



The Torch

The official newsletter for Indiana state employees

October, 2020

Gov. announces state will advance to Stage 5 of 'Back on Track' Indiana plan



On Sept. 24, Gov. Eric J. Holcomb announced that he will advance the state to an updated version of the Stage 5 [Back on Track Indiana](#) plan and extend the state's face covering mandate until at least Oct. 17.

"Indiana continues to experience steady health indicators as Hoosiers change their habits to wash our hands more, practice social distancing and wear face coverings. This allows us to continue to get Indiana Back on Track, and I urge Hoosiers to keep up their vigilance, especially as the days get cooler, so schools and businesses can remain open," Gov. Holcomb said.

Gov. Holcomb has used data to drive decisions since the

state's first case of the novel coronavirus in early March and he continues to do so. The state continues to monitor and respond to an expanded set of metrics, including:

- The 7-day average positivity rate
- The number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients statewide
- The number of critical care beds and ventilators
- The state's ability to test all Hoosiers who are COVID-19 symptomatic as well as health care workers, first responders and frontline employees
- Systems are in place to contact all individuals who test positive for COVID-19 and expand contact tracing
- The number of positive cases per 100,000 residents

Under this adjusted Stage 5, face coverings remain required.

Organizers of events with more than 500 people in attendance will be required to submit a plan to the local health department

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The Torch is published monthly by the Indiana State Personnel Department and is available online at <https://www.in.gov/spd/employee-resources/the-torch/>

Got a story?

Submit your story ideas to: spdcommunications@spd.in.gov

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Gov. announces state will advance to Stage 5 of 'Back on Track' Indiana plan

that outlines measures to mitigate COVID-19.

Restaurants and bars that serve food may open at full capacity as long as six feet of space to maintain social distancing is in place. Customers must be seated

at a table or counter.

Indoor and outdoor venues may open at full capacity with social distancing measures in place.

Senior centers and congregate meal sites may open with precautions. Personal services

and gyms and fitness centers may resume normal operations with social distancing safeguards and cleaning protocols in place.

Local governments may impose more restrictive guidelines.

FSSA and Feeding Indiana's Hungry sound call for Hoosiers to volunteer at charitable food network locations across Indiana

Volunteers may sign up at OperationFood.IN.gov

The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) is joining forces with Feeding Indiana's Hungry to encourage Hoosiers to resume or start new volunteer service at one of Indiana's food banks and other charitable food distribution sites.

Volunteers are urgently needed as members of the Indiana National Guard ended their temporary, six-month deployment to aid Indiana's food banks Sept. 30. Since being deployed in early April, guardsmen served more than 36 million meals to more than four million Hoosiers.

"We are so grateful to the Indiana National Guard members who filled a critical gap and provided the workforce needed to keep Indiana's charitable food distribution network operating during the darkest days of the pandemic," said Emily Weikert Bryant, executive director of Feeding Indiana's Hungry. "As food banks continue touchless, drive-thru distributions with pre-boxed food in response to COVID-19 safety concerns, the work needed to make this happen has been, and will continue to be,

much more than ever before. As the Indiana National Guard service ends, we look forward to seeing more of our friends who have volunteered in the past return – and we're excited to welcome new volunteers, as well."

The charitable food distribution network operates 13 regional locations across the state, which provide food for distribution to community-based pantries. Locations continue to face an increased demand for food by Hoosiers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hoosiers can volunteer by filling out a brief form at OperationFood.IN.gov. They will be contacted by their regional food bank to match them with volunteer assignments. Since the early days of the pandemic, food banks have seen dramatic drops in volunteers as Hoosiers stayed home, which was especially true among Hoosiers over age 60, who make up the bulk of food bank volunteers.

Some dedicated volunteers have returned to help on a limited basis, but food banks and pantries are now prepared to again use volunteers regularly to safely distribute food.



"Food banks have adapted their operations to prioritize the safety of volunteers and are experienced in providing food to those in need while following public health guidelines, so we are asking Hoosiers to answer the call to continue this mission to meet this critical need," said Jennifer Sullivan, M.D., M.P.H., FSSA secretary. "Our team at FSSA worked alongside Feeding Indiana's Hungry to make Operation Food a one-stop resource to find food at one of Indiana's nearly 1,750 pantries, donate to help keep our neighbors fed, and now to connect Hoosiers to places where they can serve their communities in-person."

Information from those who sign up to volunteer at OperationFood.IN.gov will be gathered by Feeding Indiana's Hungry and shared with the charitable food network around the state. Potential volunteers may also reach out directly to [a food bank in their area here](#).

Don't forget! You can earn \$150 in e-gift cards from ActiveHealth!

Want to get a better understanding of your current health AND earn gift cards you can use however you like?

You're in luck!

You can earn a \$50 e-gift card just by taking a quick health assessment in the [ActiveHealth portal](#). You can also receive a \$100 e-gift card by completing a biometric screening. Click [here](#) to see when and where the onsite screenings will take place and sign up through your ActiveHealth portal.

You can also visit partner sites

such as Quest Diagnostics or a CVS Minute Clinic, or your own healthcare provider for a physical with lab work to complete your screening.

Click [here](#) for detailed instructions for all available options for completing a biometric screening.

Your \$50 e-gift card from completing a health assessment will be available immediately in your ActiveHealth Rewards Center. The deadline for completing a health assessment is Nov. 30.

Your \$100 e-gift card earned by completing a biometric screening

will be available as soon as the results of the screening become visible in your ActiveHealth portal. It can take two to four weeks for the results to appear in the Rewards Center. The results must be visible in the Rewards Center by Nov. 30 in order to qualify to receive your e-gift card.

