

# Improving Kids' Environment

Advocates for Children's Environmental Health

Children's Environmental Health Issues in Indiana

April 2006 Edition

## IKE's "New" Executive Director Not So New

In June 2005, Janet McCabe joined IKE to replace Executive Director and Founder, Tom Neltner, who has moved to the National Center for Healthy Housing in Columbia, MD. Tom continues to advocate for safe housing and children's health on a national level. You can reach Tom at 410-772-2776 and [tneltner@nchh.org](mailto:tneltner@nchh.org). More information on Janet is available at <http://www.ikecoalition.org/McCabe.htm>.

## IKE Highlights

IKE's [Clean Stores](#) project received a 2005 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence in the Education and Outreach Category! The citation stated: Through IKE's innovative secret shopper survey, the non-profit organization helped government and citizens understand that a high percentage of retailers weren't adequately informed to help consumers with home projects involving lead-based paint and pesticides. The secret shopper survey revealed that stores gave customers accurate advice less than 30 percent of the time. The benefits of IKE's outreach have extended beyond Indiana's borders. IKE produced a toolkit for communities to duplicate the survey. The study has received attention from management of national retailers and a national paint manufacturer association and helped state government officials improve the rate of compliance with pesticides regulations. IKE was also able to compare surveys done in 2004 and 2005, which showed substantial improvement at several stores.

IKE is working cooperatively with the [Indianapolis Children's Choir](#) to get the message out about improving children's health. In a natural alliance, IKE will work with the children and families of the Indianapolis Children's Choir to educate them about environmental threats to children's health. The ICC, which more than 1700 children from the Central Indiana region, will set an example of environmental stewardship by ensuring that its own facilities are child-safe and environmentally responsible. IKE will provide regular articles for the ICC newsletter on environmental topics such as [carpooling](#) and reduced idling to improve air quality, lead poisoning, and [recycling](#). The reach and influence of the ICC throughout the Central Indiana region will help us get the message out that we can all do things around our homes and in our communities that make a difference.

[Wild Oats Natural Marketplace](#) on Indianapolis' north side has chosen IKE as a recipient of its Wooden Nickel Charities. IKE's recognition is good

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Special thanks to these organizations for sponsoring this newsletter and IKE's webpage. Their support is critical.

- [The Boren Foundation](#) & LaRita Boren.
- [Environmental Management Institute](#) & Jack and Karen Kay Leonard.

While IKE appreciates their support, their sponsorship does not imply endorsement of IKE or the content of this webpage. IKE is wholly responsible for the content of this newsletter.

Key acronyms:

- [IDEM = Indiana Department of Environmental Management](#)
- [IKE = Improving Kids' Environment](#)
- [ISDH = Indiana State Department of Health](#)

*Improving Kids' Environment publishes this newsletter semiannually to anyone interested in issues and events involving children's environmental health in Indiana and IKE's projects. IKE distributes it by email or fax – preferably by email – at no charge. Contact the editor, Janet McCabe, at [mccabe@ikecoalition.org](mailto:mccabe@ikecoalition.org) or 317-902-3610 if you have any comments, contributions, or want to get on or off the distribution list. All editions are available on IKE's webpage at <http://www.ikecoalition.org/publications.htm>.*

through June 2006. Take your own grocery bags to Wild Oats, and contribute your “wooden nickels” to the box marked “IKE” on your way out. Wild Oats will donate \$.05 to IKE for every wooden donated. The store has also asked IKE to present information on lead poisoning at its Earth Day reception on April 19 from 5:00 to 7:30. Thanks to Wild Oats for their support of IKE and commitment to improving kids’ environment!

### **Indiana Legislature Addresses Mercury Emissions from Scrapped Cars**

During the recently completed legislative session, one of the environmental highlights was HB 1110, authored by Rep. Tim Brown, with strong support from Senator Beverly Gard and Senator Karen Tallian. The bill creates a program to collect mercury-containing switches from motor vehicles that have been sent to salvage yards for scrap. This focused collection effort will prevent the mercury from being released into the atmosphere. The majority of cars made and sold in the US prior to 2003 have these switches, which each contain about 1 gram of mercury. Mercury can be released when the vehicles are crushed and when the crushed vehicles are melted at steelmaking facilities and foundries. According to IDEM, mercury from scrapped autos is Indiana’s second largest source of mercury emissions, after coal-fired power plants. HB 1110 requires auto manufacturers who sell cars in Indiana to develop and implement a plan to remove, collect and safely dispose of mercury-containing switches from these vehicles. The plans will be reviewed and approved by IDEM. Motor vehicle recyclers are required to remove all mercury-containing switches from vehicles they receive for salvage.

