

Mystery stink could not be traced

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No one was able to say where a mysterious noxious smell that wafted over southern Indiana today came from, and emergency management officials say the state has "closed the book" on its investigation into the odor.

Employees from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security were sniffing around the county today in an effort to find the source.

"They can't find any problems," said Monroe County Emergency Management Director John Hooker. "They've contacted their counterparts in other states and nothing can be determined where the source is. We think that maybe it somehow got into the jet stream and came up to Indiana."

Initially the smell, which was variously compared to sulfur gas, garbage, sewage or decaying flesh, was thought to have come from a storage facility in Orange County, Hooker said. When that was ruled out, Hooker said, he heard the smell might have come from Kentucky.

The investigation began after locals began reporting the strange smell in Lawrence, Orange and Monroe counties. Jenny Shedd said she was preparing to get her kids off to school when her daughter reported smelling something strange outside. Shedd said her daughter described the smell as either garbage or a dead animal. "I thought it was propane," Shedd said.

Shedd decided to report the smell.

"We didn't know who to call and that was the frustrating thing," she said.

Shedd, whose mother-in-law owns the Fishin' Shedd on Ind. 446, said she checked with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources which has offices across from the business. After making a few more phone calls, the fire department was called in to investigate. Shedd said she also left a message with the emergency management office.

"It was strong," she said of the smell. "It was pretty pervasive."

Barry Sneed, public information officer for IDEM, said his office first received reports at 6:30 a.m. today about the smell from Lawrence County. He said IDEM had also received reports of the smell from Orange and Monroe counties. He said no other counties reported smelling anything unusual.

Hooker said the smell in Monroe County was first reported by Shedd as well as residents at The Pointe, which is in the southern part of Monroe County. He said he also smelled the odor when he left his house on Bethel Lane. Hooker described it as a "sewer gas smell";

Hooker said that by 3 p.m., the state ended its investigation. By then, the smell had dissipated. "It was all non-toxic," Hooker said.

Follow the smell

[View odor reports so far](#)

What's it smell like?

Readers of HeraldTimesOnline.com had various phrases to describe the smell that swept through Monroe and surrounding counties this morning:

- something dead
- sewer gas
- a spilled port-a-potty
- natural gas
- gas/death odor
- garbage
- propane leak
- old urine
- dead rodent
- week-old baby diapers
- dirty socks
- sulfur water