Gift cards must be redeemed by Dec. 31.

For more ways to make the most of your wellness, save money, and become the healthiest version of you, make it a point to regularly visit InvestInYourHealthIndiana.com.

Plan to get your flu shot this fall!

The number one way to protect yourself and your family from the flu this year is to get a flu vaccination.

According to a research study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the flu vaccine reduces the risk of getting the flu by 40 percent to 60 percent. While the vaccine does not guarantee you won't catch the flu, it does reduce the chances and, if you do get sick, your illness typically is milder.

CVS is partnering with the state to offer flu shot clinics at many state facilities across Indiana. The onsite vaccination clinics are available to anyone 11 years of age and older. For employees and dependents covered by State insurance, the flu vaccine is covered at 100 percent. Don't forget to bring your Anthem ID card when attending a flu shot clinic.

This year, employees are highly encouraged to sign up for a time

slot to receive their vaccinations during an on-site clinic. While walk-ins may be accepted, they cannot be guaranteed due to safety protocols in place, availability of vaccines, and staffing. Registering in advance ensures that there will be enough of each vaccine for each employee attending. Employees will be able to sign up for a time slot and choose the vaccinations they would like to receive. The link for each clinic will be active until 24 hours before the scheduled start time of the clinic. If your work location has requested that a clinic be held on-site, you will receive an email with the registration link from the on-site clinic contact.

For those located in downtown Indianapolis, clinics are scheduled at Indiana Government Center-S. Oct. 6, 14, 22, and 30, and Nov. 17 and 18. The registration links can be found [here](#).



If you do not carry state employee insurance, you may still receive a flu shot at one of the clinics. The cost of the vaccine is \$39.99 if you are under the age of 65 and \$69.99 for those ages 65 and older. Payments can be made by check to CVS Pharmacy.

Please contact the Benefits hotline at 317-232-1167 or 877-248-0007 with any questions.

ActiveHealth introduces “Well-being Wednesday” webinar series

Sign up today for ActiveHealth’s new webinar series, “Well-Being Wednesday” debuting this month. Check out this month’s schedule below and register [here](#).

- **“Behavioral health and wellness” – noon Oct. 14**

We can eat healthy, exercise, and be tobacco-free, but still suffer from poor emotional well-being. Learn tips to better cope with stress,

deal with anxiety, and improve your overall mental well-being.

- **“Taking time for self-care” – noon Oct. 21**

Your health begins with you. Take the time to figure out what you need to do to stay healthy. Maybe it’s getting an annual check-up at your doctor or having a day to do a self-inventory. With all you’ve got going on, don’t forget to make

yourself a priority.

- **“Healthy habits at home” – noon Oct. 28**

Learn how eating at home can improve family health, discuss how to be more physically active as a family, review screen time and its impact on health, discover the importance of reducing stress, and examine simple techniques to keep your family safe at home.



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS AND SCREENINGS



There for her

Supporting those with breast cancer

As a caregiver, you have a huge impact on how your loved one approaches her breast cancer journey. Whether you’re a family member or friend, your encouragement can go a long way. You can empower her to deal with her diagnosis, keep with a treatment plan and take steps toward wellness.

For some, it can be hard to ask for help, especially women who are used to caring for others. Just showing up and being there for someone can mean a lot. Let go of concerns that you’re not doing enough, or not doing something well enough. By helping her stay on top of the details, she can focus on her treatment and recovery.



Let her health come first

Here are some ways to support someone with breast cancer:



Communicate

It's the most important part of your role. Talk to her about her feelings and listen to what she needs.



Do day-to-day tasks

You can help with cooking, cleaning and laundry. Or, run errands, handle the grocery shopping and take care of other household chores.



Be her partner in health care

Go with her to doctors' appointments if you can, take notes and ask questions. Many patients need a second set of ears to help them understand treatment options and results.



Take care of the kids

They may need help with homework, rides to school or activities or just someone to pack their lunch. They'll also need some level of normalcy. Find ways to stick to their routine.



Give comfort and emotional support

Find activities you both enjoy and that can take your minds off her diagnosis and treatment. And don't underestimate the power of touch. A hug or back rub is a small gesture that can go a long way.



Help with pets

Pets can be a great comfort to those fighting cancer. You can help by offering to cover pet care needs, like walking the dog.



Support her social life

She may need help coordinating activities. Reach out to friends and family on her behalf so she doesn't become isolated. Be sure to get her to buy in before sharing health updates with others.



Stay on top of the finances

Organize, schedule and pay the bills on her behalf.



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All about breast cancer

Did you know that 1 in 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime?¹ It's the most common cancer in American women, aside from skin cancers. There are many risk factors for breast cancer.¹

These risks of course, you can't control:

- Age 55 and over**
- A family history**
- Dense breast tissue**
- Menstruation before age 12**
- Menopause after age 55**
- BRAC1 or BRAC2 genes**

There are some factors you can avoid:

- An inactive lifestyle**
- A diet high in saturated fat**
- Being overweight or obese**
- Frequent consumption of alcohol**
- Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)**
- Radiation to the chest wall before age 30**

Staying healthy throughout your life will lower your risk of developing cancer and improve your chances of surviving cancer if it occurs.



