



The Torch

The official newsletter for Indiana state employees

Disaster drills test state's preparedness

Although the facility's staff was aware that the facility and its rooms had been rented for two days, some were caught off guard when they were plunked down in the middle of a state planned disaster exercise.



In early March, seven state agencies participated in a Continuity of Operations (COOP) emergency drill to determine the state's preparedness in the event a disaster should strike. The drill marked the first time the state had conducted an exercise that large, as well as moving the essential operations of the participating agencies to an alternate location.

It involved the offices of the governor and attorney general, state police, National Guard and the departments of natural resources, homeland security and personnel.

Nearly all state agencies have COOP plans. The next step is to determine if those plans could maintain the essential operations, should an emergency be declared.

David Barrabee, section chief of compliance and special projects for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS), explained the only way to know if they work is to test

them. "If you want to learn to drive a car, you don't go buy one and then take off driving," he said. "You first learn the basics about driving and get comfortable with the car itself. Then you can concentrate on what's outside the windshield."

The key to a successful COOP is "practice, practice, practice," said Barrabee. That is followed up by "process, process, process." These two items make up part of the COOP cycle: write a plan, train to that plan, exercise to the plan you have trained



Members of the State Personnel Department's COOP team confer how to best answer an employee's e-mail during the recent emergency exercise. According to comments by members of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, participants "set the bar high" for the next group of agencies going through a similar exercise.

on and then conduct an after-action review.

Barrabee said it's critical to review following an exercise because it

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Non-tobacco use agreement

Did you say yes or no?

If you signed up during open enrollment promising not to use tobacco products during 2011 and you are still using tobacco products, stop it now. Your failure to keep your promise to refrain from tobacco use is placing your job in jeopardy.

The names of every employee who signed the agreement have been placed in a pool for random selection to be tested for tobacco throughout this calendar year. Testing dates and locations will not be identified in advance, and anyone testing positive will be subject to dismissal from employment. Employees are also subject to testing under reasonable suspicion if the state receives a report that an employee who has signed the agreement is, in fact, using tobacco products.

Everyone agrees that quitting smoking (or other use of tobacco) is one of the most difficult things to do. Therefore, (continued on page 6)

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Submit your story ideas in an e-mail to: spdcommunications@spd.in.gov



Ag Department fields a leaner team

Nineteen Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) employees showed their colleagues who's the biggest loser – they are. Those 19 participated in an eight-week fitness challenge and lost a combined 186.7 lbs.

Under the leadership of ISDA's deputy director, participants divided into two teams, each managed by a coach. Team members were fueled by motivational e-mails and fitness and nutrition tips, sent by their coaches. Every Monday the deputy director collected the weight totals from each individual. Based on the honor system, employees recorded their weight on their at-home scales. The participants received updates on their individual and team percentages of weight loss and that's when the competitive spirit took hold.

Everyone who participated lost or maintained weight. The winning

team lost 6 percent of its starting weight and the other lost 4 percent. The percentage of weight loss by individuals ranged from 0 to 11. Eight people lost 10 or more pounds, five lost 15 and two lost more than 20 lbs. The individual winner will receive a \$100 gift card to Dick's Sporting Goods and the winning team gets a Subway lunch party, all paid for by the deputy director.

ISDA believes in a healthy workforce and will encourage weight maintenance by following up with participants after one and three months.

Want to start a similar program in your agency? Contact thahn@isda.in.gov from ISDA with specific questions or log on to www.inshapeindiana.org to view our physical activity and nutrition resources.



Not every participant made it to the photo shoot because they were traveling or located elsewhere in the state. But here are a few of the Biggest Losers winners (left to right): Dennis Henry, Libby Fritz, Tony Hahn, Amy Cornell, Sara Christensen, Jeannie Keating, Cary Aubrey and Misty Livengood.

PACERS GROUP OFFERS

Exclusive April Offer

Eligible games
Wednesday, Apr. 6 vs.
Washington, 7 p.m.

Sunday, Apr. 10 vs.
New York, 7 p.m.

