the 21st Century Scholars program is “a critical resource” in helping the state achieve its goal of at least 60 percent of Indiana residents attaining education and training beyond high school.

There is no cost to attend and registration can be completed here. For questions, email events@che.in.gov.



FSSA launches informative video to help guide families through child care, early education choices

Indiana offers useful and informative resources to help parents find quality child care and early learning opportunities for their children.

Good examples are ChildCareFinder.IN.Gov, which the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration launched in 2016 to help find and compare licensed and registered child cares in their areas, and BrighterFuturesIndiana.org, which supports families in enhancing their children’s learning. To help Hoosiers make better-informed decisions about child care and early education options, FSSA has creat-

ed [a short, easy-to-understand, instructional video](#) to direct them to these useful parenting resources.

“We have heard from many families and others throughout Indiana that they don’t know how to look for and find safe and reliable child care and early education resources,” said Nicole Norvell, director of FSSA’s Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning. “We encourage parents to view this tutorial on using Child Care Finder and Brighter Futures Indiana and share it with friends, family, neighbors and others who may benefit

from having these great parenting resources at their fingertips.”

[This new video](#) is a step-by-step guide on how to use [Child Care Finder](#), an application that allows families to search licensed providers, registered ministries and exempt providers by numerous, important parameters, including location, type of provider, hours, licensing status and whether or not the provider participates in [Paths to Quality](#), Indiana’s voluntary quality rating and improvement system.

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FSSA launches informative video to help guide families through child care, early education choices

In addition, families can find inspection reports and any validated complaints or enforcement actions for each provider they search. The video also guides families through [Brighter Futures Indiana](#), a web-based early learning resource for families, which also shares useful, timely information with parenting tips, family activities and child development on social media. Families can also call 800-299-1627



for assistance in locating child care.

The Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning oversees early child care, education and out-of-school-time programs. It is one of the six divisions of [FSSA](#). Individuals with complaints against a child care provider may call 877-511-1144.

What's Next in Monarch: Performance & Goals

MONARCH

performance & goals

In March 2019, the Monarch team successfully launched an all-new recruiting process using the SuccessFactors Recruiting module. The first year's results are very good:

- The state's online career site traffic is on pace to double
- Almost 100,000 candidates have joined the state's Talent Community
- Positions are being filled in half the time experienced prior to the launch of the new module and process!

On the heels of this successful rollout we are ready and excited to begin implementation of the next module: Performance & Goals.

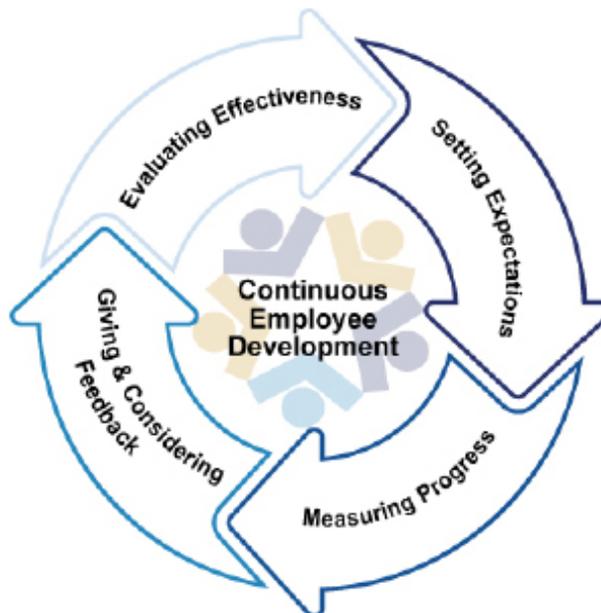
This is an exciting management module for a variety of reasons. As part of our transformation of the employee experience, Performance & Goals will promote a culture of performance that encourages consistent feedback while enabling/

supporting the success & development of each individual.

To support this cultural change, we have redesigned the performance management lifecycle to make it easier to set expectations, give and consider feedback about performance progress, evaluate based on consistent performance standards, and engage in continuous employee development.

Performance & Goals will be launched in 3 phases with just-in-time-communication, training, and materials. Phase 1 includes Goal Setting & Tracking. Phase 2 focuses on Coaching and Feedback. Phase 3 is the Annual Performance Appraisal itself.

Your HR Director and assigned Performance Management Consultant will partner with agency leadership to determine a rollout strategy that meets the needs of employees within the agency and provide advice and guidance as needed.



We look forward to working with you and your agency during this exiting transition! If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your HR Director who can also connect you with your agency's assigned Performance Management Consultant.