Wellness Webinar Series

Defining your health – Health literacy

October 20, 2020 | 10:00 AM, 12:30 PM and 4:30 PM, ET

<http://go.activehealth.com/wellness-webinars2.html>

1. National Breast Cancer Foundation, "Causes of Breast Cancer", Accessed August 17, 2020.
<https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/causes-of-breast-cancer>



Coach's corner

As a health coach and registered nurse, Denise likes to work with women to help them achieve the best life they can live. In a world where we all live busy lives, her favorite saying to share is "self-care is not selfish."

Coach Denise
CHS, RM, RN

Denise's well-being tips:

Breast cancer has risks you can't change, but there is a lot that you can do to decrease your risk:

- Be aware of common screenings. Complete periodic breast self-exams and see your provider about any changes or concerns. Talk to your provider about when you should start getting mammograms or other tests.
- Live a healthy lifestyle. Make 150 minutes of moderate activity a priority and avoid or limit your alcohol intake. Focus on keeping or getting to a health weight.



Autumn Salad

Try this seasonal salad made with apples and dried cranberries.

Find more healthy recipes at:

MyActiveHealth.com > Library > Healthy Recipes.



For more tips on how to manage your well-being, visit [MyActiveHealth.com/stateofindiana](https://www.MyActiveHealth.com/stateofindiana)

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "What is Breast Cancer Screening?", September 11, 2018. https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic_info/screening.htm

Early detection is key

Although breast cancer screening cannot prevent breast cancer, it can help find it early, when it's easier to treat. Screening tests include:²

Breast self-exams - help you alert your healthcare provider if you notice any changes.

Clinical breast exams - are done by your provider to check for any abnormal signs.

Mammogram - an X-ray of the breast. At this time, it's the best way to find breast cancer for most women.

Breast Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) - An MRI is used along with mammograms to screen women who are at high risk for getting breast cancer.

Talk to your doctor about which breast cancer screening tests are right for you.

- 50 to 74 years old and are at average risk for breast cancer get a mammogram every two years.
- 40 to 49 years old should talk to their doctor or other health care professional about when to start and how often to get a mammogram.

It's a myth

Breast cancer is not caused by underwire bras, implants, or antiperspirants-deodorants as myths often suggest.¹



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Clark retires as DNR director

Cameron Clark retired as director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in July after a seven-year tenure leading the agency.

As director, Clark stewarded more than 500,000 acres of land and water. During his tenure, the DNR protected more than 6,700 acres in 40 new nature preserves, including the J.D. Marshall Nature Preserve—the state’s only underwater nature preserve. Overall, he oversaw the protection of an additional 23,677 acres through the DNR Division of Land Acquisition.

Clark announced in February that he was going to retire in late March, but stayed to lead the agency through the many changes necessary regarding COVID-19. In the early stages of the pandemic, he informed staff that then was not an appropriate time to leave.

“This was a decision made easier thanks to all of you and how well you have risen to the occasion of adjusting your lives and your work without losing sight of the important role you play in the lives of Hoosiers,” he said.

Clark, who previously served as DNR general counsel, was appointed by then-Gov. Mike Pence to the role of agency director in 2013. When Eric Holcomb became governor after Pence left to pursue the vice presidency, Holcomb asked Clark to stay on.

“What a great privilege it’s been to see what goes into the preservation and conservation of the best Indiana has to offer and the people who are dedicated to doing it,” Clark said. “I am very fortunate to have gotten a behind-the-scenes view of some of the great stuff we do that the public just doesn’t realize.”

Recognizing early that he was surrounded by passionate, well-trained and experienced people, Clark purposely took a low-key approach from the start and maintained that approach to the end.

“I thought it was best to learn what these experts were doing and how they did it. My management philosophy was to listen and support, and to give them the best opportunity to succeed. Because in



Indiana DNR director Cameron Clark retired from his position in July after leading the agency for seven years.

the end, their individual successes are the successes of the agency and mean better conservation of our natural resources,” he said.

“It’s been a great experience.”

Eventually, he plans to return to the conservation field in a less-demanding capacity.

Note: The full version of this article appears in the September/October 2020 edition of Outdoor Indiana Magazine. Learn more about Outdoor Indiana [here](#).

Aaahhhh FALL

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Stay and Save up to 50% off at any of our 7 locations ~ Sun. - Thurs.
IndianaInns.com 1.877.LODGES 1

Meet Emily Stork, DNR Grand Calumet Region ecologist

Location: Merrillville

Years with DNR: eight

Education: B.S. in Environmental Science from University of St. Francis-Joliet, M.S. in Plant Biology from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

Hometown: Raymond, Illinois

I GREW UP ON A FARM just wanting to be outside all the time. I fancied myself an explorer, pretending to be one of the early settlers. I found the notion of pioneering our once wild land really inspiring and always wanted to see what the country looked like back then.

THE ILLINOIS 4-H had a project called Prairie Plants in Illinois, where I learned that prairie plants aren't limited to growing along the roadsides, but can and once did span the landscape. That was such a fascinating thing to me, so I started to find places where I could go and see fragments. I had this list of prairies I wanted to see, and my parents were great about that. We'd drive two hours to see a little prairie nature preserve. That's where my interest in native plants and ecology started.

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING and maintaining the state dedicated nature preserves in my region. I'm property manager for those preserves owned by DNR, so I take care of anything the property needs. The bulk of the work is controlling invasive plant species to restore the structure and function of the natural communities that exist there.

I LIKE THIS AREA because it's so incredibly biodiverse within these very small natural remnant areas. Because I manage dune and swale, I'm just lucky because I get to manage dry upland habitats, deep wetland habitats, and everything in between on one site.

