

What We Learned from the Indiana State Fair Collapse Incident

Scott G. Nacheman, MSCE, AIA
Owner/Principal, White Birch Group, LLC

4:30 PM, Tuesday, February 4
HAMP 1144



Image Source: Meredith Gradle



Image source: Wolf Technical Services

Abstract The August 13, 2011 collapse of the temporary structure at the Indiana State Fair resulted in seven fatalities and dozens of injuries. Due in part to the State of Indiana's high degree of transparency in disclosing forensic findings, temporary structures are receiving new-found scrutiny. This reevaluation is changing how the entertainment industry and regulatory agencies approach the design, construction and utilization of these and similar structures. Mr. Nacheman will present a summary of the State Fair incident investigation, and share the lessons learned from that tragedy related to the use of temporary structures. Current initiatives involving the development of improved standards, regulations and inspection requirements will also be reviewed.



Mr. Scott G. Nacheman is a forensic Architect and Engineer with diverse multi-disciplinary experience. He has been involved in many facets of emergency response, incident management, building/structure stabilization, failure investigation, and repair/remediation; in addition to the personnel, financial, and office management responsibilities associated with forensic and AEC industry services. Throughout his over 28-year career, Mr. Nacheman has managed teams on many significant response and investigation assignments, including the 2019 New Orleans Hard Rock Hotel collapse and 2018 FIU Bridge collapse. He co-managed the \$208M Smithfield fire investigation in 2009, and was appointed by the

Governor of Indiana to be Principal Investigator of the 2011 Indiana State Fair collapse incident. Mr. Nacheman has responded to large commercial building failures following Hurricanes Katrina, Ike, Harvey, Irma, Maria, Ian, CAT90/Sandy, the Christchurch New Zealand earthquakes, the Joplin Tornado, and many other large loss events. In addition, he has provided investigation and remedial design services for iconic structures such as the Chrysler Building and Empire State Building in New York City, and The Wrigley Building in Chicago.