Offer Details

\$10 – Balcony ticket
\$40 – Club ticket
\$60 – Lower level ticket

[Buy Your Tickets Today](#)

Password: PACERSWIN

Additional details

- A 6% Marion Co. admissions tax will be added at the time of purchase
- You will have to create a Ticketmaster account to purchase tickets.
- All seat locations and purchases are processed instantly.
- E-tickets will be sent to your e-mail account within minutes of your purchase.
- You can't lose your tickets! Print them from your computer up to the day before the game.
- You will receive an e-mail when your Pacers tickets are available to be printed.
- You will be reminded of the event via e-mail a few days prior to the game.

Good Friday is April 22

[View state holidays](#)

Original artwork by
Jerry Williams



Blood pressure – don't take it for granted

Imagine for a minute that you're sitting in a crowded stadium, watching your favorite football team play. There are thousands of people all around you. Would you ever think that one out of three people there have high blood pressure? In a packed crowd of 30,000 fans, that's 10,000 people with high blood pressure.

If you're feeling good about your blood pressure, and your numbers are where they should be, great job! Keep monitoring your blood pressure at each medical checkup, or as often as your doctor may recommend. It's good if you don't have high blood pressure now, but there's a strong chance that you might develop it eventually if you don't keep track of it. In fact, according to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), we have a 90 percent chance of developing high blood pressure after age 55.



But don't despair. Keeping blood pressure down is often a matter of lifestyle. The NHLBI offers these six steps to blood pressure control:

Reduce salt (sodium) intake. Sodium causes your body to retain fluid. This constricts your blood vessels and raises blood pressure. Those with healthy blood pressure levels should consume no more than 2,400 milligrams of sodium a day. That's about a teaspoon of salt. If your blood pressure is high, your doctor may recommend no more than 1,500 milligrams a day.

Follow a healthy eating plan. The NHLBI's Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) study found that a low-salt, low-fat diet filled with fruits, vegetables and whole grains effectively controls blood pressure.

Maintain a healthy weight. As your weight rises, so does your risk of high blood pressure. Studies show that losing just 10 pounds can make a difference.

Be physically active. The NHLBI calls for just 30 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week. For those who don't like to exercise, daily tasks such as vigorous housecleaning, climbing stairs and pushing a stroller for 30 minutes also count.

Limit alcohol. Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure.

Quit smoking. Even though it doesn't directly cause high blood pressure, smoking injures blood vessels. That's especially bad for those with high blood pressure. Once you quit, your risk of having a heart attack is reduced after the first year.

Source: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute - www.nhlbi.nih.gov

This information is intended for educational purposes only, and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult your physician for advice about changes that may affect your health.

Start now to walk toward healthy

National Start Walking Day is Thursday, April 7. The American Heart Association is encouraging Americans to get serious about getting healthy. And walking is an easy way to start. It takes a pair of walking shoes and a willingness to commit to at least 30 minutes of your day to get up and walk.

Think about it. We're either spending more time at work than ever before or when we're home, we're plopped in front of the TV or the computer. The unfortunate side effect of that is that we're becoming more physically inactive.

Inactivity doubles the risk of heart disease, according to the heart association. Other health problems inactivity can breed are obesity, diabetes – and from there the list grows.

Pull your sneakers out of the closet, walk around your neighborhood, a local park or trail or take them to work and walk over your lunch hour. But take the first step toward health.

As the heart association says, "Taking just 10 minutes three times a day to walk will help you live longer. In fact, studies show that just one hour of vigorous exercise will increase your life expectancy by two hours. It makes sense to walk more and eat well - to live longer.

**National
Start!
Walking Day**

ComplexCare

Support when you need it the most

Coping with a health condition that requires frequent medical care can be stressful. Dealing with several complex health issues at once can be overwhelming. At times, it may seem like the odds are stacked against you.

But the experienced nurses who staff our **ComplexCare** program can help you get back on your feet. Working closely with you, your family members and your doctors, our nurses develop an individual plan designed to improve your health and the quality of your life.

If you are eligible to receive the benefits of the ComplexCare program, a nurse may contact you.

Members in the program will receive:

- Personal attention to help you set — and achieve — healthy lifestyle goals.
- Answers to questions about specific treatments.
- Innovative ideas to help you care for yourself and stick with your doctor's advice.
- Referrals to other 360° Health® programs that may benefit you.
- Assistance with coordination of care between your doctors and other professionals who provide the health care services you need.
- Information to help you make smart decisions about your health.