Kudos goes out to the automakers, who have agreed to fund much of the mercury collection program. They will help to educate the salvage businesses on how to remove the switches safely, and will help with the costs of collection, transportation and disposal of the switches. The bill was nearly derailed when the steel and auto industries announced, just prior to the General Assembly’s Conference Committee on HB 1110, that they had reached agreement in principle on a national mercury switch program. Some argued that an Indiana program would no longer be needed. IKE, Sierra Club and Hoosier Environmental Council argued strongly that the proposed national program was not a substitute for the proposed Indiana program, because the national program is still in draft form, it is voluntary and substantially under funded. IDEM also felt that the Indiana program should proceed. Thanks to concerted efforts of Senators Gard and Tallian, a compromise was reached whereby the strong Indiana mercury switch program will remain in effect unless the IDEM Commissioner determines that the federal program is as effective as the state program. Thanks to Rep. Tim Brown for being the lead author of the bill, to Senator Beverly Gard for her hard work with the stakeholders on this bill, to IDEM for their strong and vocal support of the program, and to the automakers for their support. Everyone wins when the air gets cleaner! Read the [final bill](#).

### **Supplemental Environmental Project Credit Bank Proposal Fails**

An important issue came up in the context of HB 1110 worth noting. Much of the discussion dealt with how to fund the mercury switch collection program, IDEM Commissioner Tom Easterly proposed a concept called the Supplemental Environmental Project Bank. His proposal was intended to provide an incentive to companies to undertake positive environmental projects. The approach would allow companies to bank “credit” against future environmental penalties by doing environmental projects or contributing to a fund to help pay for the mercury switch program. IKE and other environmental groups argued strongly against this approach, comparing it to prepaying speeding tickets. Thanks to Rep. Tim Brown for taking this provision out of the final bill.

### **Two Issues Sent to Legislative Study Committee**

Two controversial issues have been sent to the Environmental Quality Service Council for study during the summer and fall of 2006: the “no more stringent than” policy and the recent proposal by IDEM to consider regulation of outdoor wood-burning boilers. Referring these issues to EQSC makes sense, and IKE will follow them closely.

### **The Office of Environmental Adjudication**

According to Mary Davidsen, Chief Environmental Law Judge for the [Office of Environmental Adjudication](#), the OEA website will be undergoing a major upgrade that will make more information about appeals that have been filed and decisions available to the public on a timely basis. The OEA is the office that hears appeals of IDEM permit approvals, rules and other agency decisions. The project, which is scheduled to be complete in October,

will focus on getting decisions posted and upgrading the tracking system. IKE is pushing for information about newly filed appeals to be posted promptly.

On February 15, 2006, the OEA issued a ruling on IDEM's Motion to Dismiss a challenge brought by the Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter and two Angola residents to 327 IAC 15-13, the Water Pollution Control Board rule that establishes a general permit for storm water runoff associated with municipal separate storm sewer system conveyance. We are pleased that Judge Gibbs disagreed with IDEM's argument that, under IC 421.5-7-3(a), the OEA can consider only procedural challenges to IDEM rules, not challenges based on the substance of the rules. (In this case, the Sierra Club argued that the state rule fails to implement certain requirements of the federal Clean Water Act and contradicts other rules.) The Attorney General's office has appealed Judge Gibbs' ruling to the Marion County Superior Court.

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## Asthma



### **Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition Gears Up for Implementation of Asthma Plan**

In December 2004, INJAC, IDEM and ISDH published [“A Strategic Plan for Addressing Asthma in Indiana”](#) (104 pages / 3.8 MB), which is a five-year action plan to reduce and address asthma in Indiana. The plan includes goals, objectives, strategies, and action steps over a real timeline with specific deadlines. The plan has five major areas: data/surveillance, children & youth, public education, healthcare, and environment.

