NEW LAWS MEAN NEW APPROACH FOR ABANDONED HOMES

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today joined Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD) Director Maury Plambeck and Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) Chief Michael Spears to outline the city’s strategy for addressing abandoned and vacant properties and to discuss how new laws that took effect July 1, 2009 will affect the initiative.

The event highlighted ways the city has worked to strategically focus federal NSP dollars, identify problem properties, and remedy the problems that exist on those properties either through demolition or rehabilitation.

“With some of the new laws that took effect on July 1 now at our disposal as we tackle this tough issue, and with our strategy that we’ve worked to refine during the past year, we’re better-positioned to help Indianapolis return blighted streets – block by block – to their once-vibrant status.” said Mayor Ballard

These laws have streamlined the process and allowed increased fines for violations to make property owners comply with local ordinances. The newly created Office of Code Enforcement will help coordinate city resources to use these new tools effectively.

In addition, the Mayor’s Abandoned Housing division, part of DMD, has worked with IMPD to identify problem properties that are the sites of frequent police runs, and created from that the Mayor’s Top 25 list of abandoned and vacant properties. To date, nine properties have been moved off of the list either by demolition or rehabilitation, and nine more properties have been added to replace them.

“The purpose of the list is to help prioritize our response to abandoned homes,” said Plambeck. “Demolition is a key part in this effort, but the main goal is to get these properties back on the tax rolls and keep them maintained to enhance the quality of life for all citizens.”
DMD is also working with residential neighborhood groups to determine which properties should be a priority within each neighborhood. The City will then work with these neighborhood organizations to determine the best means of addressing the problems that exist with these properties.