



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

April 10, 2014

EDITORIAL: Amtrak privatization could go off rails

NWI Times
Doug Ross
4/10/14

The Indiana Department of Transportation is misguided in hoping to privatize rail operations along Amtrak's Hoosier State route. INDOT's request for proposals is broad, looking for ways to privatize all or part of Amtrak's Hoosier State route between Chicago and Indianapolis. INDOT and seven communities have subsidized the service since the federal subsidy was rescinded last fall. The existence of a subsidy is not in itself a sign the route isn't viable. Transportation is subsidized. It's just that the subsidy has shifted from the federal government to the state. INDOT wants bidders to compete for the right to operate the train, in hopes a private operator would increase the number of passengers while decreasing the cost. What INDOT should be doing now is looking at how to make the route more marketable. The Hoosier State operates four days per week. A different Amtrak train runs three days per week and continues from Indianapolis. Look at the timing and reliability of the train schedule. Examine amenities aboard the train, too. Riders want wi-fi for their laptops, tablets and other devices. That's a selling point for trains that offer the service, especially for a route that long. Many Amtrak trains offer wi-fi, but not the Hoosier State. Look at potential customers, too. Who would ride this train? Is there commuter potential on certain stretches of the route? If so, the stops would need to be timed appropriately. Is it for day trips? If so, time the stops according to when major attractions open and close. It's incumbent on INDOT to figure out how to make the route more profitable by providing the proper amenities and operating the trains more efficiently. Don't look to privatization as the solution, however, before further study on how to make the route more popular.

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Construction season is here, INDOT warns of major road projects

WNDU
Kate Chappell
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SOUTH BEND As the weather continues to warm up, drivers will see more construction crews on the roadways. The Indiana Department of Transportation is using this week- Work Zone Awareness Week- to remind drivers to slow down and be on the lookout for workers. Since 2010, 47 people have been killed in work zone accidents and thousands of others have been injured. Of those fatalities, four out of five were the drivers or their passengers. To keep the roadways safe, INDOT is reminding people of the stiff fines associated with reckless driving in a work zone. Tickets range from \$1,000-\$10,000, plus jail time for hitting a worker. "The majority of the accidents in these work zones are rear-enders," said Matt Deitchley, from INDOT. "That's because people aren't paying attention." A 33 year veteran of INDOT says he's seen everything

from property damage to death on the roadway. He hopes this season, more people will slow down. "If they would just think it's their loved one that was working on the highway, and if they drove through that work zone and it was their brother, their sister, their mom, their dad," said Kevin Johnston, "wouldn't they slow down for them? We're just asking for the same respect. Slow down, give us a break, let us do our job. We're out there to serve you." The next big project that will affect city drivers in South Bend is the new US-31. Lanes will be restricted most of the summer. INDOT advises finding alternate routes. "It's important to slow down and be alert in those construction zones because people are out there working really close to traffic and it's dangerous," said Deitchley. "It's also dangerous for the drivers and their passengers, too." [Construction season is here, INDOT warns of major road projects](#)

Largest bridge slide in North America ready to take place

WAVE3 News

4/9/14

It's the largest bridge slide of its type in North America. The new Milton-Madison Bridge, which spans nearly a half-mile and weighs some 30 million pounds, will slide 55 feet laterally from its temporary piers and onto refurbished permanent piers. The slide, scheduled to begin Wednesday morning, April 9, could take up to 16 hours before the bridge rests in its final location – on top of the refurbished piers that held the old Milton-Madison Bridge in place beginning in 1929. The Coast Guard will close the river during the slide. "We're making history in Indiana and Kentucky," said Karl Browning, commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation. "Through hard work and creative engineering, we've been able to rebuild this bridge quickly and cost effectively." Pulling a half-mile structure weighing 30 million pounds a distance of 55 feet in a matter of hours is an engineering marvel, though simple in concept. Polished steel sliding plates are secured on top of the refurbished piers. Steel cables and hydraulic jacks controlled by computers will be used to pull the bridge. A total of eight jacks are mounted on the piers. Industrial lubrication is put on the sliding plates to grease the skids. Then, through a series of grabs and pulls, the bridge is slid into place. Each grab and pull is expected to move the bridge 20–22 inches – up to 10 feet per hour. Once the bridge is in its final position, additional work has to be completed before it can reopen, including inspections, welding and bolting it in place, reconnecting the driving surfaces, installing expansion joints, pouring concrete, configuring drainage and re-striping. "Everyone is a winner on this project," said Mike Hancock, secretary of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. "We're showing the rest of the country how two states, by strategically working together, can deal with aging infrastructure in creative ways that improve safety and better the quality of life for their citizens."

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