INJAC is currently working to put the State Asthma Plan into action. The coalition and its five subcommittees are meeting to strategize best practices for implementing activities and to track projects currently underway. These activities include development of a resource guide, implementation of a training course for health care professionals, review of the Sanitary Schoolhouse Rule, and continued data collection. IKE remains active as co-chair of the Environmental Subcommittee. To ensure all goals and objectives of the State Plan are met, INJAC needs continued support, resources, and leadership. If you are interested in the coalition or participation in its activities, contact Marcie Memmer at 317/233-7299.

### **IKE Partners with Indiana Builders Association on Asthma Project**

One of the projects in the State Asthma Plan was to survey people in the building trades to see if they understand how construction activities and building materials can affect their customers with asthma. For example, when working in a home with an asthmatic, extra efforts should be made to reduce the creation of dust. In a promising new partnership, IKE and the [Indiana Builders Association](#) developed a survey and gave it out at the IBA's recent annual meeting. Stay tuned for the results of this survey in an upcoming newsletter. We hope this information will help us understand how to educate renovators and remodelers on asthma friendly building techniques.

### **ISDH Staffs Up Asthma Program**

The ISDH Asthma Program now has in place three full-time staff. Program Director Marcie Memmer ([mmemmer@isdh.in.gov](mailto:mmemmer@isdh.in.gov); 317-233-7299) was hired in July 2005. Recently, Kristin Hobson ([khobson@isdh.in.gov](mailto:khobson@isdh.in.gov)) joined as the Health Educator and Hesam Lahsae ([hlahsae@isdh.in.gov](mailto:hlahsae@isdh.in.gov)) as the Epidemiologist. The Program will continue to work closely with INJAC and will use the State Asthma Plan as a blueprint when planning and implementing asthma related activities across the state. For more information on Indiana's asthma efforts, check out [www.in.gov/isdh/programs/asthma/index.htm](http://www.in.gov/isdh/programs/asthma/index.htm).

### **EPA's Proposed Changes to PM2.5 Air Health Standard Will Not Protect the Public**

On January 17, 2006, USEPA proposed revisions to the federal fine particle air health standard. Unfortunately, USEPA's proposed changes are inconsistent with virtually all of the health studies completed in recent years and contrary to the recommendations of USEPA's own staff and its prestigious Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC).

According to the Clean Air Act, the health standards must protect public health “with an adequate margin of safety.” Courts have interpreted this to mean that the standards must protect not only healthy people, but

individuals already sensitive to respiratory irritants. USEPA may not consider the costs of compliance when setting the health standards. [USEPA has proposed](#) to keep the current annual standard of 15 micrograms/cubic meter, to lower the daily standard from 65 to 35 and to add a standard for coarse particles that would apply only in urban areas. The recommendations of the both CASAC and USEPA's own staff were that the annual standard ought to be lowered along with the daily standard in order to protect the public health as required by the Clean Air Act. IKE will be providing comments to the EPA by the April 17, 2006 deadline. Under the current standards, Indiana has 12 full and 5 partial counties (see [map](#)) that have been designated by USEPA as "nonattainment" areas based on air monitoring data from 2001-2003. IDEM's monitoring data for 2002-2004 shows that fine particle levels in three counties—Marion, DuBois and Clark—exceeded the annual current health standard. IDEM is analyzing how the map would change under EPA's proposal. Contact Janet for further information, or check EPA's website at [www.epa.gov/ttn/naaqs/standards/pm/s\\_pm\\_index.html](http://www.epa.gov/ttn/naaqs/standards/pm/s_pm_index.html). More information is also available at [http://lungaction.org/campaign/Air\\_Health\\_Standards/explanation](http://lungaction.org/campaign/Air_Health_Standards/explanation).

### **Indiana Counties Returned to the Ozone Clean Air List**

IDEM's Commissioner Easterly has made it clear that he intends to seek redesignation of ozone nonattainment counties to the clean air list promptly as soon as air quality data in that county meet the federal health standard. In 2005, the following counties were returned to the clean air list: Delaware, Vigo, Greene, Jackson, Vanderburgh, and Warrick. Using air quality data from 2003-5, IDEM has indicated an intent to seek redesignation of the following additional counties in 2006: Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Clark, Floyd, Allen, St. Joseph and Elkhart. Federal law requires that all redesignation petitions must first go through a public comment process, with a public hearing and opportunity for written comment, before IDEM submits them to EPA. EPA will also provide an opportunity for public comment before finalizing the redesignation. A public hearing has been set on the Allen County petition for April 18, 6 PM at the City County Building. See [www.in.gov/idem/air/redesignations/](http://www.in.gov/idem/air/redesignations/) for more information.

