

Owen County Outdoor Emergency Warning System Project Description

In the wake of a deadly EF-3 tornado that struck part of Owen County in March 2023, the most notable impact being McCormick's Creek State Park where two campers died, Owen County Government is seeking to expand the reach of its Outdoor Emergency Warning System. With a focus on filling gaps that include some of the county's smaller communities and areas of outdoor recreation, the need for additional funding is necessary. Owen County welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors annually which engage in camping, horseback riding, and hiking. Many of the areas frequently visited do not have cellular service. The combination of visitors not being familiar with the area and a lack of infrastructure to provide timely cellular notifications, puts people at high risk.

Community members first promoted the idea of an emergency warning system in 2006. That idea grew and picked up support from local officials. Today, that idea has developed into Owen County's Outdoor Emergency Warning System. The Owen County Community Foundation played an important role in that process. In January 2007, county funding was committed, and the project began, which included a generous contribution by the Town of Spencer, contributions of manpower and supplies by local contractors, several community groups, South Central Indiana REMC, and Utilities District of Western Indiana REMC. The project was also made possible with cooperation and co-location of electric power at many of our volunteer fire departments, Spencer Owen Community Schools' facilities, the Town of Gosport, the Town of Spencer, and other property owners. The 12th site was added in 2013 via a donation from Hoosier Energy when their facility along State Road 43 was built.

These sirens have an audible tone designed and meant for outdoor alert as a supplement to other methods of notification. They are one of many tools available to increase awareness among our citizens and visitors of a potential public safety threat. Typically, people located within one mile of a siren will be able to hear it but, depending on terrain and other factors, they can sometimes be heard in the one- to two-mile range.

When a Tornado Warning is issued by the National Weather Service, or when a tornado is sighted by a trained weather spotter, activation is county-wide, meaning all sirens will sound regardless of the location or path of the tornado. Regular audible tests of the system are conducted on the first Friday of each month at Noon.

This year, Owen County Government and the Town of Spencer partnered to fund an upgrade to the system's backbone—including two new activation controllers and providing the ability to have automatic system activation when the National Weather Service issues a Tornado Warning. Four new siren sites will also be added, but additional funding is needed to have more sites—each site has an estimated up-front cost of about \$40,000. The primary source of recent funding has been the use of American Rescue Plan Act money, accompanied by support from South Central Indiana REMC, Utilities District of Western Indiana REMC, the Town of Spencer, Hoosier

Energy, and others. Partnerships with other organizations are also in process. The goal is to continue filling the gaps noted above, with six specific additional areas of interest. Related, the county is also implementing a new Hyper-Reach electronic emergency mass notification system using E-911 funds. Owen County Government will continue to maintain all current and future systems/sites as part of its normal operations.

Please consider a donation for additional siren sites. Donations can be made to "Siren Fund 4917", sent to the attention of: Auditor's Office, Owen County Courthouse, 60 South Main St, Spencer, IN 47470

"Our warning systems provide a benefit to our citizens and visitors far beyond their cost. Knowing of the time when we had no systems, it makes me proud to see what we have accomplished so far. The effectiveness of emergency alerts increases exponentially with each additional delivery method available to the public. We hope that with our expansion work, we can reach beyond our primary population centers to focus on underserved and vulnerable recreational areas."

- Anton Karl Neff, Owen County Councilman, District 2
- Siren Committee

"The significance of sirens potential in saving lives should not be underestimated. The recent storms that affected Owen County and the audible sirens may have played a critical role in saving numerous lives. Given this experience, it is imperative that we consider expanding the siren coverage."

