



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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Indiana Farm Bureau and INDOT talk roads

NWI Times
Stan Maddux
7/27/16

LAPORTE—In just a few years, Northwest Indiana roads often portrayed as crumbling will be up to par and maybe even better than those alleged to be paved with gold around Indianapolis. That was one of the messages conveyed at a meeting Tuesday between the Indiana Department of Transportation and members of Indiana Farm Bureau at INDOT district headquarters in La Porte. Bob Albertson, chief of staff for INDOT, said a lot of local roads are being fixed and soon the difference should be very noticeable, especially up north and here in the Region. “The roads in this district in three to five years will be as good, if not better, than most roads in the state,” said Albertson. Although viewed by some as a temporary fix, a bill signed by Gov. Mike Pence made \$328 million in additional money available for state road and bridge maintenance over two years. For local roads, \$684 million was made available. INDOT officials are optimistic even more road monies will be flowing in coming years due to the emphasis placed by many lawmakers on identifying a more permanent road-funding solution.

http://www.nwitimes.com/business/local/indiana-farm-bureau-and-indot-talk-roads/article_7472feaf-3b4e-524d-9e5e-b22978c0d957.html

Grant assures Eisenhower Bridge will be replaced

The Herald Bulletin
Ken de la Bastide
7/27/16

ANDERSON – After seven failed attempts, Madison County has secured \$13.5 million in federal funds to replace the Eisenhower Bridge by 2019. Sen. Joe Donnelly’s office announced Tuesday that Madison County has been awarded a TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant to provide 75 percent of the \$18 million cost to replace the bridge. “This is excellent news for Madison County and the City of Anderson, and the bridge replacement project will address one of their most pressing transportation infrastructure needs,” Donnelly, D-Ind., said. “The bridge replacement will help spur economic growth and help thousands of commuters who rely on the bridge for a safe commute to and from work every day. “I have long supported the Eisenhower Bridge replacement project, because it will help revitalize the economy, and is a critical transportation link for Hoosiers traveling to jobs and job training, and accessing essential services,” he said. Donnelly wrote a letter in support of the Anderson project to the secretary of the Department of Transportation in April. Charles Leser, Madison County engineer, said the Indiana Department of Transportation has an April bid date for the contract. “Next summer, work will begin on the relocation of utilities and removing the ramp under the bridge for the Madison County Sheriff’s Department,” he said. “In December 2017, the eastbound

lanes will be closed for replacement." Leser said the project will take 2½ years to complete. http://www.heraldbulletin.com/indianaanderson/grant-assures-eisenhower-bridge-will-be-replaced/article_7d79acac-538d-11e6-bd32-bf60828c8a1c.html

Taxes Could Go Up to Pay for Roads and Bridges

WIBC

Chris Davis

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INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.--You may have to be ready to pay more in taxes for better roads, said one state lawmaker who is on a committee studying how to pay for roads, long-term. "Believe me. I'm a Republican and don't like raising taxes any more than anyone else. But, if we're going to do something without handing our kids a lot of debt, then we're probably going to have to have some kind of revenue enhancement," said Rep. Ed Soliday (R-Valparaiso), chairman of the House Transportation Committee. Soliday said that the plan this year is to look at how the state wants to spend money on roads. The questions being: do we want to upgrade, or just maintain, or do we want to not come up with any more money and allow a decline in road quality? "We're probably at about nine percent of our bridges are at fair or poor. We'd like to get down to about three percent," he said. Soliday said in an interview on *Abdul at Large*, that Indiana is probably in the middle in road quality, when compared to other Midwestern neighbors, and that the Hoosier State is doing better with road fatalities. Last week the "Funding Indiana's Roads for a Stronger Safer Tomorrow" (FIRSST) met to discuss putting together a plan. Some lawmakers believe that putting the plan together first, and deciding what Indiana's infrastructure should look like, will help them get a better handle on what kind of money needs to be in place. "Just to take care of what we have is probably about \$300 million a year more," said Soliday, when estimating. "But to finish what we've started, to build for the future, that's probably around a billion dollars."

<http://www.wibc.com/news/local-news/taxes-could-go-pay-roads-and-bridges>

Indiana Closes Fiscal Year With Highest Budget Reserve Ever

Indiana Public Media

Brandon Smith

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Indiana closed out its fiscal year with the highest level of budget reserves in state history. More than \$400 million from those reserves will go to maintaining roads. Indiana finished its 2016 fiscal year with \$2.4 billion in reserve. Lieutenant Governor Eric Holcomb says the state can now fulfill a promise put in place by this past legislative session's road funding package. "Finishing Fiscal Year 2016 at historic reserve levels will allow us to put 428 million dollars into road funding," Holcomb says. Releasing that money to roads will bring the reserves down to 11 and a half percent of the state's total budget – a number the Pence administration has, in the past, been uncomfortable with. But Office of Management and Budget director Micah Vincent says that's not so this year. "We looked at our levels of need and we saw that it was a really good opportunity to make this unique investment into roads," Vincent says. Fifty-five percent of the road funding money will go into the state highway fund; the rest will be used for a new matching grant fund for local road and bridge construction. <http://indianapublicmedia.org/news/indiana-closes-fiscal-year-highest-budget-reserve-102738/> Also, <http://www.ibj.com/articles/59623-states-announces-record-reserve-fund-budget-surplus>