IDEM has posted an Ozone Season Summary for 2005 at [www.in.gov/idem/air/smog/summary/summary2005.html](http://www.in.gov/idem/air/smog/summary/summary2005.html). The data show that ozone levels have been lower in the past few years. Ozone is very weather dependent, so cooler summers will have fewer high ozone days, but reductions in NOx emissions by power plants in Indiana and surrounding states required by the 2002 NOx "SIP Call" rule are also contributing to improved air quality.

### **IDEM Begins Rulemaking on Outdoor Wood Burning Boilers**

With the cost of natural gas at near record levels, Hoosiers are increasingly depending on wood to heat their homes. Outdoor wood boilers are often the device of choice for the homeowner, but can cause significant health and quality of life impacts on neighbors. On December 1, 2005, IDEM published a [First Notice of Rulemaking](#), indicating an intent to explore ways to reduce the impact of these devices on neighbors. Outdoor boilers operate year-round, providing heat and hot water to the home. They burn 24 hours a day, often in a "smolder" mode, which means lots of smoke. The quality of wood (whether it's wet or green, for example) can also greatly increase the amount of smoke created. IDEM's notice has drawn a lot of attention, and even prompted a failed legislative proposal to prohibit the Indiana Air Board from adopting a rule. The General Assembly's Environmental Quality Service Council will study the issue this summer, though IKE appreciates Commissioner Easterly's statements to the Senate Environment Committee that he intends to keep working on the rule while the study goes on. IDEM has stated it does not intend to ban outdoor wood boilers, but setback from property line, minimum stack height requirements and other reasonable conditions could help make these devices better neighbors. For a thorough study of the emissions caused by outdoor wood boilers and ways to reduce their impact, check out [www.oag.state.ny.us/press/2005/aug/August%202005.pdf](http://www.oag.state.ny.us/press/2005/aug/August%202005.pdf). This rulemaking will be very controversial; comments from those interested in reasonable restrictions on these devices will be very important. IKE will be very involved in this rulemaking process. Your experience and opinions matter, so please contact IKE to let us know how you have been affected by these outdoor wood burners.

### **City of Indianapolis Adopts Idle Reduction Policy**

On March 10, the City of Indianapolis Department of Public Works announced adoption of an [idle reduction policy](#) for City vehicles. The policy states: "Effective immediately, Indianapolis-Marion County employees shall

avoid all unnecessary vehicle and equipment idling. In cases where vehicle and equipment idling may be necessary to perform our critical work, it should be limited to less than five (5) minutes in any one-hour period. The Office of Environmental Services estimates that if every city vehicle reduced idling by 10 minutes per day, the City will save as much as 90,000 gallons of fuel, preventing unnecessary pollution in our neighborhoods and city streets. Thanks to Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson and DPW Director Jim Gerrard for showing leadership on this issue.

### **Diesel Retrofits Continue Around the Region and State--Indianapolis Sets the Pace**

One of the easiest things to do to reduce pollution from diesel engines is to retrofit them with diesel oxidation catalysts or particulate traps. DOCs reduce carbon monoxide by 70%, hydrocarbons by 60% and particles by 25%, at a cost of \$1000-1500 per vehicle. Particle filters reduce CO by 75%, HC by 85% and particles by a whopping 90%, at a cost of \$5000-7000. The devices are easy to install, require minimal maintenance, and last a long time. IDEM and the City of Indianapolis have been retrofitting engines at a fast pace, using federal grants and supplemental environmental project funds. To date, the cities of East Chicago, Hammond, Evansville/Vanderburgh County, and Washington Township in Marion County have retrofitted a total of more than 350 school busses and 60 city vehicles. Thanks to commitment by the City of Indianapolis and the Indianapolis Public Schools, kids and all of us living in Indianapolis can breathe a bit easier: 175 of the school busses owned by the Indianapolis Public Schools have been retrofitted with pollution control devices. Indianapolis has also retrofitted 37 packer trucks and 5 roll-off trucks. At least 100 more vehicles are scheduled for installation of pollution controls, including street maintenance vehicles, two Indianapolis Marion County Public Library bookmobiles, and vehicles owned by the Marion County Health Department and the City of Lawrence.