WE'RE WORKING ON NATURE for nature's sake. A lot of other divisions focus on human uses for the land, but we have a broad ecosystem focus. Instead of being focused on one aspect, we're focused on all of the aspects and how they're interrelated.

I'VE FOUND PLEASURE in bringing nature home. I've started to convert flower beds to natives, and that's a really fun thing to do. My 6-year old daughter enjoys looking at the plants with me and at all the different butterflies and other wildlife that come to visit them.

Note: This article originally appeared in the September/October issue of [Outdoor Indiana Magazine](#).



Stay up to date with COVID-19 news

- [2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Indiana Department of Health](#)
- [Governor Eric J. Holcomb](#)

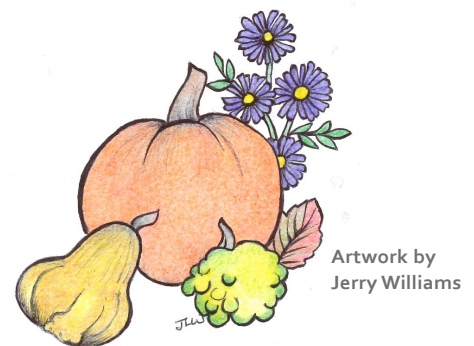
Helpful resources

Anthem Resources

- [Anthem Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)
- [Anthem NurseLine](#)
- [LiveHealth Online](#)
- [211.org](#)

General Resources

- ISDH COVID-19 Call Center—877-826-0011
- Contact the INSPD Benefits Hotline — 317-232-1167 (Indianapolis area), 1-877-248-0007 (toll-free outside Indianapolis)
- Disaster Distress Helpline — 800-985-5990, or text “TalkWithUs” or “Hablanos” to/al 66746.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Helpline — 800-662-HELP
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 800-273-TALK or 888-628-9454 (español)



Artwork by
Jerry Williams

Virtual Genealogy and Local History Fair scheduled for Oct. 24

The Indiana State Library is hosting the 2020 Genealogy and Local History Fair virtually from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24.

This year's theme is "The Women in Your Family Tree." Presentations during the free event will examine techniques for researching women, as well as looking at women's

suffrage and other 19th-century social movements.

Highly acclaimed speakers Gena Philibert-Ortega and Katherine Willson will present.

Philibert-Ortega's "25 Tips for Researching Your Female Ancestors" will provide information to help researchers identify, trace and discover more about their female ancestors. Philibert-Ortega will also present "Fabric, Cigars, and Murder," in which she will share her research on a community of Hoosier women who worked on a 1930s-era quilt top that she discovered in California.

Willson will present "Social Reform Movements of the 19th Century," which will examine the beginnings of the women's

suffrage movement and other social reforms, such as free public education, prison reform and temperance. She will also discuss where records pertaining to these movements can be found. A question and answer session will be held after Willson's presentation.

Registration is free and required. Click [here](#) to register. The event will be held via Zoom. Participants will receive an email confirming their registration. Links to the Zoom sessions will be sent out closer to the date of the event. This event is eligible for LEUs for Indiana librarians.

Please contact [Jamie Dunn](#), Genealogy Division supervisor at the Indiana State Library, with any questions.



'Run the State' set to close out 2020 season at Indiana Dunes

Registration open for Oct. 17 5K

The final event of the 2020 [Run the State 5K and Hike Series](#) is almost here!

We're set to close out another great season with a visit to one of the state's most unique – and beautiful – natural attractions: [Indiana Dunes State Park](#). Located in Chesterton, Indiana Dunes is famous for, well, its sand dunes which stand nearly 200-feet-tall! It also has three miles of beach along Lake Michigan and habitats for plants and animals. The 5K itself takes place along a paved route and is stroller and pet-friendly.

Registration for the season-ending 5K is open right now! The run takes

place Saturday, Oct. 17. Get more details and register [here](#).

Note: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, staggered start times will be implemented in order to help maintain social distancing during the event. These start times are staggered in 15-minute increments with the

first time leaving the starting line at 8 a.m.

Participants may choose their preferred start time by clicking [here](#). Please select your preferred time by noon Monday, Oct. 12, or a start time will be assigned to you.



Auditor recognizes National Retirement Security Month



Every year, since 2006, Congress has recognized the importance of saving for retirement by recognizing a week in October as “National Retirement Security Week.”

This year, the entire month of October has been designated as a time for Americans to review their retirement readiness and understand the importance of saving for retirement.

As the administrator of Hoosier S.T.A.R.T., Indiana’s 457(b) deferred compensation plan, and as a member of the Indiana Public Retirement System (INPRS) board of trustees, I encourage all Hoosiers to take time this month to review their own retirement goals to assist them in having a more enjoyable retirement adventure.

Simple steps like saving more to increase your retirement income, updating your beneficiary, and meeting with a Retirement Plan Advisor can help make your retirement adventure even more enjoyable.

Saving is difficult and can be a hardship on many families, especially this year when so many people have been affected by the pandemic. However, by making small changes in your lifestyle such as; packing your own lunch, creating and sticking to a monthly budget, cancelling unneeded or underused subscriptions, and buying generic brands can help you save a little more money now to be invested

into your retirement account for use in the future.

On Oct. 6, my office, along with Empower Retirement, the third-party administrator for the Hoosier S.T.A.R.T. plan, will be hosting a webinar titled “Hoosier S.T.A.R.T. Top Ten List.” During this hour-long event, you will have the opportunity to ask questions of a Retirement Plan Advisor and set up a 1:1 virtual meeting to discuss your retirement savings.

