



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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Tully: Defending that new gas tax

Indianapolis Star
Matthew Tully
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That sums up the recent debate over a new state law that imposes a 10-cents per gallon tax increase on gasoline, with the revenue generated dedicated to long-term infrastructure improvement. State lawmakers had two choices: Raise taxes and address our state's many infrastructure needs, or stick with the status quo and hope nobody notices so many roads, bridges and water systems that resemble my battered mailbox. Fortunately, and wisely, Statehouse Republicans went with the responsible option and raised our taxes during this year's legislative session. So if you purchase 15 gallons of gas this week, you'll cough up an extra buck and a half. Over a year, it will set you back about \$78. A flurry of news stories and op-eds greeted the new law, which took effect just before the July 4th holiday. The articles focused in many cases on the potential electoral consequences of the tax hike, and the criticism it has generated. But Hoosier drivers have a choice: We can label the new law nothing more than a new tax, and punish the lawmakers who supported it, or we can consider it an investment in our state. I say we offer a pat on the back to those lawmakers — mostly Republicans — who pushed for and supported the new tax. We should encourage displays of adult behavior. And as the issue may find its way into political campaign ads next year, I thought I would again make the case for a tax increase that makes a lot of sense. Why would anyone defend a tax hike? Well, here are a few reasons to consider next time you fill up the tank. It's impossible to argue that the vehicles we drive don't contribute to the wear and tear of our state's infrastructure. The tax is for a specific cause, paid for by taxes tied to that cause, and that always makes a tax increase go down easier. And while we can debate the proper size of government, most would agree that infrastructure is a basic and valid chore of the state. <http://www.indystar.com/story/opinion/columnists/matthew-tully/2017/07/11/tully-defending-new-gas-tax/103598068/>

Lowell awards \$900K road paving contract

NWI Times
Melanie Csepiga
7/10/17

LOWELL — Work is expected to begin soon on a project to repave 5 miles of streets in town. Walsh & Kelly Inc., of Griffith, won the contract for the project with its bid of \$924,963. The other bidders were Town & Country of DeMotte and Reith-Riley of Indiana and Michigan. Engineer Craig Hendrix of SEH said the Walsh & Kelly bid was lower than expected. "You got surface for \$65 a ton. That's an outstanding rate," he told the Lowell Town Council as it approved the contract. That bid is about \$232,000 less than the Indiana Department of Transportation grant amount. Hendrix said the remainder can be used for repairs to sidewalk and drainage in those

areas. It's all part of the INDOT Community Crossings grant of \$1 million awarded the town in September. The town must match the 50-50 grant. Community Crossings grants are being offered again with a July 14 date for submissions, so the council, Lowell Town Manager Jeff Sheridan and Hendrix will be readying the Lowell application. It's a 75 percent off sale," Town Council President LeAnn Angerman, R-2nd, said of changes in the grant program which benefit Lowell. The state will contribute more to those communities with a population less than 10,000. The state will pay 75 percent of project costs while the town will pick up the remaining 25 percent. http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/lowell-awards-k-road-paving-contract/article_847628b9-ec11-5960-9c07-99537b05a8f1.html

Tax to pave way for roads

The Journal Gazette

Niki Kelly

7/9/17

INDIANAPOLIS – Dollars from the newly increased gas tax and fees will start flowing into local coffers in a few months and officials already have plans on how to use the extra cash. Millions more will be available for investment in local asphalt, bridges, county roads and more. "It's a good shot in the arm to fill in the gaps where we were falling behind," said Scott Tilden, Kosciusko County highway superintendent. "Hoosiers should see a real difference." That could come quickly if local units choose to use the money for repairs and preservation rather than new construction, which requires more long-range engineering. The revenue will flow into two local road funds, which use population, vehicle registrations and road miles to send the money to city, counties and towns. Allen County will see \$13.9 million in 2018 – up from \$9.6 million in 2016, according to an analysis done by the Local Technical Assistance Program at Purdue University. Fort Wayne should see an additional \$4.5 million in 2018, the city said. Allen County has been struggling to keep up with maintaining roads, said Kim Yagodinski, finance manager for the Allen County highway department. The county, for example, has more than 500 miles of asphalt road and should resurface 43 miles per year to keep up with the life of the roads. But the department only had 5 miles of asphalt repaving in the budget. Now it hopes to increase that to between 25 and 30 miles. Allen County Highway Department Director Bill Hartman said preliminarily the county plans to focus on maintenance. This includes asphalt resurfacing and resealing of current roads. And it wants to do at least 10 miles next year of converting gravel roads to chip-and-seal. The latter is a special protective wearing surface applied to existing pavement. <http://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/indiana/20170709/tax-to-pave-way-for-roads>

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