IDEM is willing to work with cities, towns or school districts interested in a retrofit project. Kudos to Indianapolis for aggressively seeking federal grant dollars and for using enforcement penalties for this program. Check out [www.in.gov/idem/air/dieselwise/index.html](http://www.in.gov/idem/air/dieselwise/index.html) for information and opportunities.

### **Utility Emission Reductions Planned for Indiana**

IDEM is proceeding with rulemaking to adopt federal requirements that power plants in Indiana (and throughout the eastern part of the US) reduce their sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. EPA estimates reductions in NOx of 63% in 2015 and beyond and in SO2 of 65% on the same timetable. Known as the "Clean Air Interstate Rule," or CAIR, the program follows the Acid Rain and NOx reduction programs. These reductions should go a long way to reducing ozone and fine particle levels across Indiana, though whether they will be enough to bring areas that currently violate the health standard for fine particles into attainment remains to be seen. IKE and HEC are participating in IDEM's stakeholder group, and are pushing for the inclusion of language that will encourage early reductions, provide incentives for extra clean, efficient or alternative energy projects, and encourage reduction strategies that will achieve reductions in mercury as well as SO2 and NOx. For more information, see [www.in.gov/idem/air/workgroups/mercury/](http://www.in.gov/idem/air/workgroups/mercury/).

### **Central Indiana Air Quality Advisory Group Agrees on Priorities for Reducing Ozone**

On November 18, 2005, the Central Indiana Air Quality Advisory Group ratified an [Interim Statement of Findings](#) for a clean air plan for the Central Indiana ozone nonattainment region. The statement came at the conclusion of a two-year process to consider a variety of possible clean air measures. The key conclusions of the statement are that 1) voluntary measures are important, but uncertain in their effectiveness and likely more useful to provide a cushion against future exceedances; 2) that additional mandatory programs may be needed beyond those already in place to meet health standards; and 3) a hierarchy of measures exists that could be implemented depending on how much reduction in pollutants are needed. The next meeting of the group is 1-4 PM, April 21, 2006, in Indiana Government Center South, Conference Center Room B. The public is welcome at this meeting.

### **IDEM Gets Grant from USEPA to Study Air Pollution on Indianapolis' Southwest Side**

USEPA has announced a grant of \$244,000 to IDEM to study air pollution on the southwestside of Indianapolis, an area of high air emissions that has shown up as an area of elevated risk in USEPA's National Air Toxics Assessment study. IDEM will use the grant to collect air monitoring data, collect more accurate information

about industrial and other emissions in the neighborhood and consider the health impacts on the residents. IDEM will form a stakeholder group to work with it and the City of Indianapolis Office of Environmental Services as the study progresses.

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## Mercury



### **Environmental Groups Collect Data on Mercury in Women's Hair**

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 6% of American women have mercury in their blood at levels that exceed the safety threshold set by USEPA. IKE, HEC and Sierra Club are participating in a nationwide project to collect and analyze hair samples from Hoosier women of child-bearing age and analyze them for mercury. The women who volunteer to participate in this program receive their results and information that explains what the results mean for their health. We also provide participants with information about choosing fish that are low in mercury. So far, 35 women have participated in the Indiana study. There is no cost to participate, though we welcome contributions to help defray the costs of the sample kits. We will be scheduling additional events—if you have a suggestion for an event or would like to help, let Janet know. More information on the project is available at [www.sierraclub.org/mercury/get\\_tested/](http://www.sierraclub.org/mercury/get_tested/).

### **IDEM Workgroup on Utility Mercury Controls Considers Technologies and Costs**

In addition to the Clean Air Interstate Rule, IDEM's Utility Workgroup is also considering USEPA's Clean Air Mercury Rule, which requires reductions of mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants across the country. The rule is very controversial because of the amount of reductions required by EPA's rule and the timetable for power plants to come into compliance. [EPA's program](#) calls for power plants to reduce emissions of mercury by approximately 66% by 2018 (though banking options in the rule will extend compliance out until 2025). A [number of states](#) have programs in place or under consideration that would require up to a 90% reduction on a much faster timeframe. In June 2004, the Hoosier Environmental Council presented a petition to the Indiana Air Pollution Control Board calling for adoption of an Indiana rule that would require Indiana power plants to meet a 90% reduction target by 2008, recently adjusted to 2010. IKE and HEC are actively participating on IDEM's Utility Workgroup and pushing for larger and faster reductions than the federal rule requires. Contact Janet if you are interested in this effort; we will provide more information as the rulemaking continues. Information and documents from the workgroup process are posted on the IDEM website at [www.in.gov/idem/air/workgroups/mercury/](http://www.in.gov/idem/air/workgroups/mercury/).

