



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **January 3, 2017**

#### **Indiana lawmakers eye gas tax ahead of 2017 legislative session**

WISH-TV

Nick Natario

1/2/17

INDIANAPOLIS (WISH) — With funding expected to be tight, Republican leaders are eyeing tax increases when the 2017 legislative session starts. The conditions were dreary outside the statehouse Monday, but it isn't what lawmakers are calling for when they return. "We don't sit around with our feet on the desk for the first couple of weeks like was traditional in the House, at least, for many generations," House Speaker Brian Bosma said. Besides the budget, road funding, education and attracting jobs are what Republicans are eyeing. For Democrats, it's about roads, early childhood education, equality and wages. "I'd like to see them just continue to stay fiscal and responsible," Indiana resident Ray Mack said. "Keep the state going the way they have been. Creating jobs should be focus number one." "I think a lot really with the business and the social side," Indiana resident Ashley Voorhies said. "More so the business." House Speaker Brian Bosma is ready. "I don't get the jitters, but you can't avoid feeling the excitement in the building," Bosma said. "I still get pretty charged up." Speaking to 24-Hour News 8, the speaker said recent financial reports are making road and bridge funding difficult. "We are confirming that we'll be looking to gas taxes and other user fees to fund those investments, which we believe are critical to the state's future," House Speaker Bosma said. GOP leaders say they aren't focused on social issues. But Hoosier Democrats think it's important to make that a priority.

<http://wishtv.com/2017/01/02/indiana-lawmakers-eye-gas-tax-ahead-of-2017-legislative-session/>

#### **Berman: Expect 'Road Funding Session'**

Inside INdiana Business

Andy Ober

1/2/17

INDIANAPOLIS - The Statehouse bureau chief for our partners at Network Indiana/WIBC expects the 2017 legislative session, which gets underway today, to be "dominated by road funding." Eric Berman says, while many legislators agree on how much money to spend, the debate will focus on where to get the money. He says to "expect discussions" on raising the gas tax, increased tolling and additional vehicle fees. State lawmakers spent much of the 2016 session debating road funding as well, but did not pass a long-term spending plan. Instead, legislators formed a task force to form recommendations for generating revenue to fund the projects. The group released its findings last month, saying "current funding levels are insufficient to meet the critical transportation infrastructure needs of the state." Its recommendations include increasing the state gas tax to "recover some or all of the purchasing power lost since the gasoline tax was last increased in 2003," and indexing that tax on a yearly basis "to ensure funding stability." The task force also suggested creating road usage fees on alternative fuel vehicles, electric vehicles

and other vehicles which pay little or no fuel tax. The task force was co-chaired by State Senator Luke Kenley (R-20) and State Representative Tim Brown (R-41). Berman says he does not expect any social issue "flashpoints" to take center-stage this year, as they have done in previous sessions. <http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/story/34167414/berman-expect-road-funding-session>

### **No easy answer under McDaniel Road**

Times Sentinel

Lisa Trigg/Tribune-Star

12/29/16

There's no quick fix for a retaining wall collapse that led Vigo County to close McDaniel Road south of Springhill Drive to Gross Drive late Monday. That closure, caused by a retaining wall collapse on the McDaniel Road overpass, also means Indiana 641 east of U.S. 41 will be closed. Two engineering firms have inspected the collapsed retaining wall beneath the overpass bridge, but no immediate solutions have been determined, Vigo County Engineer Jerry Netherlain said Tuesday. McDaniel Road from Springhill Drive to Gross Road was closed Monday night by order of the county highway department after the collapse was reported by CSX Railroad workers. The closure was coupled with the closure of the 641 bypass from McDaniel Road to U.S. 41 since most traffic coming off 641 turns north onto McDaniel Road and would use the railroad overpass. There is no easy detour for traffic from 641 to follow, Netherlain said. The collapsed wall is composed of concrete panels holding back-fill dirt which supports the roadway approaches to the bridge. If that dirt continues to escape, Netherlain explained, the roadway approach to the bridge is in danger of collapse. One vertical section of panels collapsed, allowing sand to spill out and exposing broken reinforcement-bar brackets that hold in place the panels of the restraining wall. While not readily visible to drivers who travel above the tracks on McDaniel Road as it approaches the Indiana 641 bypass, the collapse is visible to train crews. The 641 bridge is not affected by the collapse. Netherlain said conversations are continuing over who must repair the retaining wall. Its construction was part of a county federally aided project tied in with the state's Indiana 641 project. [http://www.timessentinel.com/indiana/news/no-easy-answer-to-fixing-retaining-wall-collapse-in-vigo/article\\_73129e15-d01b-59ce-a951-5b7566d3a521.html](http://www.timessentinel.com/indiana/news/no-easy-answer-to-fixing-retaining-wall-collapse-in-vigo/article_73129e15-d01b-59ce-a951-5b7566d3a521.html)

### **Other view: A plan to fix our roads**

Palladium Item

Kokomo Tribune

12/29/16

Anyone who drives a truck or car along Indiana's highways and county roads knows that many of those byways desperately need repair and replacement. Thankfully, the state's incoming governor, Eric Holcomb, seems to accept that reality, too. Holcomb has called for a long-term infrastructure plan fueled by "sustainable" funding. That is a gentle synonym for steady tax revenue. Its need is a harsh reality. The American Society of Civil Engineers gave a "poor" rating to one in six major Indiana roads in 2013. Ten percent of bridges were structurally deficient, the engineers concluded. Last February, the Interstate 70 overpass of U.S. 41 crumbled so extensively that the highway below was visible through a hole in the I-70 bridge deck. Only clumps of concrete clinging to bent rebar prevented a massive opening. Other road and bridge failures around Indiana have been documented. The cost of restoring the "Crossroads of America" to a safe, smooth status will not be cheap. Infrastructure experts estimate the state must invest \$1 billion annually to maintain adequate roads and bridges. Ironically, an impediment to a comprehensive plan to revitalize Indiana's roads has been pressure from lobbyists, a force Vice President-elect Mike Pence (also the state's current governor, officially) and President-elect Donald Trump claim to want to neutralize in Washington. Such pressure threatens to derail a proper infrastructure program again in the upcoming session of the General Assembly. Holcomb, state legislators and the Republican machine controlling the Statehouse should nonetheless

stand firm and act reasonably. <http://www.pal-item.com/story/opinion/editorials/2016/12/28/view-plan-fix-roads/95931948/>

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