Visit www.HoosierSTART.IN.Gov to learn more and to register.

INPRS is also hosting several webinars to promote National Retirement Security Month. You can register by visiting <http://bit.ly/NRSMWebinars>

I urge all of you to review your fiscal health this month to help your retirement adventure be the best it can be.

Tera Klutz, Indiana Auditor of State

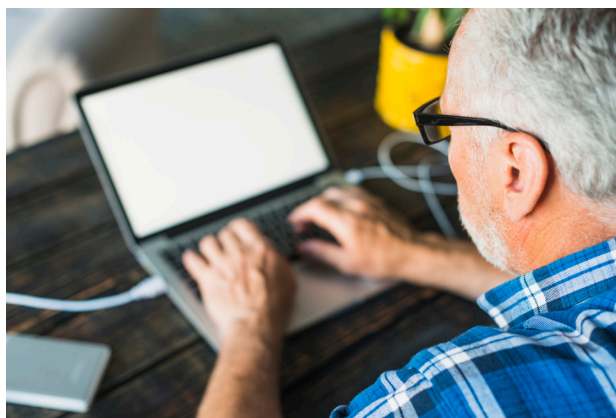
INPRS offers webinars for National Retirement Security Month

This year, the Indiana Public Retirement System (INPRS) is dedicating an entire month to helping you improve your retirement security!

October is National Retirement Security Month and INPRS is providing a comprehensive suite of webinars designed to help you and your employees become retirement ready.

Our webinar series includes:

- Asset Allocation and Investment Basics – noon Oct. 15



- Positive Money Habits: Budgeting and Saving – noon Oct. 8 and 22

- ‘77 Fund: Police and Fire Benefits Plan – 2 p.m. Oct. 19
- Understanding Your Plan: A PERF/TRF Webinar – 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Oct. 6, 13, 20, and 27
- PERF/TRF Retirement Benefits Webinar – 1 and 5 p.m. Oct. 7, 14, 21, and 28

To register, click [here](#).

New Indiana Veterans Center will provide centralized services and resources for veterans at historic downtown site



INDIANAPOLIS – On March 15, 1919, members of the American Expeditionary Force convened in Paris to form the first American Legion caucus.

This historic event marked the start of an organization dedicated to creating and fighting for veteran benefits, resources and programs. The new American Legion crafted the first pages of the G.I. Bill and established the U.S. Veterans Bureau, which would later become the Veterans Administration.

The group's war-weary veterans held their first convention in November 1919 in Minneapolis. They adopted a constitution and preamble and voted to establish a permanent national headquarters, moving the newly-named American Legion from Washington, D.C., to Indianapolis. With more than 170 trains in and out of the Circle City on a daily basis, Indianapolis provided the ideal location for 55 department heads to meet and create the programs that would change the lives of American veterans and their families forever.

"A special Indiana legislative session in 1920 actually designated

two city blocks on state property and allocated \$2.2 million to construct what is now the Memorial Mall," said J. Stewart Goodwin, Indiana War Memorial executive director and retired U.S. Air Force brigadier general. "They initially sought to use the property to honor the

nearly 135,000 Hoosier veterans and 3,709 killed in action."

The state moved to build the Legion's home on this property, located at 777 N. Meridian St., and broke ground in 1924. Building 777 was the first property conceived on the state land. In 1927, General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, commander of American Expeditionary Forces on the Western Front during World War I, laid the cornerstone of the Indiana War Memorial, launching the development of additional memorials standing in that space today. The American Legion Mall features a sunken garden with a cenotaph and four Art Deco columns topped with stylized golden eagles. Built in 1931, the cenotaph is a tribute to the Hoosiers who gave their lives in World War I.

"The city of Indianapolis has more memorials and space dedicated to our service members and veterans than any other city in America, except Washington, D.C.," Goodwin said. "Leaders back then understood the importance of honoring and caring for our nation's veterans. It behooves us to do the same and consolidate

services, programs and benefits for veterans in one location to ensure the highest quality care and recognition for their efforts defending freedom around the world."

After the building's construction was complete in 1925, the American Legion, the Red Cross and the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) took up residence in the four-story, 40,000 square foot iconic structure. The American Legion Auxiliary also began serving women veterans from Building 777. The location was so successful that by 1950, the Legion had outgrown the building and moved to a new, larger location nearby at 700 N. Pennsylvania St. In 2014, then-IDVA director James Brown and Goodwin conceived the idea to centralize and secure veteran services in one prime location named the Indiana Veterans Center.

"We are now in a position to put this historic site back to work in a way that will provide tremendous benefit to veterans and eligible family members," said Dennis Wimer, IDVA director. "The vision we have is to make Building 777 the nucleus of veteran activity, resources and strength in Indiana. Veterans will be able to access the help and resources they need in one location, one trip, one stop."

The distinctive structure needed a transforming renovation, while still preserving all the detail of its early 1920s charm and architecture. Then-Gov. Mike

(continued on page 13)

New Indiana Veterans Center will provide centralized services and resources for veterans at historic downtown site

Pence appropriated funds from a 1923 state account that allocated monies for maintaining, building and recovering state properties but remained unused until labor to revive the site began. While the historic look of the building has been preserved, new features include updated ramps compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and restrooms on each floor. Now that the renovation is complete, all divisions of IDVA will migrate to the building's third floor, including the State Approving Agency (SAA) and the Military Family Relief Fund.