### **NPR's Sound Medicine Features Dr. Steve Jay**

The locally produced NPR program "Sound Medicine" recently featured Dr. Steve Jay, Director of the Department of Public Health at the IU School of Medicine and IKE Board Member in a story about environmental mercury and its effects on women and children's health. You can find out more about this story at [soundmedicine.iu.edu/](http://soundmedicine.iu.edu/)



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## Environmental Tobacco Smoke

Second-hand or environmental tobacco smoke is the most significant environmental threat to children's health, especially children with asthma. IKE strongly supports efforts to reduce children's exposure to tobacco smoke.

IKE has traditionally not had special efforts to restrict this exposure. Advocates at the state level and in Indiana's communities such as [SmokeFree Indy](#) have more resources and capability to have an impact than a small organization like IKE.

But it's definitely worth reporting the forward progress that in recent months has resulted in a number of local communities passing or considering their own local smoke free indoor air regulations. The Indianapolis law went into effect on March 1 of this year and, according to Lisa Cauldwell, Indoor Air Specialist of the Marion County Health Department, compliance has been good. The law does not extend to the other cities within Marion County

(Lawrence, Speedway, Southport and Beech Grove). The Smoke Free Indy coalition is working to incorporate these cities into the new law. If you would like help with these efforts, contact [policy@smokefreeindy.com](mailto:policy@smokefreeindy.com).

And Hoosiers can get free help in their effort to quit smoking through the [Indiana Tobacco Quitline](#), a telephone-based helpline where a trained Quit Coach will help design a personalized quit plan. Help is available in English and Spanish, with translation services offered for other languages. The number is 1-800-QUIT-NOW.



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## Sewage

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### **IDEM Posts Sanitary Sewer Overflows Weekly—Check Them Out For Your Town or City**

In response to advocacy by HEC, IKE and the Sierra Club, IDEM now posts the location, duration, cause and amount of sanitary sewer overflows in communities across the state. When a system experiences an SSO event, the owner must report that event to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management within 24 hours of the event. Treatment plant bypasses, which are releases of untreated or partially treated wastewater occurring at a wastewater treatment plant, must also be reported to IDEM within 24 hours. You can find the information at [www.in.gov/idem/water/compbr/compeval/ssoreport.html](http://www.in.gov/idem/water/compbr/compeval/ssoreport.html). The site also archives past results, which is helpful to track trends and identify communities with chronic problems. Thanks to IDEM for making this information available in a timely way. Check out the information for your own community, and contact IDEM with questions or concerns.

### **Final Plans Very Close for Indianapolis Combined Sewer Overflows**

For more than a century, Indianapolis has relied on combined sewers (CSO) for disposal of sewage and stormwater in all of Center Township and some adjacent areas (the “old city”). This means that when there are heavy rains, human waste flows into Fall Creek, Pogues Run, Eagle Creek, Pleasant Run, and the White River, creating dangerous conditions for kids (and adults) who come in contact with the water. The city’s growth made the problem worse because the city did not consider the impact of new sewer connections on the combined sewer system. After more than six years of negotiations with USEPA and IDEM, the City is close to announcing a comprehensive plan to update the sewer system. The City and the EPA are in the final stages of reaching agreement on the plan. Just a few years ago, a rainfall of more than 0.25” would cause overflows on more than 60 days per year out of one or more, usually more, of the 133 CSO overflow points. The 20-year goal is to capture larger storms and reduce overflows significantly. The centerpiece of this effort is a tunnel, more than 20 feet in diameter, starting near 34<sup>th</sup> and Fall Creek and running parallel to the creek and then along the White River and ending near the Belmont Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant (AWT). The tunnel will store sewage and storm water until it can be treated at the AWT. It will take about 20 years to complete the whole project.

