



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **March 24, 2015**

#### **Path to road money in Southern Indiana proves bumpy**

News and Tribune  
Maureen Hayden  
3/23/15

INDIANAPOLIS — County officials from around Indiana arrived at the Statehouse recently with a tough request: Give us billions of dollars to fix our roads and bridges. They didn't have much problem making the case that their infrastructure is crumbling, given a decade's decline in funds for local governments to maintain 85,000 miles of roads and 12,000 bridges. Harder was the argument that legislators may have to impose new taxes to raise that revenue. "There's no pain-free way to solve this," said Stephanie Yager, who heads the Indiana Association of County Commissioners. "But it's not pain-free to ride down a road that's full of potholes. Yager, a former county commissioner from the tourist haven of scenic Brown County, has watched paved roads turn back to gravel as gas tax revenues used for local repairs dwindled over the past decade. A local "wheel tax" — imposed on every motorist residing in Brown County — hasn't raised enough dollars to close the gap. "We welcome the tourists, they're a big part of our economy," she said. "But our roads take a beating." Jason Heile, a Davies County highway engineer and president of the Indiana Association of County Highway Engineers and Supervisors, made a similar case at the Statehouse. With a stretch of the new Interstate 69 running through his county, Heile says there's not enough money to build side roads for the development that will come with the highway.

[Path to road money in Southern Indiana proves bumpy - News and Tribune: News](#)

#### **Highways: Tomorrow's promises come with speed bumps**

NWI Times  
Keith Benman  
3/22/15

Big progress on highways in Northwest Indiana during the next five years will depend on matching planners' vision with money, a task that is increasingly difficult in an era of declining gasoline tax collections. Even expectations for some public-private partnerships have been scaled back, though innovative financing remains in the tool box and may be crucial for a number of key projects. Those include the 48-mile Illiana Expressway, a limited-access, four-lane toll road that would stretch from Interstate 65 near Lowell, to Interstate 55, near Wilmington, Ill. Transportation officials in both states are hopeful private investors looking for a long-term return on their money will help defray the cost of the \$1.5 billion project. "This project is primarily about being able to provide the goods and services the region needs to keep its economy growing," said Indiana Department of Transportation spokesman Will Wingfield. "And we believe this corridor is needed to address current and future traffic needs." No matter what Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner has decided, the Illiana Expressway remains a top priority for Northwest Indiana.

Although all officials here say Illinois' involvement is critical. The Illiana Expressway also remains a key part of INDOT's four-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan, Wingfield said. Officials are hopeful ground can be broken in late 2015 or sometime in 2016. Indiana is moving to meet the highway funding challenge on multiple fronts, Wingfield added. Those include prioritizing traditional fuel tax revenues for road and bridge preservation, the use of innovative public-private partnerships, and a Major Moves 2020 fund set aside by the legislature in 2013.

[Highways: Tomorrow's promises come with speed bumps](#)

### **Viewpoint: Better Toll Road counties' goal**

South Bend Tribune

John S. Dull

3/22/15

Northwest Indiana is much stronger even though the LaPorte-Lake County Consortium is not the apparent high bidder for the Indiana Toll Road lease. Porter County leadership also supported the two-county project although timing prevented its joining. The two-county consortium was up against worldwide financial competition. IFM Investors, an Australian firm owned by 30 nonprofit pension funds, submitted using employee retirement funds and was the apparent high bid for the remaining 66 years of the lease. But, northwest Indiana is also a winner! The effort proves that county lines can be crossed to address a common goal. Courage was needed and vision required. Five county commissioners and 10 county council persons from both major parties cast a historic vote for a project to power regional success. The project's team included first-rate participation from Goldstein & McClintock, Piper Jaffray, Krieg DeVault and Globalvia. The county consortium's bond underwriter is Bank of America/Merrill Lynch. Yes, the world's fifth largest market capitalization bank has faith in northwest Indiana's political leaders. The first-class effort of LaPorte County Commissioner Dave Decker and LaPorte County Attorney Shaw Friedman, the project's two prime movers, must be acknowledged. The two-county consortium congratulates the apparent winner! The deal must close by September. The two counties remain in a backup position should there be any hiccups in the bankruptcy proceedings. If the Australians close the deal, hopefully IFM Investors will initiate immediately infrastructure improvements, including a bridge repair in northwest Indiana. The two-county consortium had this task as its top priority. [http://www.southbendtribune.com/news/opinion/viewpoint/viewpoint-better-toll-road-counties-goal/article\\_88cc3f82-0a01-5be1-8ad2-bf718e163be3.html](http://www.southbendtribune.com/news/opinion/viewpoint/viewpoint-better-toll-road-counties-goal/article_88cc3f82-0a01-5be1-8ad2-bf718e163be3.html)

---

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