



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

January 29, 2015

U.S. 31 needs more upgrades, Elkhart County leaders say, but funding is in question

The Elkhart Truth
Tim Vandenack
1/27/2015

Indiana Sen. Carlin Yoder is confident the continued upgrade of U.S. 31 is a top priority for state roads officials. "I don't have any doubt," said the Middlebury Republican. Funding to complete the work, though — that's another question. Do you hike Indiana's gasoline tax? Impose new fees on hybrid vehicles? Increase the share of sales tax funds earmarked for road projects? The Indiana Senate's Homeland Security and Transportation Committee, headed by Yoder, took up the matter Tuesday, Jan. 27, while a group of Elkhart County leaders discussed it at a gathering in Goshen. Participants in each meeting agree that upgrading all of U.S. 31 between South Bend and Indianapolis to freeway-grade status needs to be done. That'll make the roadway safer and reduce travel time from northern Indiana to the state capital, an economic development issue. Things get tricky, though, when trying to pinpoint how to pay for the work, which boosters estimate will cost up to \$928 million. U.S. 31 south of South Bend and around Kokomo were the focus of recent upgrades, while improvements will finish later this year on a segment north of Indianapolis, leaving about 78 miles of highway untouched in between "The question is, Where's the road funding going to come from, and that's not clear," said Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce President Kyle Hannon, who led the Goshen meeting.

[U.S. 31 needs more upgrades, Elkhart County leaders say, but funding is in question - Elkhart Truth](#)

IFA authorizes borrowing \$170 million for Ohio River Bridges Project

Indiana Economic Digest
Matt Koesters, News and Tribune
1/27/2015

SOUTHERN INDIANA — The Indiana Finance Authority has authorized the borrowing of \$170 million for the Ohio River Bridges Project east-end crossing. The money is being borrowed from the U.S. Department of Transportation via the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, and will be used to pay WVB East End Partners — the design-build team for the east-end bridge — milestone incentives. The loan won't impact the overall cost of the project, and toll rates will not be affected, according to IFA Director Kendra York. "What's really important to understand on the TIFIA question is the fact that nothing is changing in terms of amounts or timing," York said. "We're using TIFIA instead of issuing bonds due to the lower interest rate available via this financing mechanism. "In the largest scheme, the impact isn't significant on the larger project, but anywhere we can save taxpayers' money, we are compelled to do so." There will be no additional loans taken out for the east-end crossing, according to Stephanie McFarland, a public relations specialist in the employ of the IFA. The new east-end bridge expected to be

open to traffic in October 2016, with the entire ORBP expected to be completed in December 2016. The east-end crossing is expected to cost a total of just more than \$1 billion, with the ORBP costing \$2.34 million overall.

[IFA authorizes borrowing \\$170 million for Ohio River Bridges Project - Indiana Economic Digest - Indiana](#) Also, [Finance Authority Approves Bridge Project Loan - Newsroom - Inside INdiana Business with Gerry Dick](#)

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