### **IKE’s Civil Rights Action Has Served its Purpose**

With the anticipated conclusion of the Indianapolis Long Term Control plan described above, the disparate impact on minorities living along Fall Creek that prompted the civil rights action filed by IKE, the Concerned Clergy of Indianapolis, Sierra Club and the Hoosier Environmental Council in 1999 have been resolved. The last sticking point was the city’s reluctance to notify the public when sewer connection permits were received and permits approved that would impact sewer capacity. Thanks to Tim Method, Jim Garrard and Jodi Perras at the City and Glenn Pratt, Merri Anderson, Leon Bates, Al Stone, and Dick Van Frank in the public interest community for their persistence in resolving these issues. The parties are planning to withdraw their complaint.



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## Lead and Healthy Homes

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- IKE publishes the Indiana Lead-Safe and Healthy Homes Newsletter on a quarterly basis. Please check out the [May 2005](#), [August 2005](#) and [December 2005](#) editions at [www.ikecoalition.org/publications.htm](http://www.ikecoalition.org/publications.htm).
- The 2006 Lead Safe and Healthy Homes Conference will be held on October 24 and 25 at the Marten House in Indianapolis. Check out the programs from the 2005 Conference at [www.ikecoalition.org/Lead\\_2005/Conf\\_Overview\\_and\\_Recap\\_2005.htm](http://www.ikecoalition.org/Lead_2005/Conf_Overview_and_Recap_2005.htm) to see the types of programs and caliber of speakers the conference presents. And mark your calendars now!

### Radon Testing in Rental Homes

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer for non-smokers and the second leading cause for smokers, according to the US Centers for Disease Control. One in three homes in Indiana have radon levels that exceed the level established by USEPA. Homeowners are becoming more savvy about the need to test for radon, but rental property is not usually checked. IKE and the Organization for a New Eastside have teamed up to do radon tests in rental property on Indianapolis' eastside, in the 46201 zip code. Through a grant from the USEPA, the Alliance for Healthy Homes, and the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists, IKE and ONE will measure radon in 75 rental units. AARST has agreed to provide mitigation systems for up to ten properties that are found to have excessive radon levels. Contact IKE for more information, or if you are a renter in 46201 and would like to have your home tested.

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## Healthy Schools

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### IDEM Releases Study on Indianapolis Public School 21 Air Quality

In 1999, an Indianapolis Public School substitute teacher contacted IDEM about health problems she experienced while working at Elementary School IPS 21 on Indianapolis' east side. School 21 is immediately adjacent to the coke plant owned by the Citizens Gas and Coke utility and at the corner of a very congested intersection. The neighborhood includes a mix of industries, older housing, and retail activity. For the next five years, IDEM and the City of Indianapolis Office of Environmental Services, with technical and financial help from USEPA, collected data on certain hazardous air pollutants, developed a detailed inventory of the air pollutants emitted by local businesses, and used computer models to determine the estimated health risk to people living in the area. On February 9, 2006, IDEM released its final report on the project: [Indianapolis Public School #21 Risk Characterization and Reduction Project](#) (402 pages). What have we learned and what did the study accomplish?

- Benzene levels at the School 21 monitor were significantly higher than levels at any of IDEM's other air monitors in the state in the first years of monitoring; and benzene levels at the School were highest when the wind blew from the direction of the Coke Plant.
- Benzene in the study area comes from mainly from background (48%), Citizens Gas and Coke (41%), and motor vehicles (9%).
- Average annual benzene levels at the School appear to have decreased steadily since 2001, though there continue periodically to be unexplained spikes, and the timeframe is too short to draw much of a conclusion.
- Citizens Gas and Coke was a willing participant in the project, agreeing to an independent environmental audit of their facility that identified a number of steps the company could take to reduce emissions. They have made a number of improvements at the plant, though IKE believes more needs to be done to identify the causes of and prevent the benzene spikes that continue to occur.
- The City of Indianapolis has agreed to study traffic movement in the intersection for ways to improve flow and reduce congestion related emissions.
- IDEM estimated that there could be an increased risk of cancer to people living in the neighborhood as a result of exposure to the benzene emissions. The study illustrated how difficult it is to do these

assessments and to communicate them in a way that is meaningful to neighborhood residents. Risk assessments are necessarily based on very conservative, often unrealistic assumptions.