Every one of our nurses is backed by a team of medical specialists in areas such as pharmacy and nutrition. So you can be sure they have access to the most up-to-date information about your treatment options.

To learn more, log in to [anthem.com](https://www.anthem.com) today. Not registered? Sign up now for access to personalized service and resources. It's fast, easy – and secure.



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Cowabunga! Milking contest is a barn burner



(From left to right) Dave Smiley of WZPL's Smiley Morning Show, 2011 State Fair Queen Sarah Alford, Media Cow Milking Champion, Tracy Forner of WISH-TV's Indy Style, Kjerstin Ramsing from FOX59's Morning Show, John Stehr of WTHR-TV, Andi Hauser from WISH-TV's Indy Style and Indiana Agriculture Director, Joe Kelsay.

March Madness was sent to the Back 40 recently, when Milking Madness overtook the Indiana Government Center lawn. It was the final celebration of Agriculture Appreciation Month and state employees got to witness, first hand, as local news media folks competed in a cow milking contest.

WISH-TV's IndyStyle co-host, Tracy Forner, swept the competition, managing to squeeze out some 100 ml in 60 seconds. Forner's results firmed up his slot in the coveted Indiana State Fair Cow Milking Competition to be held later this summer.

His co-host, Andi Hauser, took second place. The remaining competitors, WTHR's John Stehr, FOX59's Kjerstin Ramsing and WZPL's Dave Smiley, were only good for a drop in bucket, each securing only trace amounts.



Prior to her media debut on the Government Center lawn, Sheila the cow partakes of a healthy snack of hay.



WISH-TV's Tracy Forner, and milking champion, milks it for all it's worth.



Four-day old calf, Patty (born on St. Patrick's Day), was popular among the day care center kids who clamored for her attention.



Once the cow was milked, it was time to eat. State employees lined up to be treated to free porkburgers and mugs of milk, thanks to the Indiana Pork and Milk Promotion Services of Indiana.

Driver safety

To answer or not to answer

If you're driving a state vehicle or a leased vehicle on behalf of the state of Indiana, and your cell phone rings what should you do?

a) Go ahead and answer it, so long as the call is regarding state business.

b) While holding onto the phone and the steering wheel, text the caller and tell them you'll call later.

c) If it is your supervisor calling, at your earliest convenience and the safest opportunity, get off the roadway, put the vehicle in park and take or return the call.

d) Regardless of who is calling, when it is safe and convenient, get off the roadway, put the vehicle in park and return the call.

The correct answers are c) and d). Do not talk on a cell phone while driving. And don't even think about texting while driving! If you cannot pull off the road, continue driving until you can pull into a rest stop or a parking lot, and there take the call.

The Department of Administration strongly discourages the use of cellular phones while driving in a state-owned or leased vehicle. If a cell phone must be used while driving, employees should pull over to the side of the road at the safest opportunity or pull into a rest stop or parking lot and stop the vehicle.

Before you start out on state business, become familiar with the state's [Vehicle Fleet Management Policy](#).



Student loans

Student loan balances may be forgiven

In 2007, Congress created the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. The program encourages citizens to enter and continue to work full time in public service jobs. Through this program, public service employees may qualify to have the remaining balance of their eligible federal student loans cancelled.

There are some requirements in order for this to happen including:

- The borrower must not be in default on the loans for which forgiveness is requested.
- The borrower must have made 120 payments on those loans under certain repayment plans

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Disaster drills test state's preparedness

shows an agency the strengths and weaknesses of the plan. From there, you work to improve the viability of the plan. As fellow ISDH employee, John Erickson, pointed out, a COOP exercise "makes us think of situations that we would not ordinarily think of. Real life is always more complex."

"The state does not have the option to close its doors, as a business would (should a disaster occur). It must maintain operations," said Barrabee. "In the event of a disaster, we may not be able to do everything state government does every day, but we must maintain the essential operations."

Having a viable emergency response plan takes all agencies and its employees to be prepared, should a disaster occur. "We have an obligation to do what we can as far as preparation," he said. "Let's have it go wrong in a controlled environment, where we can correct it and do it again. That's the value of an exercise."

while employed full time by certain public service employers (this includes state government).

