



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **January 13, 2015**

#### **How Raising Gas Taxes Could Affect The Transportation Budget**

Indiana Public Media

Lacy Scarmana

1/13/2015

Resources the state typically relies on for its transportation budget aren't generating much in additional funding, making maintenance and expansion increasingly difficult. Lower gasoline prices have led to fewer sales taxes collected from gasoline sales. Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute President John Ketzenberger says over the next several budget sessions, the general assembly will identify whether they can raise revenue through existing sources or if they must find new sources of revenue to meet transportation needs. One solution could mean a higher gas tax. "Nobody believes Indiana should forfeit its natural position as a logistics center because it has poor transportation systems and I think that that's going to be a priority beginning over the last couple of years and into the next five or so," Ketzenberger says. Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee Sen. Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, says the state will have to look at what needs to be done and determine the price tags of projects such as I-65, I-70, and I-69. He says the gas tax has gotten "out of whack" as more Hoosiers drive cars with better gas mileage, or electric cars that don't depend on gasoline at all. "The day of reckoning is going to come where not only will we have to decide what we want to do and how we want to maintain and build our infrastructure, but how we're going to pay for it," Kenley says.

[How Raising Gas Taxes Could Affect The Transportation Budget | News - Indiana Public Media](#)

#### **West Virginians support Indiana's Amtrak line**

Lafayette Journal & Courier

Chris Morisse Vizza

1/13/2015

A shot of encouragement from two states away has lifted the spirits of Indiana passenger rail advocates who've been watching the clock tick toward a Jan. 31 deadline to secure continued operation of the Hoosier State line. Friends of the Cardinal, a group of passenger rail supporters in Charleston, West Virginia, last week approved a resolution urging continued funding for the train that stops in Lafayette on its run between Indianapolis and Chicago four days a week. The resolution also praised local government and business leaders, residents and members of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance who've pressed state legislators and transportation administrators to fund the so-called short line that lost federal funding in October 2013. That their efforts were noticed by people who live 375 miles east of Lafayette was gratifying to IPRA president Steve Coxhead. "It's a great morale booster," he said. "It's a clear indication that we're not alone and not just a few lonely souls pounding away at this." It also means the Hoosier State is not just an Indiana project, Friends of the Cardinal founder Chuck Riecks said. The Indiana train runs on a 196-mile section of track that's also traveled three days a week by Amtrak's long-

distance Cardinal, which stops in Charleston on its run between New York and Chicago.  
<http://www.jconline.com/story/news/2015/01/11/west-virginia-group-supports-amtrak-train-indiana/21594577/>

### **State spends more than \$30M in Clay County on construction projects in 2014**

The Brazil Times

Ernest Rollins

1/11/2015

It was a busy year for the Indiana Department of Transportation in Clay County. Six projects were started in 2014, generating a price tag of more than \$30 million combined; that is three times the amount of money spent on construction in 2013 and 10 times more compared to work done in 2012. "2014 investment is up considerably due to the U.S. 40 project through Brazil," INDOT Communications Director of the Crawfordsville District Debbie Calder said. "For the most part we have heard positive comments from Clay County residents about the work going on in the area. INDOT realizes construction is frustrating for motorists but in the end most are usually happy with the outcome." The U.S. 40 project was awarded to Gradex, Inc. for \$19.7 million. It is expected to give the historic road a facelift from the SR 340 intersection to Walmart just on the city's border. It was also, by far, the costliest investment for projects in 2014. With the new year, INDOT officials will continue investing in the area as several projects are in the works with project specifications being advertised by as early as March. Additionally, a lot of the projected work seems to be shifting towards bridge rehabilitation. While US 40 and SR 59 would still see construction, target areas will also include the SR 42 and SR 59 bridges over the Eel River, the SR 59 bridge over Birch Creek and three more bridges along I-70. "Priorities are determined by a process which considers, in part, pavement/bridge condition, traffic volume, crash data plus cost and operational effectiveness," Calder said. "We make project decisions for our statewide system based upon the highest priority needs from across the entire state." Increased investment in the county's infrastructure seems to follow a statewide trend. In 2005, former Governor Mitch Daniels committed funds to improve and expand the state's highway infrastructure over the next decade as part of the state's "Major Moves" program. On Jan. 6, Gov. Mike Pence announced his decision to request the State Budget Committee release \$200 million, already earmarked for highway construction, for the "Major Moves 2020."

[Brazil Times: Local News: State spends more than \\$30M in Clay County on construction projects in 2014 \(01/11/15\)](#)

### **Blodget: Now's the time to raise the gas tax**

Yahoo Finance

Joe Belfiglio

1/9/2015

As the president works to shore up support for his free college plan, Senate Republicans are talking about raising the federal gas tax for the first time since 1993. Henry Blodget says the mere mention of a gas tax gets Americans fired up. "People go crazy when you say the word gas tax in this country," he says. "We have this idea of a constitutional right to incredibly cheap gas." The national average currently sits at \$2.17, the lowest price in nearly six years according to AAA. Blodget thinks a tax increase will work if it is done incrementally. "There are sensible ways to do a gas tax that don't actually hose poorer people or people who just bought a car. You phase it in over time. You announce that in five years this is going to be the number. In ten years this is going to be the number. And effectively you do it so it's stabilizing the price of gas." Blodget says the revenue brought in would also help fund desperately needed repairs to the country's infrastructure. "We need highways. You can't just privatize roads. We actually have to pay for this stuff. The country's infrastructure is falling apart. This at least puts the tax on the folks who are getting the most advantage out of it with a road system." A tax increase would give the depleted federal Highway Trust Fund a much-needed jolt. Just last month, the American Association of

State Highway and Transportation Officials calculated a \$37 billion shortfall between funds available and funds needed for maintenance.

[Blodget: Now's the time to raise the gas tax - Yahoo Finance](#)

---

[www.buildindianacouncil.org](http://www.buildindianacouncil.org)