- The study did not find a link between the measured benzene levels and very short term health effects that may be caused by exposure to benzene, such as watery eyes, sore throats or headaches.
- The study focused on a specific set of toxic chemicals, and did not collect data on all the air pollutants that could affect the public's health, such as particulates.

### **IKE To Promote No-Idle Zones and Awareness at Marion County Elementary Schools**

With funding assistance from USEPA's Environmental Education grant program and the Indianapolis Office of Environmental Services, IKE will be working with elementary schools in Marion County to educate about the health and environmental impacts of unnecessary idling and to promote and encourage reduced idling. The project will reach all members of the elementary school community: students and their families, school administrators and staff, and transportation officials.

### **Integrated Pest Management Is The Way To Go For Schools**

Indiana University professor (and IKE Board member) [Dr. Marc Lame](#) has published [A Worm in the Teacher's Apple – Protecting America's School Children from Pests and Pesticides](#) (AuthorHouse, 2005). Marc is a nationally recognized expert on pests and pesticides and a vocal advocate of integrated pest management in schools and daycares. His book is practical guide to reducing pesticide use through better facility management—a simple agenda that saves money, reduces pests, reduces pesticides, and protects kids. A book worth reading and sharing with your neighborhood school.

### **ISDH School Indoor Air Quality Assessments**

During 2005, ISDH responded to 7 complaints of poor indoor air quality at schools, under [IC-20-10.1-33](#). The reports of these investigations are posted at [http://www.ikecoalition.org/Schools/IAQ\\_IN\\_2003-2004.htm](http://www.ikecoalition.org/Schools/IAQ_IN_2003-2004.htm). Four of the six schools where carbon dioxide was measured had excessive levels, indicating that not enough outside air was being supplied to the school. IKE remains concerned that the inspection program is not achieving the goals of the 2002 law because:

- The ISDH inspection reports do not direct that action must be taken to address problems or give specific direction about how best to address the problems
- ISDH does not follow up with schools to see if they have taken corrective actions or if the problems remain
- There is no mechanism to assure that parents and employees at the schools are informed of the inspection and its results
- Many parents and teachers are reluctant to make complaints because of fear of reprisal. ISDH procedure is that complaints must be in writing, although the agency does not provide the name of the complainant to the school.

### **Upcoming Events (if you need more information about any of these events/meetings, contact Janet)**

April 21 Central Indiana Air Quality Advisory Group, 1-4 PM, Indiana Government Center South  
April 22 [Earth Day Indiana Festival](#), 11 AM – 4 PM Downtown Indianapolis  
April 26 INJAC Environment Committee 10:30-12:30, IDEM  
April 29 World Asthma Day at Castleton Mall  
October 24-25 2006 Indiana Lead Safe and Health Homes Conference, Marten House, Indianapolis

### **Thanks for improving kids' environment!**

*If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter or Improving Kids' Environment, contact Janet McCabe at [mccabe@ikecoalition.org](mailto:mccabe@ikecoalition.org), 317-902-3610 or 1201 N. Central Avenue, #9, Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please let us know if you do not want to receive this newsletter. You may get enough emails and faxes already. We do not want to add to the burden if you are not interested in receiving the materials.*

*IKE also publishes the [“Indiana Lead-Safe & Healthy Homes” newsletter](#) on behalf of the Indiana Lead-Safe Task Force. This newsletter deals with issues and events involving lead-poisoning and healthy homes in Indiana. Let Janet McCabe know if you want to get copies of that newsletters.*

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**IKE SUPPORTER - REGISTRATION FORM**

You can become a supporter of children's environmental health by:

1. Mailing or faxing IKE a copy of this completed registration form to 1201 N. Central Ave., #9, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202 or 866-234-8505;
2. Sending IKE an e-mail with the information at [mccabe@ikecoalition.org](mailto:mccabe@ikecoalition.org) ; or
3. Visiting IKE's website at [www.ikecoalition.org](http://www.ikecoalition.org) and completing the form on-line.

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**ALL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

*Donations are graciously accepted to help the organization achieve its mission. Please donate!*

*Attached is my contribution of:  \$25  \$50  \$100  \$200  \_\_\_\_\_*

*Please make checks payable to: Improving Kids' Environment. IKE also accepts payments by personal or corporate credit cards Mastercard or Visa Only. Or donate on-line through the DONATE button on IKE's homepage.*

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