



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

April 14, 2015

Amtrak alternative unveils plan for Hoosier State line

Journal & Courier
Chris Morisse Vizza
4/14/15

Ed Ellis has emerged from background observer to key player in the state's 2 1/2 year search for a way to fund and improve the Hoosier State passenger rail line. His company, Iowa Pacific Holdings, was tapped in November by the Indiana Department of Transportation to provide and maintain rail cars, food and beverage service, and marketing for the 196-mile short line that lost federal funding in October 2013. The state and communities served by the Indianapolis to Chicago route last year paid Amtrak about \$3 million to operate the four-day-a-week Hoosier State. Combined with Amtrak's three-day-a-week long-distance Cardinal, the trains provide daily train service to Lafayette. Ellis saw opportunity throughout 30 months of sometimes contentious negotiations among INDOT, Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration. The state last week announced an agreement in principle with the FRA and resumed talks with Amtrak to provide engineers, conductors, tickets and access to tracks owned by freight rail companies. Now that the dust seems to have settled, the president of the Chicago-based company presented to members of Greater Lafayette Commerce his plan to turn the often delayed, inconveniently scheduled route into a self-supporting enterprise. It's a vision built on a lifelong career in the railroad industry, including a five-year stint as vice president of Amtrak from 1996 to 2000, prior to founding in 2001 the primarily freight-oriented Iowa Pacific Holdings. In the world of transportation, Ellis said, there are three groups of people: those who need to get somewhere in a hurry, those who just need to get somewhere and those who are looking for a reason to go.

<http://www.jconline.com/story/money/business/2015/04/14/iowa-pacific-contractor-hoosier-state-rail-line/25754719/>

Bill allowing I-69 to cut through Perry Township heads to Pence

Indianapolis Star
Tony Cook
4/13/15

A bill that would allow I-69 to run through Perry Township along the Ind. 37 corridor is headed to Gov. Mike Pence's desk after the Senate approved it Monday over the objections of lawmakers from that area. Despite dire warnings about the financial impact on restaurants and other businesses along the heavily commercialized corridor, the Senate voted 31-19 in favor of the bill. Pence would not say through a spokeswoman Monday whether he plans to sign the measure. The proposal would replace legislation passed eight years ago that forbade the superhighway from going through Perry Township. Opponents, including Sen. Brent Waltz, R-Greenwood, said undoing the ban and allowing construction now would be a disservice to businesses and entrepreneurs who have chosen to locate along the Ind. 37 corridor. But those who want to allow

construction in Perry Township said they are not pushing the Indiana Department of Transportation to pick Ind. 37 as the route; they just want to make it available should INDOT choose it.

[Bill allowing I-69 to cut through Perry Township heads to Pence](#)

Stagnant state funding threatens Transpo services

South Bend Tribune

Lincoln Wright

4/12/15

Over recent years Transpo, like public transportation services across Indiana, has been fighting a stagnant pool of state dollars and an overall lack of consistent funding. "Transpo has done everything it can to become more efficient. We run a very lean organization in terms of how we are staffed, but at the end of the day when you consistently see your funding cut there's really nowhere else to go," David Cangany, Transpo general manager, said. The money Transpo — and every qualifying transit agency in Indiana — receives from the state is divided out of the Public Mass Transportation Fund. That fund has remained just under \$42.6 million for the past seven years. But every year costs rise and transportation agencies are forced to make do and compete for the funding available. The problem started when the PMTF was detached from sales tax and made another line in the state budget, Cangany said. Before, when tied to sales tax, the PMTF would naturally escalate each year with inflation. Because this fund has seen no change, Transpo has had a more than \$1 million decrease in state funding since 2008, Cangany said. Some of that is due to the cap on property tax passed by the General Assembly in 2008, he said, but the company expects to lose about \$1.8 million more by 2019 if state funding continues on this trend. And Transpo has already been forced to cut services in recent years. In 2012, about \$1 million worth in services was cut, resulting in reduced routes and less frequent buses. Cangany said the transportation provider was lucky that ridership numbers weren't greatly impacted and have remained steady since. Transpo estimates it serves about 8,000 passengers per day, rounding out to about 2.2 million rides per year. "I really think we have done everything we can," Cangany said. "We can only hold on for so long."

