

# All green lights for sirens?

By Mike Rutledge  
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## Emergency traffic system being considered

**FORT MITCHELL** – Northern Kentucky safety officials sometimes wish they could snap their fingers and make all the lights on Dixie Highway turn green as they rush to emergencies or area hospitals.

There isn't a system that responds to finger snaps, but signals can respond to emergency vehicles' strobe lights, or their sirens.

Traffic engineers have recommended such a system to the Dixie Highway Advisory Committee, because several Northern Kentucky

communities use the crowded Dixie corridor in emergencies.

"I think that would be outstanding," said TransCare paramedic Rick Jamie. "A lot of times, people are so involved with their own cars or cell phones or radios that they don't even see you."

"Big, loud and lights doesn't necessarily mean they see you," Jamie said. "Hopefully, they're paying attention to the traffic signals."

"I think it's a great idea," said Fort Mitchell Fire Chief Charles Dietz. In the 23 years he has served on

the department, "I would say traffic is at least doubled" on Dixie, he estimated.

There is one drawback with the siren-sensing system, noted Christine Hiller of TEC Engineering Inc., which is studying the Dixie corridor for the committee.

"One small disadvantage is this system can be set off by birds," Hiller told the committee.

What kind of birds?

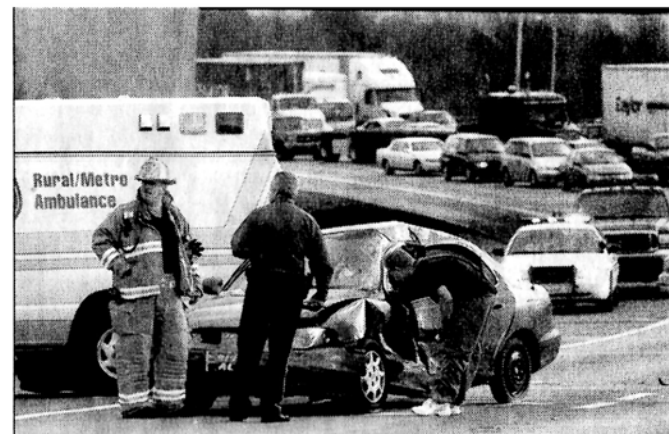
"Very loud ones," she guessed, although she and Bob Fluharty of TEC said they had never experi-

enced it.

"It's frequently mentioned as a possibility, but I've never really heard of it happening," Fluharty said. "On Colerain (Avenue), nobody's reported that happening."

Officials have not estimated costs of adding the system, but said the siren-responsive system would be less expensive because the strobe-responsive one would require equipment to be added to several cities' vehicles.

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**Emergency vehicles** are often hampered by congestion on Dixie Highway. In this December photo, Fort Mitchell officials survey the scene of a collision involving an ambulance on Interstate 75, just south of the highway.