



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

February 18, 2016

County again seeking funds for Eisenhower Bridge project

The Herald Bulletin
Ken de la Bastide
2/17/16

ANDERSON – Local officials are making one more effort to secure federal grant funds to replace the 47-year-old Eisenhower Bridge over the White River in Anderson. This will be the eighth time that Madison County officials apply for a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant, commonly referred to as a TIGER grant. Last year, Madison County was reportedly on the final list for funding, but Jeffersonville was the only Indiana city to get the grant. The U.S. Department of Transportation awarded \$10 million for that city's project. "We made it to the final cut last year," Chuck Leser, Madison County engineer, said Wednesday. "It's really hard for one state to get two grants in the same year. "We were so close last year that we decided to give it another shot," he said. "If the county can secure federal or state funding, INDOT (Indiana Department of Transportation) has set the project for a September bid letting." Leser said applications for the TIGER 8 grants are expected to be accepted by the end of this month or in March with the announcement of the awards in September. Getting bids for the replacement of the Eisenhower Bridge would have to be pushed back.

http://www.heraldbulletin.com/news/county-again-seeking-funds-for-eisenhower-bridge-project/article_b26d22fe-d5a2-11e5-9ccd-97d143c45642.html

POINT OF VIEW: Indiana Farm Bureau supports tax hike for roads

Goshen News
Randy Kron
2/17/16

Indiana Farm Bureau's position on taxes has traditionally been one of less, not more. Since the organization's founding in 1919, we have fought for an equitable tax structure, and are supportive of SB 308 and the General Assembly's efforts to fix an out-of-sync farmland property tax formula. As the newly elected president of Indiana Farm Bureau, I've traveled the state talking to our members, and crippling property tax bills remain a major concern for them. However, another important issue to Indiana farmers is the need for better local roads. For the past two years, the Farm Bureau membership has supported a policy that might surprise some. Farmers depend on local roads to do their work and get their products to market. Because of the deteriorating condition of the state's local road system, our voting delegates adopted a policy position that supports a data-driven solution for long-term road funding. They also supported finding more money for state and local roads and bridges from a range of sources, including raising fuel taxes. There are a number of road funding bills in the Statehouse this session, and each has merit. We support HB 1001, which offers a long-term infrastructure solution that includes both state and local roads. In addition to indexing the gas tax to regain lost buying power, the bill directs excess

state reserves toward roads, establishes local taxing options, redirects 5 of the 7 cents of sales tax collected on fuel to be spent on roads and bridges, and increases the cigarette tax by \$1 per pack to offset general fund sales tax that is redirected to infrastructure expenditures.

http://www.goshennews.com/opinion/point-of-view-indiana-farm-bureau-supports-tax-hike-for/article_6bea1fbf-0cda-57eb-88f6-8b00e369b690.html

Lake County erects roadblock to tolls, higher taxes

NWI Times

Bill Dolan

2/17/16

CROWN POINT — The Lake County Board of Commissioners opposes legislation to raise local taxes or study charging tolls to drive on Interstates 65 and 94. Commissioners Kyle Allen, D-Gary; Mike Repay, D-Hammond and Gerry Scheub, D-Crown Point, signed a three-page resolution attacking House Bill 1001 and other proposals before the General Assembly that would raise transportation costs for county residents. House Bill 1001 would introduce a \$1 per pack cigarette tax hike and 5 cents per gallon gas tax increase. It also would require the Indiana Department of Transportation to conduct a feasibility study on whether to seek a waiver from the Federal Highway Administration to begin collecting tolls on I-94, I-65 and Interstate 70 downstate. Despite opposition in the Senate to higher taxes or motorists fees, lawmakers are expected to work out a compromise roads plan in the remaining days of the legislative session. The Lake County Commissioners take the Republican-dominated General Assembly to task for what they believe to be inequities in distributing state highway maintenance funds that shorts Northwest Indiana. They denounce state suggestions that local government raise local income taxes to improve roads. They ask the General Assembly to remit local income tax revenues here more quickly, direct all sales tax on gasoline to be used for road repair, stop giving local businesses tax breaks and pursue multi-state and multi-national businesses to pay hundreds of millions in more taxes to help repair roads. Commissioner Gerry Scheub, D-Crown Point, slammed the state officials. http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/lake-county-erects-roadblock-to-tolls-higher-taxes/article_0e876f1f-d1fd-5653-8ffa-430dce30b8c7.html

GUEST COMMENTARY: Time is now for investment in Hoosier roads

NWI Times

Ryan Hoff

2/16/16

Every morning, in countless homes across Indiana, Hoosiers play out their usual routine. A daily commute, getting the kids to school, going to the store for groceries or maybe heading to church may be your routine. But how many bad roads and bridges now stand in the way of your daily routine? Roads are littered with potholes. Many bridges are rated for such low weights that school buses and farm equipment can't safely cross. Roads are being converted back to gravel from pavement. Why do the roads seem to be in worse shape than in the past? First, the network that we've relied upon for decades is falling apart. Much of Indiana's transportation infrastructure was built in the 1950s and, after a 50- to 60-year lifespan, is simply due to be replaced. Second, the user-fee system of road and bridge repair has not kept pace with inflation or technology. Fuel efficiency in vehicles and inflation has undermined the per-gallon fuel tax, and only one cent of the 7 percent sales tax on gasoline is currently used to fund roads. The Association of Indiana Counties has long advocated for a long-term, sustainable solution to the ongoing shortfall in funding for maintenance of roads in our state. Nearly 90 percent of all road miles in our state are maintained by local units of government, 70 percent of which are county roads. Our members have heard clearly the demands of Hoosiers for safe and reliable roads and bridges. However, at current funding levels, maintenance and replacement of our vital infrastructure is falling behind. http://www.nwitimes.com/news/opinion/columnists/guest-commentary/guest-commentary-time-is-now-for-investment-in-hoosier-roads/article_324735f1-772e-54af-a862-0f8071919043.html

www.buildindianacouncil.org