



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

June 9, 2016

Transportation Funding Scores a Win; Championship Still Within Reach

Inside Indiana Business

David Holt

6/9/2016

You watch the hometown hockey player accelerate on his skates deking in, moving out, he has the defender beat, he lifts the stick and sends the puck at 100 miles per hour into the net past the goalie. The crowd erupts in cheers, lights flash, a horn sounds. Your favorite player made the game-winning goal for an overtime victory, ensuring your team a spot in the playoffs. The hockey player huddles with his teammates as the hometown crowd continues to celebrate. The emotional overtime-victory guarantees a next round of play, but it does not ensure a championship.

Metaphorically, this hockey team stands about where the 2016 Indiana General Assembly finished on legislation upgrading Indiana's infrastructure. While legislators approved more funding for our State's roads and bridges, they have yet to compete for and win the championship. The Conexus Indiana Logistics Council (CILC), a statewide group of logistics executives and thought leaders, was pleased with \$1 billion allocated over the next three years (2016-2018) for infrastructure. The final legislation agreed to by the Indiana Senate and the Indiana House and signed by Governor Mike Pence provided a short-term fix for our transportation needs. House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1001 ensures funding over the next three years for infrastructure through a combination of local option income tax (LOIT) reserves, dedicated funding through existing sales taxes on gasoline and funding from the General Fund Reserve. Reaching a long-term funding solution during the 2017 Indiana General Assembly is equivalent to a championship win. If Indiana is to maintain and grow its designation as the "Crossroads of America," we must show up and win the playoffs. Without a 2017 championship win, Indiana will fall behind, making a comeback that much harder.

<http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/story/32183353/transportation-funding-scores-a-win-championship-still-within-reach>

Wheel tax another sign of tax creep on residents

Fort Wayne Journal Gazette

Frank Gray

6/9/2016

City officials seem to be making a reasonable case for a wheel tax that will cost people with cars \$20 a year and even people with scooters \$12.50. True, people are using less gas because they have more efficient cars and they seem to be driving less, so gas tax revenues are down. True, when oil prices went up so did asphalt, and we know that when prices go up they seldom come back down, so asphalt and concrete prices remain high. It makes maintaining streets – and paving your driveway – more costly. And face it; \$20 a year isn't going to financially cripple most people. The price of a license will go up, but nowhere near as dramatically as the price of a candy

bar has soared during my lifetime. In exchange, we're supposed to get much nicer streets. To me, though, it's just another example of what I call creep. Counties at one point were given the option of introducing their own wheel tax, and most did. Then they were given the option of introducing a local income tax, and they all did. It now stands at 1.35 percent in Allen County. Then the state decided to let cities introduce a wheel tax, and in Fort Wayne there was no hesitation. An ordinance to tax cars in the city was introduced last month. Now it appears that when you renew your license next year, it is going to cost more. You'll be paying tax to the city and the county and the state and a fee to the BMV. We're promised that the money will allow the city to catch up on road repairs and provide better streets. But to me, it's just another example of creep, another tax instituted the instant it becomes legal.

<http://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/frank-gray/Wheel-tax-another-sign-of-tax-creep-on-residents-13476576>

Despite project's end, more construction ongoing

Franklin Daily Journal

Annie Goeller

6/8/2016

By the end of the week, two months of detours around a busy Whiteland intersection will end and the town will have a new and improved entrance. The roundabout that has been under construction since April at Whiteland and Graham roads is set to open Friday morning. The \$1 million project is expected to significantly improve traffic at the intersection, where backups were a daily occurrence at the four-way stop sign, especially during rush hour due to motorists who access Interstate 65 via Whiteland Road. Town officials said the new roundabout — the largest in the county — will be a new entrance into the town and into what they hope will become a key industrial area in the county in the near future. The end of this construction project also means the end of detours and drivers being ticketed for driving past the barricades to see if the intersection is truly closed. But it won't be the end of construction in the area. Next up, the state will close a section of Hurricane Road just south of there while crews rebuild a bridge over Interstate 65.

http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/local_story/Despite-project-s-end-more-con_1465430147

WL construction: US 52 repairs ahead of schedule

WLFI, Channel 18

Cameron Hardin

6/8/2016

Construction has become part of our everyday lives, so nothing puts a smile on drivers' faces faster than hearing a construction project is ahead of schedule. But something else that makes drivers happy is saving money, and a new project being constructed in West Lafayette looks to do just that. The nearly five-mile resurfacing project that has caused lane restrictions from Montmorenci to West Lafayette is in the final stages, according to the Indiana Department of Transportation. "We understand everybody gets frustrated when you get behind or delayed in traffic," INDOT spokesperson Debbie Calder said. "But the good news is that it is wrapping up, the completion date is June 30th — so the end of this month. But our project engineer says it should be done before that." Most of the resurfacing is completed, and now crews have to make sure the stoplights are fully operational. INDOT says the purpose of the project was to preserve the road so there wouldn't be a bigger, more expensive project in the future.