- The effective date is Oct. 1, 2007, which means the borrower would not qualify for forgiveness of any remaining balance on the loans until October 2017.
- Any non-defaulted loan made under the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program (Direct Loan Program) is eligible for loan forgiveness.

Find out more about this program and if it can be of benefit to you by logging onto studentaid.ed.gov.

Continued from page 1

Did you say yes or no?

if you have tried to quit, but are unsuccessful at this point, you need to immediately rescind your agreement by logging into PeopleSoft.

To get to the Rescission Request page, go to: Self Service > Benefits > Rescind Non-Tobacco Use Agreement. Follow the prompts to submit your request to rescind the agreement.

If you need assistance, contact the State Personnel Department Benefits Division at 317-232-1167 or toll-free at 877-248-0007.

Once you have submitted your request and your rescission is approved, your health care insurance premium will increase by \$10 biweekly and any premiums from pay periods in which you received the incentive will be collected. However, your job will be secure.

For assistance in becoming tobacco free, you may call the Indiana Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-Quit-Now. This free service is available to all Hoosiers seven days a week from 8 a.m. until midnight.

Dentists are disease detectives

Early detection of serious medical conditions is being made in an unexpected place – the dental office.

Because many other diseases can cause specific signs and symptoms in and around the mouth and jaw, dentists see clues that may point to critical health issues. As a result, increasing numbers of dentists are urging their patients to seek medical tests that seem unrelated to their dental checkups.

More than 120 disease signs and symptoms can now be detected through a routine oral exam. Regular dental checks are more important than ever, not only for oral health, but for general well being.

Dentists also perform thorough oral cancer examinations, including inspection of the oral cavity and neck. Since cancers of the mouth, tongue and jaw are usually first discovered during dental examinations, dentists are at the forefront for saving lives.

Oral clues that may indicate a serious health problem:

- Anemia -- Burning, fiery red tongue, inflammation of the corners of mouth or pale gum tissues.
- Diabetes – Dry mouth, distinctive breath odor, burning tongue, high rate of tooth decay, inflammation and infections in the mouth.
- Anorexia nervosa and bulimia -- Chemical erosion of tooth enamel, fillings that appears to be raised above the eroded tooth surfaces, sensitive teeth, enlargement of the parotid glands making the face look full and round, sweet breath aroma.
- Kidney failure – Retarded tooth development in children, dry mouth, odor, metallic taste and ulcers on the tongue and gums.
- Deficient immune system (HIV positive) – Unexplained sore(s), red mouth due to opportunistic yeast infections (thrush mouth), non-removable white areas on the sides of the tongue.
- Heart disease – Pain radiating to the jaw caused by insufficient oxygen to the heart muscle.



Governor Daniels received an update on the status of I-69 from INDOT officials in Daviess County.

Anthem EAP

How important are job skills?

For the month of April, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will focus on developing job skills. You can learn more about it when you sign up for EAP's "Less is More" discussion. Choose from one of three sessions: April 19 at noon, 2 or 4 p.m. All are Eastern times.

To register, go to AnthemEAP.com. The login is "State of Indiana." Once you have logged in, scroll to the lower right screen and click on "Seminars." Once you are registered, make sure to put the information on your calendar.

Anthem EAP will offer a seminar the third Tuesday of each month. The topic for May (scheduled for May 17) is the importance of sleep.

Discounts available

Kings Island offering season passes

Kings Island opens April 30 and the park again is [offering state employees discounted prices on admission](#). Buy tickets online now and save off the regular price.

Also available this year are season passes. Adult season passes are \$99.99 adult and \$74.99 junior/senior. Every season pass will include free parking all season (\$39.99 value) and other gold pass perks including early ride times and discounts on food and merchandise. Season passes are sold now through May 30 only.

Other discounts

Check the State Personnel Department [discount page](#) for updated discounts with Sprint and Dell posted in March. Also good news for baseball fans as the Indianapolis Indians and Cincinnati Reds will have tickets offers posted soon for a handful of games throughout the season.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Indiana Holiday Commission presents

*The 13th Annual Statewide
Holocaust Observance*
Commemorating the Victims of the Holocaust

5.4.2011 at 12:00 pm
Indiana Statehouse Rotunda



Free and open to the public. Space is limited. For more information call: 317.232.2651

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