



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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The road not taken

The Journal Gazette

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Any discussion about infrastructure is bound to be – See? You’re already nodding off! – A little dull. Roads, bridges, dams, rail lines, airports, utility systems. Just the subjects to set the heart racing and spark passionate political debate. And if you get past boring, the subject is bound to be a little depressing. Just keeping Indiana roads from deteriorating further in the next few years could cost \$500 million or more. Building needed roadways will cost hundreds of millions more. And with just most of the century left on the Toll Road lease, that \$3.8 billion windfall has dried up. But there are worse things than boring or dull. Like scary. Roads in disrepair can add to the inherent danger of driving. Bridges in disrepair can turn deadly, as when the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis collapsed in 2007, killing 13 and injuring 145. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, 1,944 of the 18,953 bridges in Indiana, or 10 percent, are considered structurally deficient. Sixteen percent of Indiana’s 9,965 miles of major roads are in poor condition.

[The road not taken | Editorials | Journal Gazette](#)

Indiana lawmakers’ next big push: roads

Indianapolis Star

Tony Cook

5/4/15

With the 2015 legislative session in the rear-view mirror, state lawmakers already are hinting at their next big undertaking: how to pay for the state’s roads. It’s an important question for a state that calls itself “the Crossroads of America,” but it’s also a sticky one. Any answer is likely to involve new taxes — a tough sell for lawmakers in a conservative state. But with gasoline tax revenue on the decline thanks to better fuel efficiency, and with a temporary influx of cash from the Indiana Toll Road lease used up, lawmakers are acknowledging they can no longer avoid the issue. “We’re going to have to talk about who pays what, in what form, to support this,” said Sen. Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, the Senate’s chief budget writer. “So that’s going to be a tough discussion.” The state is facing a gap of at least \$500 million just to maintain existing bridges and highways, said House Transportation Chairman Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso. And that doesn’t include hundreds of millions of dollars needed to complete I-69, add lanes to I-65 and I-70, and construct a new outer-loop freeway around Indianapolis. Lawmakers made little progress on those issues this year. They concluded the 2015 session this week with a new two-year state budget that includes more than \$460 million in new spending on education — but \$200 million less than lawmakers wanted on infrastructure. “If I had one disappointment about the session, or one lowered expectation, it was what we were able to do for infrastructure,” said House Speaker Brian Bosma, R-Indianapolis. “While we set out with the goal of this being the ‘education session,’ we’re already talking that the next session needs to be the ‘infrastructure session.’”

<http://www.indystar.com/story/news/politics/2015/05/04/lawmakers-big-regret-enough-road-funding/26740301/>

Legislative session ends, and now the results

Courier & Press
Chelsea Schneider
5/2/15

INDIANAPOLIS - The Indiana General Assembly adjourned this year's legislative session Wednesday following a memorable, and at times controversial, four months at the Indiana Statehouse. This session Hoosiers saw lawmakers respond to the national uproar over the state's Religious Freedom Restoration Act and vote to repeal a state law serving as a way to set common wages on public construction projects. Up next, lawmakers already are saying they plan to focus on transportation infrastructure in the future. Infrastructure funding: With this year billed as the "education session," lawmakers are already eyeing roads and transportation as the next focus. Republican legislative leaders expressed disappointment at the level of funding provided to highway construction and expansion projects through the budget at \$100 million in funding per year. "Really the next budget session, if we label this one the education session, that's probably going to be the road and infrastructure session. It almost has to be," said state Sen. Luke Kenley, a Noblesville Republican. Kenley said lawmakers will then face the challenge of pinpointing a funding source if they choose to do more with infrastructure projects. Last year, plans for an Interstate 69 bridge linking Indiana and Kentucky scored among the highest out of future transportation projects compiled by a state panel. The state also has yet to determine funding for the sixth and final section of the I-69 extension that will carry the road from Martinsville to Indianapolis. [Legislative session ends, and now the results - Courier Press](#)

Crumbling roads creep up as issue

The Journal Gazette
Niki Kelly
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INDIANAPOLIS – Lawmakers tackled a lot of issues in 2015 but not the one plaguing Indiana's roads, bridges and infrastructure: lack of money. Instead, that will be the primary focus in two years as legislators must find a sustainable way to pay for state and local road needs at a time when fuel efficiency is going up and revenue from gas taxes is stagnating. "Something that is overlooked is Indiana's infrastructure is crumbling – almost to the point of becoming a crisis," said House Democrat Leader Scott Pelath. "We cannot grow unless we have the circulatory system that allows businesses to move and remain here." Republican leaders agree – acknowledging that the road funding issue is the one disappointment of the just-ended legislative session. Sen. Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, said that if this was the education session, the next budget session in 2017 will be the road infrastructure session. "It almost has to be. And that means we also have to face the actual problem of if we're going to do more where are we going to get the money?" he said. "We're going to have to talk about who pays what, in what form to support this. That's going to be a tough discussion." Indiana's gasoline tax is 18 cents per gallon and hasn't been raised since 2003 – when it jumped 3 cents. The state is getting about the same amount of money in motor fuel taxes as it historically has. But as consumers buy less gas because cars become more fuel efficient, it will be a problem. Revenue from the state gas tax is expected to be about \$600 million in 2015. Indiana also receives about \$690 million in federal gas tax money.

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Hoosier State train forging ahead

Journal and Courier
Chris Morisse Vizza

5/1/15

For a fourth time, Amtrak and the Indiana Department of Transportation announced they've extended an agreement to operate the Hoosier State passenger rail line. On the eve of Thursday's contract end date, spokesmen for both entities said the four-day-a-week Indianapolis-Chicago route, which stops in Lafayette, will run through June 30. Combined with Amtrak's long-distance Cardinal, passengers have daily service. Since October 2013, Indiana and communities served by the Hoosier State have paid Amtrak about \$3 million to run the 196-mile route while the state pursued a new operating model. But a succession of obstacles has delayed the state and local plan to hire a contractor to increase ridership and improve service on the line that is often delayed, runs at inconvenient times and lacks Wi-Fi and food service. The hope is that during the next 60 days the state can reach long-term agreements for Amtrak employees to operate rail cars provided by private contractor Iowa Pacific Holdings, INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield said. July 1 is the tentative start date for the new operating model. "That's a target we're shooting for," he said. "We're getting closer day-by-day to getting everything in place, but there are still a lot of pieces to be put in place." Several of those pieces are beyond the state's control. The Iowa Pacific rail cars and food facilities still must pass safety and health inspections by the Federal Railroad Administration and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, then pass Amtrak inspections. <http://www.jconline.com/story/money/business/2015/04/30/hoosier-state-passenger-train-funding-continues/26667663/>

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