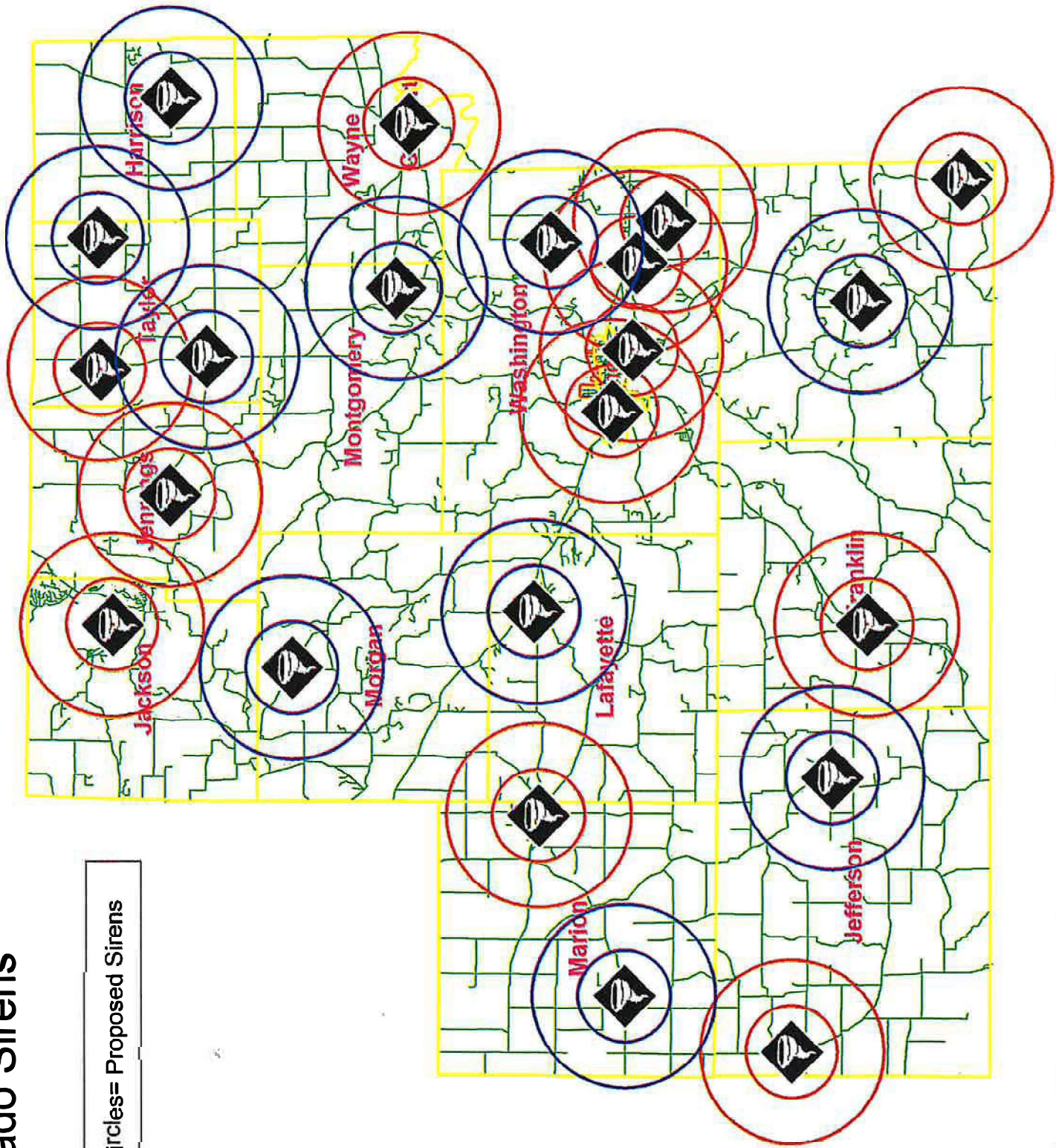
- Bruce Hamlin, Director South Central Indiana REMC
- Siren Committee

"In March of this year when the F-3 tornado touched down in McCormick's Creek State Park Campground around 10:30 PM, most of the campers were aware of the inclement weather threat because the tornado siren in the area had been activated. The Siren at Hoosier Energy on State Rd 43 is the closest siren to McCormick's Creek Park. That siren was a generous gift from Hoosier Energy, ultimately, it was a lifesaving donation. As we navigate this task to upgrade and expand the Owen County Outdoor Warning System, we are asking the community for monetary support. Interested donors have an opportunity to make a difference in our small community, possibly a lifesaving difference."