<http://wlfi.com/2016/06/08/wl-construction-us-52-repairs-ahead-of-schedule-kroger-makes-room-for-gas-station/>

LP Council in favor of wheel tax

Michigan City News Dispatch
Jessica Campbell
6/8/2016

"There is an imbalance for road funding. Look at La Porte County versus Hamilton County, who has three times our population but receives eight times the amount of funding we get." That's what La Porte County Attorney Shaw Friedman told members of the La Porte City Council, La Porte County Board of Commissioners and several citizens, including officials for the city of La Porte, while discussing the city of La Porte Wheel Tax Ordinance. Friedman was referring to reports he supplied to council members Monday night during the first reading of the ordinance and subsequent public hearing. A lengthy discussion took place with the first introduction of the Wheel Tax Ordinance, which is a response to the Indiana Department of Transportation Community Crossing program, in which the city will have the ability to receive \$1 million for road and street repair if a matching \$1 million can be raised by the city. The plan is to use a bulk of the Local Option Income Tax funds, as well as rainy day funds, to raise the money, La Porte Mayor Blair Milo said. The program opened on May 31 and the city has until July 15 to send in the pavement system application. The Community Crossing program is open to all counties in Indiana and will be scored by the state legislators. According to Milo, the application to earn the funds needs to include an economic development project, which the city already has set up. Also, one of the stipulations of the program is to save 50 percent of the funds for counties who apply who have a population of less than 50,000. To enter into the program and to earn the money, the city must adopt the wheel tax, which many people at the meeting had concerns with regarding the cost of yet another tax. The tax declares a \$25 rate on all passenger vehicles, motorcycles, trucks with a declared gross weight that does not exceed 11,000 pounds and motor driven cycles per year with the registration. It also taxes \$40 to buses, recreational vehicles, semitrailers, tractors, trailers and trucks. The uses of the funds, as stated in the ordinance, will go to the construction, reconstruction, repair and maintenance of the streets and roads under the city's jurisdiction. The taxes will go toward the city's contribution to obtain a grant from the local road and bridge matching grant fund, stated within the document.

http://www.thenewsdispatch.com/news/article_088fec32-3119-5d33-bf4c-ee435c0ecd6.html

Crown Point, Munster advance wheel tax ordinance

NWI Times
LuAnn Franklin & Mary Wilds
6/8/2016

The Crown Point City Council voted Monday 5-2 in favor a wheel tax as the Munster Town Council approved on first reading a wheel/excise tax ordinance. In Crown Point, the council adopted the tax after more than two hours of presentations and discussions about the condition of the city's 140 miles of roads and the municipality's finances. In Munster, the council approved the measure preliminarily despite some reservations expressed by council members. Crown Point's amended ordinance calls for a \$25 fee for vehicles up to 11,000 pounds and \$40 for larger ones in the first year. That amount will be reduced to \$15 and \$25, respectively, for the second year. The tax will be collected starting in 2017. The first year, the wheel tax will generate \$1.1 million. The reduction of the tax in the second year will drop that amount to approximately \$670,000, according to Dan Niksch, GIS coordinator with the Crown Point engineering department. By adopting the wheel tax, the city is now eligible for up to \$1 million a year from the Community Crossings matching grant, a partnership between the Indiana Department of Transportation and Indiana communities to improve roads.

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/crown-point-munster-advance-wheel-tax-ordinance/article_3702f16f-5c17-5db2-9da1-ef7b8b7776f6.html

Letter: Was bridge tax really necessary?

Lafayette Journal & Courier

Letters to the Editor
6/8/2016

While J&C columnist Dave Bangert may feel that the Tippecanoe County commissioners stepped up to the plate and took a bold step by passing another new tax, I wish to disagree. While I think there is no question there is a need for more funding for local bridges, the method employed by the commissioners is suspect. The first news that I heard of this new tax was approximately one week before the commissioners' vote. Maybe I have had my head in the sand, but that does not seem like very much time to find out what the commissioners have done to come up with this new tax. Second, they vote on it during a meeting which most of the public of Tippecanoe County is at work and would have to make special arrangements to attend. When debating or voting on a new tax that will affect many of the residents, the commissioners need to be more up front with information and schedule meetings at times were the folks who are going to pay this tax can attend. Better yet, put it to a referendum on the local ballot.

<http://www.jconline.com/story/opinion/readers/2016/06/08/letter-bridge-tax-really-necessary/85592924/>

Construction Begins on North Main Complete Street Project

Tristate Homepage
6/7/2016

After years of planning, a project that started on the grass roots level finally gets underway. Construction crews converged upon North Main Street in Evansville to get started on the much-discussed complete street project. Crews began working on identifying and determining the elevation of utility lines underneath North Main Street between Division and West Franklin Streets Tuesday morning. Earlier this year, the Evansville City Council approved the funding for the \$13 million project, the city's first investment in the historic commercial corridor since the 1970s. The complete street project eliminates on-street parking on the east side of North Main from Division to Maryland streets. It also adds a protected, eight-foot-wide bike path, the first of its kind in the city. The protected bike path will eventually lead to Garvin Park and Bosse Field and could connect with similar bike routes in the city's other cultural districts. The project will be funded by the special Jacobsville taxing district currently in place. The TIF district has produced about \$1.5 million per year and it's trending upward because of an expansion at Berry Plastics. Kelley Coures, the executive director of the Department of Metropolitan Development, said new figures suggest annual revenues within the TIF district are \$1.7 million per year.

<http://www.tristatehomepage.com/news/local-news/construction-begins-on-north-main-complete-street-project>