[Stagnant state funding threatens Transpo services - South Bend Tribune: Local](#)

Money scarce for northern Vanderburgh roadwork

Evansville Courier & Press

Thomas B. Langhorne

4/11/15

But improvements to northern Vanderburgh County's underdeveloped and heretofore sparsely traveled local road system aren't keeping pace with the growth — and county officials acknowledge they don't have the money to catch-up. Blaine Oliver, assistant director of the Evansville-Vanderburgh Area Plan Commission, points to the Schnucks site. "The developer has already made fairly major improvements to Boonville-New Harmony just east of 41," Oliver said. "The roads are wide enough to handle the traffic — at that development area. But residents of the subdivisions around there are going to be taking local roads to get to Schnucks, and some of those are narrow and may need improvements. "You can't ask a developer to correct every problem in an entire road system that already existed. It wouldn't be fair. The county itself is going to have to address these narrow roads," Oliver said. But county government doesn't have the money to put up even a 20 percent match for the federal government's 80 percent for any road project, said County Engineer John Stoll. In northern Vanderburgh County, it has to rely on Tax Increment Financing district proceeds. That's how the county's work rebuilding Green River Road up to Indiana 57 is funded. [Money scarce for northern Vanderburgh roadwork - Courier Press](#)

Study: 10 Percent Of Indiana Bridges Need Major Repair

WIKY
4/10/15

Indiana has one of the nation's highest numbers of bridges that are in need of major repairs or upgrades, according to a new report. The analysis was done by the American Road and Transportation Builders Association. Alison Black, the group's chief economist, said the group found that 10 percent of Indiana's bridges - slightly more than 1,900 of them - are structurally deficient. "A bridge is classified as structurally deficient," she said, if one of the key structural elements - and usually that's the deck, the superstructure or the substructure - is rated in poor condition or worse." In Indiana, Black said, there are more than twice as many structurally deficient bridges in urban areas as in rural areas. Black said the bridge problem in Indiana and nationwide could get even worse, since the latest extension of federal highway and transit funding through the Highway Trust Fund is set to expire on May 31 -- unless Congress acts. "This is something that is an issue, funding both at the federal, state and local level," she said. "It's something that all levels of government need to address. But the uncertainty over the federal-aid situation is a big issue for state DOTs (departments of transportation) and local governments." According to the report, nationally about 61,000 bridges are considered structurally compromised. Many of those are on interstate highways, which carry the bulk of truck traffic and passenger vehicles. [Study: 10 Percent Of Indiana Bridges Need Major Repair - News - 104.1 WIKY - Adult Contemporary Radio - Evansville, IN](#)

Senate Leaders Want to Spend Less 'Major Moves' Money

WBOI
Brandon Smith
4/10/15

The Senate Republican budget proposal mirrors its House counterpart in setting aside \$400 million for future road projects. The chamber's budget leader says he'd like to keep that money in state coffers the next two years. In the 2013 budget, lawmakers created the Major Moves 2020 fund that put aside \$400 million for future projects. But the Pence administration, with State Budget Committee approval, took that money and spent it on road projects over the last two years. With lawmakers set to move a new \$400 million into the fund, Republican Senator Luke Kenley says he's going to be more reluctant to release that money to INDOT right away. Kenley notes that the state needs to have a serious discussion about what he calls the "big picture" of future road funding needs. "That's a 2017 discussion based on the studies and the environmental impact statements on some of these major projects," Kenley said. "So I'm hopeful that we can save that money for that time and then turn it in the right direction." House budget leader Tim Brown says he doesn't have any plans for the Major Moves 2020 money, but won't commit to keeping it in the fund for the next two years. Senate

Senate budget eases hit on IPS, boosts funding for higher ed, highways

Indianapolis Star
Tony Cook
4/9/15

The Indiana Senate rolled out a proposed \$31.5 billion state budget Thursday that would ease the financial hit on Indianapolis Public Schools, add money for higher education and set aside \$200 million a year for highway expansion. Sen. Luke Kenley, the chief budget writer for Senate Republicans, presented the two-year budget during a Senate Appropriations Committee meeting Thursday morning. The committee voted 8-3 to advance the plan to the full Senate. The Senate version provides an additional \$466 million over two years for public education, roughly the same as the budget the House approved last month and about \$130 million more than Gov. Mike Pence had proposed. The Senate budget also: Sets aside \$200 million a year to increase state highway capacity, which could be used to add lanes to I-70 and I-65, to complete I-69 from

Martinsville to Indianapolis or to build an outer loop interstate around Indianapolis. [Senate budget eases hit on IPS, boosts funding for higher ed, highways](#)

www.buildindianacouncil.org