



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

**July 21, 2016**

### **INDOT, Farm Bureau Ask Rural Residents For Road Funding Solutions**

WBAA/NPR  
Annie Ropeik  
7/20/2016

State officials are taking the road funding debate outside the statehouse, to rural locations across the state. The meetings between the Department of Transportation and Indiana Farm Bureau are a chance for rural residents to speak up about their infrastructure needs. Larry Pullam was one such resident at a recent meeting in Crawfordsville. He learned that upcoming roads projects are listed online, and about how to weigh in on road conditions. He says healthy infrastructure and good information are key for getting farm products to market and keeping prices low for consumers. State Sen. Phil Boots (R-Crawfordsville) says rural residents drive longer distances for basic services -- so they make bigger contributions to the gas tax, a key source of road infrastructure funding. So he says INDOT should devote more money to rural roads. The Farm Bureau is also using the meetings to shape its lobbying agenda for the next state legislative session, when lawmakers say they'll hone in on road funding issues. Farm Bureau lobbyist Amy Cornell encouraged the Crawfordsville audience to voice opinions on how they wanted to see funding for infrastructure projects improve. INDOT officials said at the meeting that the gas tax is becoming a less reliable funding source, as cars become more fuel-efficient. Sen. Boots said he wouldn't support a gas tax hike. The latest road funding bill increased INDOT's share of gas tax money, but did not raise the tax itself. <http://wbaa.org/post/indot-farm-bureau-ask-rural-residents-road-funding-solutions>

### **New laws now in effect**

Greensburg Daily News  
State Senator Jean Leising – Guest Columnist  
7/21/2016

Many new laws passed during the 2016 legislative session took effect July 1. These new laws focus on various issues including education, public safety, veterans, economic development and more. By supporting the passage of these laws, my hope is to continue improving the lives of citizens and their families. Here are some of the new laws that are now in effect: SEA 67 and HEA 1001 work together to provide \$1 billion in new state and local road funding over the next two years with no state tax increases and no new state debt. The money comes from excess state and local reserves, and dedicates 1.5 cents out of every 7 cents of sales tax collected on gas to roads. [http://www.greensburgdailynews.com/opinion/columns/new-laws-now-in-effect/article\\_2f1471ca-2ac6-5c6e-bb6d-dabe9cb70d52.html](http://www.greensburgdailynews.com/opinion/columns/new-laws-now-in-effect/article_2f1471ca-2ac6-5c6e-bb6d-dabe9cb70d52.html)

### **Regional transportation priority moves forward**

South Bend Tribune  
Jeff Rea, President & CEO, St. Joseph County Chamber of Commerce  
7/20/2016

Our transportation network is critical to the growth and development of the region. Over the years, community leaders have identified top transportation priorities then marshaled the resources to make those projects happen. Construction of projects like the Indiana Toll Road, U.S. 31, U.S. 20, Indiana 23 and Indiana 331/Capital Avenue have all helped better connect our local communities and have especially helped our businesses move goods and services in and out of our region. Because of the high costs often associated with the design, planning, right of way acquisition and construction, many of those projects have spanned long periods of time from the introduction of the concept to the final construction. For example, Capital Avenue was on the drawing board for about 50 years. U.S. 31 has been a priority for even longer. In the last decade, major construction projects have been completed on U.S. 31 between South Bend and Indianapolis, cutting significant time off a trip to the capital city and making it much safer. Improvements on six stoplight intersections, two railroad crossings, 100 intersections and 200 driveways remain on the wish list. In the 1950s, work began on the U.S. 31 Bypass around South Bend. In 1967, plans were made to extend U.S. 31 north from the state line to Interstate 94. In the early 1970s that construction began and portions of the roadway moved forward until it was interrupted in the late 1990s by a rare butterfly. The proposed roadway cut through an area that was the habitat of this endangered species. Construction was halted near Napier Avenue in Benton Harbor. For close to 20 years, construction of the final phases, connecting the roadway to I-94, has been in limbo. Earlier this month, Michigan announced plans to move the project forward. The final phase of the U.S. 31 corridor project in Berrien County has been added to the Michigan Department of Transportation's five-year plan. The project is estimated to cost \$92 million. The construction of this final link will position the region to better take advantage of future development opportunities. [http://www.southbendtribune.com/news/business/regional-transportation-priority-moves-forward/article\\_21842055-9cd6-54b8-adad-c4d349b1eec6.html](http://www.southbendtribune.com/news/business/regional-transportation-priority-moves-forward/article_21842055-9cd6-54b8-adad-c4d349b1eec6.html)

### **Progress made on extension project involving Judson Road, Morgan Street**

Kokomo Tribune  
George Myers  
7/19/2016

The Kokomo Howard County Governmental Coordinating Council policy board moved forward Tuesday with the Judson Road extension project, approving a maximum budget of roughly \$2.2 million. The project will effectively complete an extension of Morgan Street between Dixon Road and Phillips Street, allowing semi-trucks to avoid two 90-degree turns on Judson Road, according to KHCGCC Director Tammy Corn. "The budget for the project, construction for which is expected to start in 2018, was increased about \$350,000 after a gas line was found in the vicinity of the project, noted Corn. Eighty percent of the project's cost will be covered by federal funds, with the remaining 20 percent to be paid by county funds. [http://www.kokomotribune.com/news/local\\_news/progress-made-on-extension-project-involving-judson-road-morgan-street/article\\_6e6984e8-4de9-11e6-9412-97a5db3b6e07.html](http://www.kokomotribune.com/news/local_news/progress-made-on-extension-project-involving-judson-road-morgan-street/article_6e6984e8-4de9-11e6-9412-97a5db3b6e07.html)