To watch the video version of this message, [click here](#)

Scholarship opens new educational doors for PLA program director

[WGU Indiana](#) awarded a total of eight Public Service Recognition Scholarships in 2019.

One of those winners, Indiana Professional Licensing Agency assistant board director Shawwna Ajeigbe, is set to continue working toward a longtime goal she said is now within reach thanks to the \$6,500 scholarship. Learn more about Shawwna's educational plans below and click [here](#) to read about a reception honoring this year's Public Service Recognition Scholarship recipients.

Shawwna Ajeigbe, assistant board director for the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency, was awarded a \$6,500 scholarship to pursue her bachelor's degree at WGU Indiana. Shawwna has worked for the state of Indiana for nearly six years. She plans to study Human Resources management.



Q: What is your course of study at WGU and when did you start?

A: HR Management. I will begin Feb. 1.

Q: Why did you choose WGU?

A: I chose WGU because I was looking for a school that catered towards working adults. I also like their learning format and all the support they provide for their students.

Q: What made you want to go back to school (or attend college for the first time)?

A: I am returning back to school so that I can obtain my bachelor's degree and achieve a personal goal that I set out for many years ago.

Q: What do you hope to learn, or what job skills do you hope to improve?

A: I hope to learn more about the HR industry in regards to the laws and technical information specific to this field, so that I am better prepared to successfully transition over once I have completed my degree program.

Q: How did you feel when you were

notified you'd won a WGU scholarship?

A: I was ecstatic. It felt surreal. It means the world to me to be able to know that others are willing to invest in my future as well as in the future of all the other recipients, both past and future.

Q: How will the scholarship help you on the way to your goals?

A: I was not in a position financially to pursue this goal on my own. This scholarship takes the financial stress off so that I can focus on adjusting to preparing my mind to begin my courses in a few weeks.

Q: What advice would you give a friend, family member, or co-worker who is thinking of going back to college (or pursuing a degree for the first time)?

A: I would suggest that they go for it! We can always come up with reasons as to why now is not the time, but the time is ripe for whenever you are willing to take the leap to trust God to be with you, and [trust] yourself that you have what it takes to bring your goals to reality.

All 2019 WGU Indiana Scholarship Recipients:

- Anthony Hedge, Integrated Public Safety Commission (\$2,400)
- Lucie Nader, Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles (\$6,500)
- Chris Henderson, Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (\$2,400)
- Kristina Govert, Family and Social Services Administration – Division of Family Resources (\$2,400)
- Terry Bryant, Office of the Attorney General (\$2,400)
- Gayle Turner, Family and Social Services Administration – Office of General Counsel (\$6,500)
- Amy Holeman, Indiana State Police (\$6,500)
- Shawwna Ajeigbe, Indiana Professional Licensing Agency (\$6,500)

Data Day doubles in size, showcases importance of data use in addressing issues

More than a thousand people filed through the Indiana Statehouse Jan. 22 for a look at how two dozen state of Indiana government agencies, educational institutions, medical facilities, and businesses are using proven statistical information to improve the lives of Hoosiers.

The third annual [Data Day](#), organized by the [Indiana Management Performance Hub](#) (MPH), doubled in size and scope only 10 months removed from its 2019 incarnation (which itself was a far bigger event than the Data Day debut) and set up shop in both atriums of the Statehouse.

proof positive that data-driven decision and policy-making is here to stay in Indiana.

“Data Day is a great way for us to bring many of our agency and organizational partners together not only to showcase the great work they are doing with data throughout the year, but also to demonstrate the power of collaboration in solving some of the state’s largest challenges,” said Ashley Hungate, MPH communications director.

The overarching message of data’s role in pushing the Hoosier State forward was reflected in reams of

educational materials and myriad interactive electronic exhibits dotting the main hall of one of the state’s most revered buildings.

At every turn were experts in fields that ran the gamut from healthcare to transportation to technology.

New this year were full-on

presentations (and even panel discussions) that allowed the event’s largest audience yet to receive insight on how data is making a real impact in Indiana. In other words, much more than numbers on a page or screen, the information collected from data gathering guides the practices that shape everything from hiring the best talent

to helping reduce Indiana’s infant mortality rate.

Ethel Massing, innovation project specialist for Parkview Health Mirror Center for Research and Innovation, and her team are working hard to address the latter.

Massing and her colleagues Cameron Mere and Charlotte Gabet helmed one of around two dozen informational booths set up for Data Day, opening a window into a data competition called “Healthy Mom + Baby Datapalooza,” one part of which saw students and professionals utilize statistics to explore reasons Indiana has the [highest infant mortality rate in the Midwestern United States](#).

Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb has challenged the state’s social service agencies to reverse course; by 2024 Gov. Holcomb hopes Indiana will have reduced the number of infant deaths to such a degree that the state ranks first, not last in its geographical region. According to data from Parkview, Indiana is 44th with 7.3 deaths per 1,000 births. The figure is nearly double that of Massachusetts which ranks first in the nation with about 3.7 infant deaths per 1,000 births.

Addressing the issue were groups of students and data professionals who mined droves of relevant information to determine factors related to the deaths. Some of the data was broken down at the county level and explored socioeconomic conditions, genetic factors, maternal health, and numerous other circumstances that may contribute to infant deaths.

The first winners in the Healthy Mom and Baby Innovation Compe-



The Indiana Management Performance Hub’s (MPH) third annual Data Day featured presentations by state of Indiana agencies and MPH data partners, which addressed the event’s largest crowd yet. More than 1,000 state employees, data field experts, and members of the general public attended the event.

The event’s tagline of “Data to the People” couldn’t have been more appropriate as the information shared was presented to MPH’s largest audience yet. The overwhelmingly positive reception and record attendance were, as much as the statistics and analyses form the foundation of MPH’s work,

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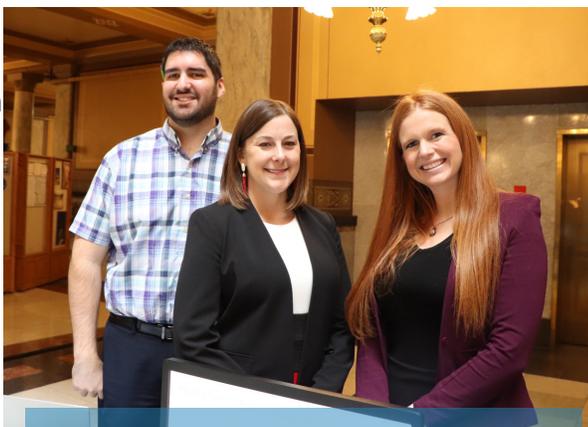
Data Day doubles in size, showcases importance of data use in addressing issues

tion were students from the University of Michigan's Department of Learning Health Sciences, Health Infrastructures and Learning Systems program and the Business Critical Intelligence division of IU Health.

Massing serves as president of the Indiana chapter of the non-profit Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, Inc. (HIMSS), a "global advisor and thought leader supporting the transformation of the health ecosystem through information and technology," according to the organization's website.

HIMSS was joined in the endeavor by Parkview Health, MPH, the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, the Indiana State Department of Health, the Regentrief Institute (each of which had a presence at Data Day 2020), and KSM Consulting.

Another major topic was the use of data in addressing Indiana's opioid crisis. The Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative (RJOI) had perhaps the furthest reach of all participants in Data Day 2020, encompassing several states. MPH's role in RJOI is



Parkview Health's Cameron Mere, Ethel Massing, and Charlotte Gabet brought statistics meant to address Indiana's infant mortality rate to the Indiana Management Performance Hub's 2020 Data Day Jan. 22.

to use data to help Supreme Court chief justices come up with a plan to take on another serious topic in Indiana -- the opioid epidemic -- at the regional level.

Hungate noted that the presence of RJOI was an example of how Data Day's reach has expanded outside of the Marion County area. In the future, MPH's largest annual event may grow to find a presence in other corners of the state as well.

In any case, the event showed how critical facts, statistics, and real

data are in stemming the tide of some ongoing issues. It's not a stretch to say that the use of data, particularly in these instances, really is a matter of life or death. Though heady topics remain, MPH and its numerous partners are working to make a difference in the lives of all Hoosiers -- and their practices are backed up by proven statistics.

Things will only get better -- and perhaps bigger -- for MPH's signature event.

"The best part about Data Day is bringing together more than 1,000 people who want to learn about best practices in data and how those best practices are improving outcomes for Hoosiers," said Hungate.

"One of the best parts about Data Day is hearing from citizens about how our current work is empowering insight and also what additional questions that insight has spurred," she added. "We are always looking to grow and innovate. Our team is already discussing how next year's Data Day can be bigger and better."

Data Day happens only once per year, but MPH is available year-round to provide state agencies with the expertise, training, and technology to derive insight from agency data to improve outcomes for Hoosiers.

Agencies interested in partnering with MPH can visit IN.gov/MPH or email Ashley Hungate at ahun-gate@mph.IN.gov.

Story by Brent Brown, Indiana State Personnel Department



The Indiana Management Performance Hub's third annual Data Day was the largest yet, occupying twice the space in the Indiana Statehouse as the 2019 event and showcasing how data drives policy and decision-making in the state of Indiana.