SAAs were created during the early days of the World War II GI Bill of Rights, from ideas conceived and developed in Building 777. The primary focus of the SAAs continues to be the review, evaluation and approval of quality programs of education and training under state and federal criteria. SAAs conduct on-site compliance visits to approved institutions and to those seeking approval and provide technical assistance to help them meet requirements. SAAs engage in outreach activities to encourage wider use of the GI Bill by veterans,

schools and employers. Many also act as state liaisons, helping military installations provide base personnel with quality educational offerings and information about education benefits.

Additional agencies that will follow IDVA to the Indiana Veterans Center are the Hoosier Veterans Assistance Foundation, INVets, representatives from the Disabled American Veterans, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Furthermore, the location will assist veterans with their medical and health care enrollment and benefits, as well as with acquiring benefits and services offered from the federal regional office of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

"No other state that we know of will offer all of these services under one roof," said Goodwin. "Since the Vietnam War, every veteran is a volunteer; they raised their hands and took an oath to protect and defend others. It is our responsibility to take care of those who took care of us."

Building 777 also has improved technology access and increased space for training, staff meetings



The historic Building 777 on N. Meridian St. in Indianapolis is now the Indiana Veterans Center.

and conferences. Veterans will be able to use computers and the internet to access any digital and electronic records with assistance from staff.

"This will be a veteran's last stop; this is the finest collection of veteran helpers in one location," Goodwin said. "If you have a problem or an issue and you can't get it solved elsewhere, you need to bring it here and get it resolved. We will work until it is truly fixed."

Article by Kirsten Clark, SSgt., USAF (ret.)

Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs

Some information for this article obtained from <https://www.legion.org/history>.

IOT readies for WorkSmart 365 Resilience



Join the Indiana Office of Technology (IOT) for three weeks of virtual celebration; including scheduled live events through Microsoft Teams, and on-demand content available through stream. What's happening: The WorkSmart

365 Community is shifting its annual Fall Conference to a month-long virtual event celebrating the diversity and resilience of the state of Indiana's workforce.

When is this taking place? Events planned from Oct. 13 to Oct. 30
What will it look like? Look for scheduled Teams live events, training opportunities, and on-demand content hosted or produced by WorkSmart 365 Champions, members of the Microsoft account team, agency

leadership from around the state, and more!

If you are interested in contributing a pre-recorded message, session content, or hosting a live event – [visit the contributors page for more details!](#)
[Register now to receive updates and reminders for the Resilience Celebration](#)

For more information: [Visit the WorkSmart 365 site!](#)

IARA announces new digital collections

The Indiana Archives and Records Administration (IARA) is pleased to announce two new digital collections.

The [Indian Treaty Maps collection](#) showcases 87 survey maps transferred from the Auditor of State and various Land Offices that were in operation throughout the years. The maps date from 1819 to 1847 and show the exact boundaries of reservation lands.

The [Indiana State Fair collection](#) contains more than 10,000 photographs dating from 1909 to the 1980s, and was made possible thanks to a partnership with IUPUI and an LSTA grant from the Indiana State Library. IARA has also introduced a new record series on the General Retention Schedule for All State Agencies.

4-H girls with lamb, 1961



GRADM-10 covers documentation of Indiana's response to states of emergency and other events of an historic nature. This series was developed in response to COVID-19, but is intended to apply to any similarly significant states of emergency.

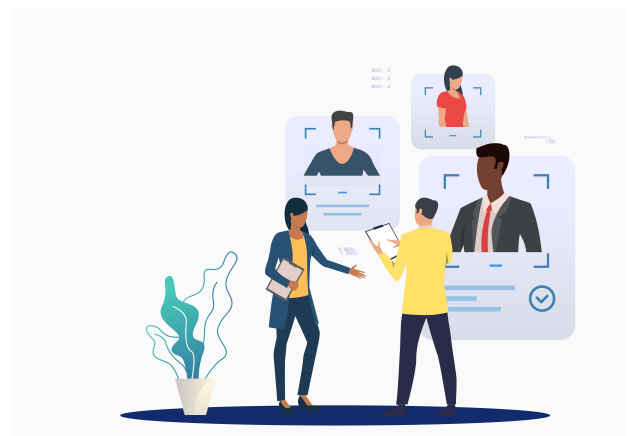
For more information, see IARA's [COVID-19 Record Collection Guidelines](#) or get in touch at archives@iara.in.gov.

HR-Payroll Modernization Project to provide state-wide process improvements

The Human Resources (HR)-Payroll Modernization project is underway, and a project team led by representatives from the Auditor of State (AOS), State Personnel (INSPD), and the Indiana Office of Technology (IOT) is on track to complete the project in September 2021.

The state project team, which includes members from three branches of government, multiple state agencies and quasi-agencies,

boards, commissions, the State Budget Agency (SBA), AOS, INSPD and IOT, are partnering closely with Accenture, the implementation partner, to meet the aggressive goals of the project.



The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received three national communications awards

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received three national communications awards for its work in 2019 during the Association for Conservation Information awards program Aug. 30.

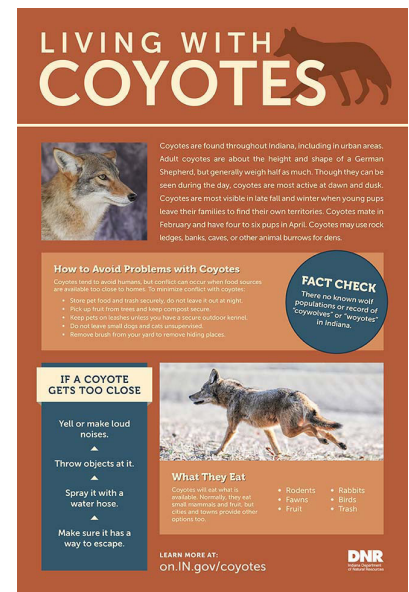
Indiana took first and second place in the poster contest in the Graphics Division, and third place

in the Magazine Division in the Destination, Historical or Cultural article category.

