



City of Peru, Indiana

Office of the Mayor

35 S. Broadway, Peru, IN 46970

(765) 472-2400

PERU – As an employee of Peru Community Schools for the past 27 years, Paul Fry has his finger securely on the pulse of the needs and wants of the residents of the city in which he works.

Most of those years of service have been spent at Elmwood School, an elementary school nestled in the Oakdale neighborhood of the city's northeast side.

And, for the past several years, on his way to school, he's had to look with disdain at the dilapidated property at 341 Jefferson Ave. every morning before the school day starts.

The property, which was condemned in September of 2013, has been an added challenge for Elmwood school officials.

Fry, now the Principal at Elmwood, and staff have had to issue special rules to make sure students don't get too close to the house during events like recess or fire drills.

It's also been a challenge keeping inquiring young students off of the property as they arrive and leave school.

"The building at 341 Jefferson has been a huge problem for as long as I can remember," Fry said. "I have noticed break-ins through the years. I have contacted the authorities numerous times about the dangerous potential. The previous administration at the city did little in the past."

That all changed Friday (December 9), when the city was finally able to demolish the structure, leaving one less stressor for Fry and his staff as they continue to cultivate the minds of the young children in the community.

Fry said the eyesore was of particular concern to preschool students and staff due to the fact that play areas for recess were dangerously close to the vacant house.

"It's always been a constant source of anxiety for the school due to complaints from parents," Fry added. "That building made the whole area look bad and dangerous. I want to give a big heartfelt thank you to Mayor [Gabriel] Greer for doing something about this finally. I will thank Mayor Greer personally when I see him."

The now-demolished house at 341 Jefferson is just one of numerous blighted properties the city of Peru has been able to eliminate through its Blight Elimination Program.

Part of the program, which is aided by a state grant, has helped the city tear down four condemned houses to this point. Four more properties are scheduled to be demolished as part of the program before the end of the year.

Five other abandoned, run-down properties have also been torn down by the city, properties which in most cases had been problematic or deemed unsafe for several years.



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"Blighted homes are a major concern for the city," Mayor Greer said. "They attract unwanted animals, people and can bring entire neighborhoods down. We are pushing hard to get houses fixed up, and if they can't be, then we are tearing them down."