- Jack White, Owen County Emergency Management Director
- Siren Committee

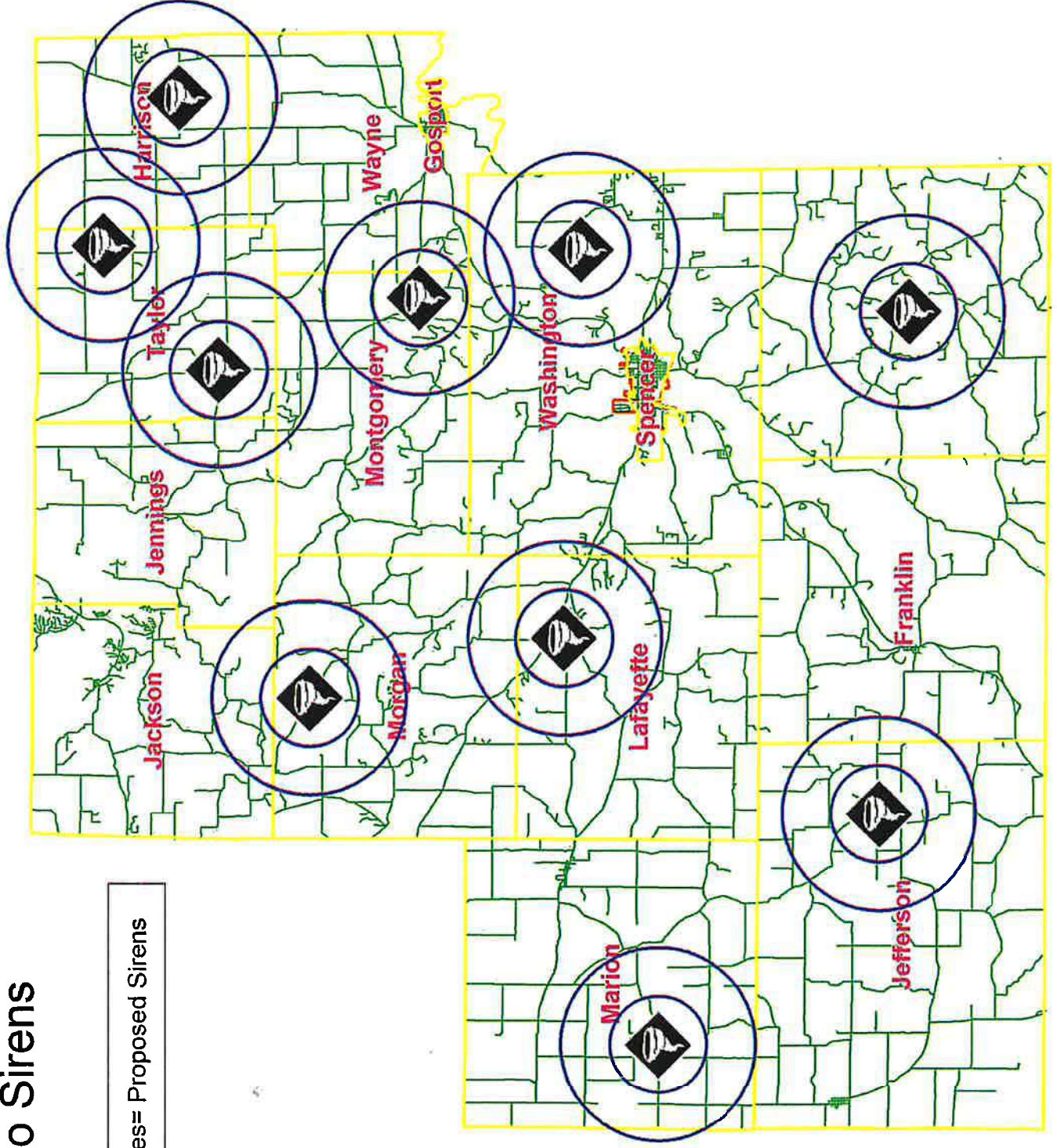
Tornado Sirens

● Blues Circles= Proposed Sirens



Tornado Sirens

● Blues Circles= Proposed Sirens



TMData

| Feature Name | Latitude | Longitude | Priority | Property Owner | Electric Provider |
|------------------------------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| McCormicks Creek #1 | 39.2832193 | -86.8675337 | 1 | DNR property | SCI REMC |
| 5167 W State Hwy 46 | 39.3121683 | -86.8654913 | 2 | CLinton Query | SCI REMC |
| 2018 State Hwy 67 | 39.3554678 | -86.7337194 | 3 | Family of God Church | SCI REMC |
| Across from 6500 Atkinsville Rd | 39.3890619 | -86.8880761 | 4 | Christian Geiger | SCI REMC |
| Quincy Post office | 39.4500514 | -86.7126945 | 5 | United States Postal Service | IPL |
| 5663 State Hwy 43 | 39.2084423 | -86.7397077 | 6 | Clay Township Fire Department | UDWI REMC |
| 13762 State Hwy 246 | 39.2842693 | -87.0219459 | 7 | State Right of way | UDWI REMC |
| 8964 Kieffaber Rd | 39.2179660 | -86.9332866 | 8 | Communication Properties LLC | UDWI REMC |
| Old School House Harrison Township | 39.4266919 | -86.6555886 | 9 | Harrison Township Trustee | SCI REMC |
| 8661 N US Hwy 231 | 39.4156239 | -86.7613466 | 10 | Hoosier Energy | SCI REMC |

Yellow = Funded Tornado Siren Location
White = Proposed Tornado Siren Location