



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

May 24, 2016

GUEST COMMENTARY: Wheel tax a tough call, but the right one

Mayor James Snyder
5/23/16

Recently, an editorial assigned blame to the Legislature for putting local communities in a position to institute new road-funding mechanisms, such as the so-called wheel tax. I believe that opinion to be misinformed. The fact of the matter is that paving and construction prices are going up while government revenues are declining. The revenue declines are caused by positive changes, such as fuel efficiency, tax cuts and resident service demands. The price increases are due in large part to pay increases for construction workers and normal inflation on the costs of construction products. Mayors from across Indiana asked for the wheel and excise tax to allow us to make up the gap created by these otherwise positive changes. Residents expect a high level of service, and a majority of citizens understand there is a cost to provide those services. Safe roads, sidewalks and bridges are the foundation of a prosperous community. While the state Legislature chose to postpone long-term federal and state highway funding until next year, they gave cities and towns exactly what they were asking for and more. Mayors asked the Legislature for the ability to raise needed revenues ourselves to fix our meager, somewhat embarrassing, paving budgets. Snow storms have rocked Northern Indiana, and our small paving budgets were decimated to where many communities, including Portage, needed to take on debt by bonding for five, 10 or 20 years just to pave a few dangerous roads.

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/opinion/columnists/guest-commentary/guest-commentary-wheel-tax-a-gift-not-burden/article_86dccacf-74c0-5e94-9e8d-22113ed7ff70.html

Lawrance returns to Chamber, to push for more road funding

Indianapolis Business Journal
Hayleigh Colombo
5/20/16

Mark Lawrance is back at his old workplace again. The longtime Indiana Chamber of Commerce executive, who recently resigned after a two-year stint as director of the Indiana University Public Policy Institute, is back in a new role: vice president of engagement and innovation policy. Lawrance, 61, returned to the Chamber this week and said he came back because he got the opportunity to design his job, to "pick and choose many of the areas that I'm very passionate about and want to improve." Lawrance spent 14 years at the Chamber before heading to the Public Policy Institute in 2014. In his previous Chamber stint, he oversaw the Indiana Chamber Foundation, developed long-term economic development plans and led numerous studies on issues from workforce development to government efficiency. One big area he'll tackle this time around will be transportation and infrastructure funding. Lawrance said he'll advocate at the Statehouse for a long-term solution in next year's budget-making session. This year, the Indiana Chamber supported plans by House Republicans to raise cigarette and gas taxes to finance infrastructure improvements. But in an election year, the proposals proved to be too politically

difficult to pass. Instead, the approved plan will funnel \$230 million in funding for state roads and bridges for two years, along with \$580 million for local projects. "Hoosiers observe our roads are not as good as they need to be," Lawrance said. The legislature's 2016 solution "was not the long-term step that we believe needs to be taken for our roads so they are truly superior infrastructure." <http://www.ijb.com/articles/58688-lawrance-returns-to-chamber-to-push-for-more-road-funding>

Verbatim: INDOT to Host City, Town and County Officials for Local Road and Bridge Funding Meetings

The Journal Gazette
5/19/16

The Indiana Department of Transportation will host six regional meetings for city, town and county officials to detail new funding opportunities for local roads and bridges through recent legislation. In March 2016, Governor Mike Pence signed into law House Enrolled Act 1001 and Senate Enrolled Act 67, which provide more than \$1.2 billion in new funding for road and bridge preservation across Indiana, much of which is targeted at improving local roads and bridges. Cities, towns and counties have received \$430 million in Local Option Income Tax distributions that can be used improve local roads and bridges. In addition, as part of HEA1001, INDOT is launching a Local Road and Bridge Matching Grant Fund that provides \$186 million in match funding over the next two years to local governments that submit qualifying road and bridge projects. The new funding is in addition to the more than \$200 million that INDOT provides to cities, towns and counties each year through the agency's federal-aid program. INDOT's regional meetings will provide details on how to access new funding and answer questions. City, town and county officials should plan to attend a session near them to learn about projects eligible for funding, how to submit projects for matching funds, deadlines for project submissions, projected timelines for distributing funds, and developing an asset-management plan. <http://www.journalgazette.net/blog/the-scoop/Verbatim--INDOT-to-Host-City--Town-and-County-Officials-for-Local-Road-and-Bridge-Funding-Meetings>

Regional planners get wheel tax reminder

NWI Times
Andrew Steele
5/19/16

State Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, reminded members of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission on Thursday that if their communities intend to use a wheel tax to leverage state matching funds for road repair, they'll need to have the tax approved before July 1. The city of Portage has approved a wheel tax, and other communities are considering one. The tax is one of several options communities have to qualify for a Local Road and Bridge Matching Grant from the state. Other local matches can come from local income tax funds, particularly LOIT money the state has held in trust but is returning to local governments, and money from a "rainy day fund" if the municipality or county has one. The state put \$186 million into the grant program as part of the legislation passed this year. It also allocated a portion of the gas tax to the program. The Indiana Department of Transportation is currently collecting project proposals for the grants, which have a cap of \$1 million per project. INDOT's "call for projects" ends July 3. "I believe there will be a lot of demand," Soliday said. "All of us want this project to work." http://www.nwitimes.com/business/transportation/regional-planners-get-wheel-tax-reminder/article_b80fbffa-b5d6-57e0-86f3-7922b1250a95.html

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