The first-place poster, designed by Adam Cox and photographed by John Maxwell, both of the Division of Communications, and created with the assistance of the Division of Fish & Wildlife's Morgan Sussman, promotes the [Nongame Wildlife Fund](#), which protects Indiana's endangered and nongame wildlife.

The second-place poster, also designed by Cox and created with the assistance of Sussman and photographed by Maxwell and photo editor Frank Oliver, covers the subject of [Living with Coyotes](#).

The third place article told the story of Indiana's covered bridges in the [September/October 2019](#) issue of [Outdoor Indiana](#) magazine. It was written by Scott Roberts, photographed by Oliver and Maxwell, designed by Erin Hiatt,



and edited by Marty Benson.

Subscribe to Outdoor Indiana at [innsgifts.com](#) or 317-233-3046.

ACI ([aci-net.org](#)) is a non-profit organization of natural resources communicators. Members represent state, federal and Canadian wildlife conservation, parks, and natural resource agencies, as well as private conservation organizations.

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World Mental Health Day is an opportunity to decompress

On Oct. 10, we will recognize World Mental Health Day.

Ideally, on this day, the world will collectively take a deep breath and assess the status of their mental health... at least that's the goal.

The theme for this year's Mental Health Day is "Increased investment in mental health." With this theme in mind, what can we do to invest in our own mental health? The answer may vary depending on the setting, but I have a suggestion! We must take time to decompress. That means giving ourselves time to "relieve or reduce the pressure on (something)."

So why this theme? When we take time to decompress, we give ourselves time to breathe, think, unwind, and regain a sense of calm. This is so important because the world we live in is constant.

There is a pressure that mounts, and we can find ourselves sitting under the weight of weeks and months of work and stress without any attention paid to our mental health and well-being.

Giving ourselves time to decompress is critical for all of us to contribute to a positive work culture. When we don't take time to breathe, we can find ourselves reacting in a manner that shows the pressure we feel. We can inadvertently contribute to toxic cultures because we are tired and overwhelmed.

Decompressing is a positive way to take a little time for yourself. Take a walk, read a light-hearted



article, or just take five minutes to consciously breathe – the methods to decompress are endless, and the benefits should be felt quickly.

In acknowledgement of World Mental Health Day, I recommend that we all take a few minutes to decompress and take care of our mental health.

By Shayla Webb, Diversity and Inclusion manager, Indiana State Personnel Department

Renaissance man

State employee shares joy of painting, music for charity

Jeffery Lahr is no stranger to lending his considerable artistic talents to a good cause.

The Indiana Office of Technology LAN administrator is an avid painter who headlined a special [Indiana State Employees' Community Campaign \(SECC\)](#) event last year, which was so much fun he agreed to do something similar for Public Service Recognition Week in May. Last month, he once again put paintbrush to canvas for a program that will benefit people throughout the Hoosier State.

Lahr is more than happy to share

his talents in the name of helping others.

"No matter who we are or where we come from, we can always come together in love and charity," said Lahr, who noted that it's his own life experiences during times in which he was less fortunate that have helped motivate him to find ways to help others in need.

"First and foremost, as a Christian, it's what I'm meant to do," said Lahr of his mission to give back whenever he can. "However, I have also been on the receiving end. A long time ago, before moving to Indiana, I lived in Green Bay, Wisconsin and was having a rough time of things... partly because

of my own poor choices, but also some bad luck/bad breaks as well. I was homeless for a time and partook in the local food pantry, stayed in the local homeless shelter for a time, and partook in the free meals provided by that homeless shelter. I know what it's like to go without, but also how a little faith, a helping hand, and someone who believes in you can truly turn your life around."

The joy of painting

These days, Jeffery's happiest place often is among the "happy little trees" adorning the landscapes that, with a few deft brush strokes,

(continued on page 17)

Renaissance man

spring from the imagination onto a blank canvas. Sharing that talent has been a way for Lahr to spread the sort of joy that only comes from creating something entirely of one's own making.

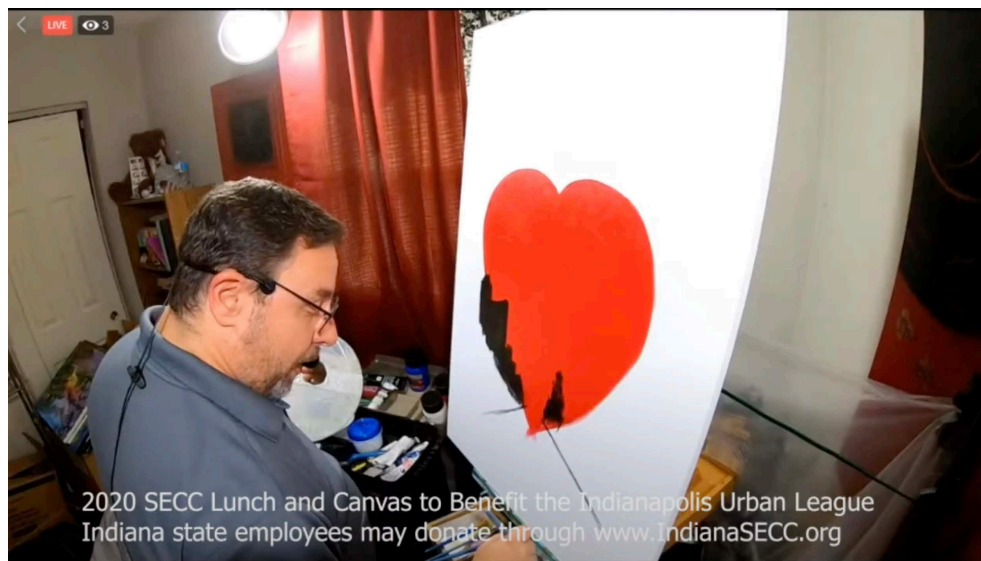
In a way, he's the teacher and quite literally anyone can be the student in much the same way TV painting programs of the past married an affable artist with an inquisitive audience.

