EDITOR'S NOTE: Demolition work will begin next week at the following locations: 2860 Adams St., 2855 Boulevard Place, 416 Dearborn St., 1142 Earhart St., 1850 Milburn St., 923 Lynn St., and 2718 E. North St.

MAYOR BALLARD LAUNCHES ABANDONED STRUCTURES INITIATIVE TO REMOVE HUNDREDS OF UNSAFE, UNSALVAGEABLE HOUSES, BUILDINGS

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today launched the City’s Abandoned Structures Initiative, announcing seven abandoned houses will be removed over the next week as the Department of Public Works (DPW) begins the bidding process on 384 unsafe, unsalvageable structures that will start coming down as early as October. The program aims to have over 600 unsafe buildings under contract for removal by the end of 2011.

“Abandoned and unsafe structures are harmful for our residents, our businesses and our neighborhoods. They threaten our public safety, harm property values, and impact the quality of life in our community,” said Mayor Ballard. “We are aggressively engaging in an unprecedented program to remove hundreds of these buildings – and the blight and impediments to economic development they represent.”

Mayor Ballard was joined by community leaders for the announcement in front of an unsafe, abandoned house at 1142 Earhart St. on the City’s Near Southeast side. The vacant building is next door to Penick Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, which plans to purchase the lot once the structure is removed. Local contractor Denney Excavating began demolition on the house following the kickoff of the initiative.

About 1,200 affirmed properties throughout Marion County are on the list for removal, with the largest concentration in Center Township. The Abandoned Structures Initiative aims to remove 2,000 structures by the end of 2012. The City solicits public input throughout the process by conducting presentations and encouraging residents to report unsafe properties. The Indy Land Bank seeks to acquire the properties to make them available for redevelopment. The City of Indianapolis took down 675 abandoned and unsalvageable buildings in 2010 and 375 in 2009.

Funding for the initiative is funded through RebuildIndy, Mayor Ballard’s initiative to restore deteriorating thoroughfares, residential streets, sidewalks and bridges, as well as address neighborhood drainage and flooding issues and demolish unsalvageable abandoned houses posing a public safety threat. The initial $140 million RebuildIndy investment funded projects repairing long-neglected streets, sidewalks, bridges and parks throughout Indianapolis. DPW has about 350 major street, sidewalk, bridge and park projects completed, underway, or slated as part of RebuildIndy. For more information, visit www.indy.gov/rebuildindy.

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