Lahr, a Danville resident who has worked with IOT for almost seven years, has had plenty of time to brush up on his craft, which is one of several hobbies he enjoys outside of his career.

"I have been painting since high school where I began with watercolor, then graduated to acrylic, then to oils," he said. "I love painting for the sheer joy of creating something fun, colorful, and sometimes even beautiful!"

The married father of two now-adult children began painting more than 20 years ago, but his love for this particular style of art grew when he began dabbling in oil painting approximately five years ago. His inspiration for pouring his heart and soul onto blank canvasses came from the renowned and revered Bob Ross as well as that pop cultural icon's predecessor.

"I discovered my love for painting by watching the predecessor and mentor of the great Bob Ross – a fun, friendly, German fellow by the name of Bill Alexander," Lahr said. «He was the first painting show I watched on PBS prior to Bob Ross inheriting that spot. Then, I just learned and practiced by watching Bob Ross on



his 'Joy of Painting' shows."

Lahr is also an accomplished, self-taught musician.

"I am a drummer first, but also taught myself guitar and piano/keyboard," Jeffery said. "I also sing and record/produce my own music."

Lahr said an original holiday song and an instrumental work are available for purchase on Apple's iTunes and Amazon.com. You can find them by searching for "Jeffery Lahr."

Music is a family affair for the Lahrs as Jeffery's wife Casie, a registered nurse for IU Home Hospice, uses her talents to bring happiness to others as well.

"She was featured last year on IU's website as IU's "singing nurse" because she has been known to sing for her patients and bring smiles to their faces even in their darkest moments," Jeffery said.

Back to the drawing board

After the extremely positive reception of Jeff's previous presentations, he was contacted by the Indiana State Personnel

Department for a follow-up event meant to benefit the 2020 Indiana SECC. This year's theme is "It Starts WithIN" and seeks to highlight state agencies and employees who have been integral in the Hoosier State's ongoing fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

With that in mind, Lahr came up with a sketch he said he felt would represent unity and the need to help one another in times of crisis. He finished the piece in a live broadcast from his at-home art studio, during which state employees who contributed to the Indianapolis Urban League – the Week 1 SECC's chosen charity from the sponsoring Indiana Department of Health – could watch and paint along.

It was a live demonstration of Lahr's creative process at work that benefited an important cause.

"Most of my ideas just come off the top of my head," remarked Jeffery. "Bob Ross used to say, 'All you need to paint are a few tools, a little instruction, and a vision in your mind.' That pretty much says it all."

Renaissance man

Anyone planning to watch the archived broadcast, which can be viewed [here](#) on the State of Indiana Employees' YouTube channel, will best be able to emulate Jeff's work by getting together a palette of basic colors - black, white, red, blue, green, and yellow. Other colors can be produced by mixing the existing hues.

Viewers needn't be a Monet, a Munch, or even a Pollock to enjoy the program, either, as Jeff's tutorial allows armchair artists to put their own spin on a masterpiece that can proudly be displayed at home. As the late Ross was fond of saying, "happy accidents" at the easel are bound to happen, allowing one's own creativity to flow into the piece.

More than anything, the latest "Lunch and Canvas" was all about fun.

"First and foremost, I hope [viewers] have fun," said Lahr prior to the event. "Second, I hope they recognize that even

in the midst of a pandemic, chaos, and uncertainty, we've still been given the tools and have had the people placed in our lives that can give us a reprieve from all the ugliness and still make something beautiful."

Flight plan

What's next for Jeffery Lahr? Well, you might say "the sky's the limit."

Jeffery has been taking flying lessons for the last year and a half. If that surprises you, his reasons for taking to the skies probably won't.

"My ultimate goal in wanting to learn to fly is to provide charity flights for terminally-ill patients and/or their families to treatment locations... to gather with their family whom they may not be able to afford to see otherwise," Lahr said. "Also, potentially flying victims of child/domestic abuse to their places of safety to begin their new lives."

Jeff is quickly becoming an accomplished pilot having completed his

first solo sojourn aloft last May and his fledgling cross-country flight (with an instructor aboard) only weeks ago. He hopes to continue making this dream a reality and has placed his confidence once again in his faith.

With those wings beside him, it appears Jeffery Lahr is cleared for take-off. But whether he's painting blue skies or passing through them, Jeff is always down to earth, and it's here where he hopes to continue spreading joy whenever and however he can.

"We can give back and be someone else's blessings even in times of darkness," he said. "No matter who we are or where we come from, we can always come together in love and charity."

See more of Jeffery Lahr's work at [Art by Lahr](#) on Facebook.

Story by Brent Brown, Indiana State Personnel Department



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