



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

July 15, 2014

Two-thirds of roads need repair, feds say

Fort Wayne Journal Gazette
Roger Runnigen/Bloomberg News
7/15/2014

More than two-thirds of U.S. roadways are in need of repair and the poor condition of the nation's transportation network results in billions in extra costs, according to a White House report. The report was released Monday in conjunction with President Barack Obama's campaign to pressure Congress to reach a deal to replenish the Highway Trust Fund. The fund, supplied by fuel taxes, is heading toward insolvency as early as next month, jeopardizing jobs and projects during the peak construction season. Crumbling roads and bridges cut into economic growth, by increasing transportation costs and delaying shipments, according to the report. "A well-performing transportation network keeps jobs in America, allows businesses to expand, and lowers prices on household goods to American families," said a 27-page report by the Council of Economic Advisers and National Economic Council.

<http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20140715/NEWS03/307159987>

Obama says short-term highway funding fix OK, presses Congress for more lasting solution Columbus Republic

Nedra Pickler/Associated Press
7/15/2014

President Barack Obama said Tuesday he supports temporary measures to keep federal transportation aid flowing to the states and to keep construction crews on the job, while he also pressed Congress for a more permanent solution to the longstanding shortfall in funding for road and bridge-building projects. The House was expected later Tuesday to pass a temporary patch for the Highway Trust Fund, which is projected to run dry next month unless Congress acts, the Transportation Department says. The measure cobbles together \$10.8 billion from various sources to keep the fund solvent through May 2015. A similar bill is pending in the Senate. Obama said he supports the efforts by lawmakers in both chambers, but wants to see more. "At the very least Congress should be keeping people on the job who are already there right now," he said after touring a federal highway research center in northern Virginia. "But all this does is set us up for the same crisis a few months from now. So Congress shouldn't pat itself on the back for averting disaster for a few months." Obama said better roads and bridges will help boost the economy by keeping construction workers on the job and by ultimately saving time and money for businesses and commuters. Obama pushed his own \$302 billion, four-year transportation spending plan, one partly paid for by closing corporate tax loopholes.

<http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/2fab3e4843a8426fae5d66e86a9c23ef/US--Obama-Transportation>

Also <http://www.wsbt.com/news/politics/with-deadline-looming-obama-to-again-push>

[infrastructure/26942952](#)

County to re-surface roadways

Crawfordsville Journal Review

Bob Cox

7/15/2014

Montgomery County Commissioners accepted a revised paving program from Montgomery County Highway Director Rod Jenkins. Two of the selected roadways will complete two paving projects started a couple of years ago. "I would like to get approval to finish two on-going re-surfacing projects that we have been doing a little at a time," Jenkins said Monday. "I would like to pave two-and-a-half miles on Old 55 heading into Wingate and also finish Whitesville Road from C.R. 500 S. to U.S. 136E for three additional miles. This will complete these projects. We have the funds to do the work and I would like to get these roads done this year." Jenkins also asked permission to pave Schenck Road from the railroad crossing to Big Four Arch Road. Previously commissioners approved re-surfacing projects in the amount of \$613,144. The additional work will increase costs to \$943,166. Jenkins said he and Montgomery County Auditor Michelle Cash have reviewed available funds and the money is available. Commissioners approved Jenkins' recommendation by a 3-0 vote.

http://www.journalreview.com/news/article_0566d498-0bc2-11e4-9ae2-001a4bcf887a.html

State panel makes road 'wish list'

Kokomo Tribune

Maureen Hayden

7/13/2014

A panel of public and private officials is calling for \$10 billion in projects to upgrade the state's aging roads and bridges, but its members concede there's no money to pay for it all. On Wednesday, Gov. Mike Pence's Blue Ribbon Panel on Transportation Infrastructure released a long wish list of "critical" projects that includes adding travel lanes to the state's most crowded arteries — Interstates 65 and 70 — as they pass through rural areas. Also on the list of projects deemed essential to the state's economic growth are improving Interstate 69 across the Ohio River bridge in southwest Indiana, and a new four-lane divided highway to loop around Indianapolis so that drivers can avoid the crowded bypass that already exists. Pence, who appointed the commission last year, praised its work as a step toward improving the state's infrastructure. "If you're going to welcome people to Indiana with signs that say we're the 'Crossroads of America,' you better have the roads to back it up," he said. But Pence acknowledged funding remains elusive. He said the state Department of Transportation is engaged in a two-year study of road needs and ways to pay for them.

<http://www.kokomotribune.com/local/x1927858612/State-panel-makes-road-wish-list>

Also <http://wbaa.org/post/transportation-panel-lists-top-priorities>;

Also <http://www.newsandtribune.com/opinion/x1760127764/HAYDEN-Road-to-funding-Indiana-highways-jammed> ;

Also <http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/newsitem.asp?ID=66042>

A vital highway of bipartisanship

Fort Wayne Journal Gazette

Opinion/Editorial

7/13/2014

Suppose you had a way to strengthen the economy, create and save jobs, contribute mightily to public safety, and save every driver in Indiana hundreds of dollars in wear and tear on their vehicles? Why, you'd jump at the chance. But then, you aren't in Congress, which has until the

end of the month to come up with a solution to the fact that the highway trust fund is almost out of money. A few days ago, Mayor Tom Henry stood in front of a school bus that was made to look as if it had been crushed by a bridge collapse. Henry was joining with members of the Laborer's International Union of North America to emphasize one of the reasons the nation needs to keep roadways and bridges repaired. Passing drivers on West Jefferson Boulevard might have found the mayor and union's staging a bit distracting, but the message was clear. This is a vital, urgent issue for every community in northeast Indiana.

<http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20140713/EDIT07/307139983/1147>

Lake agrees to South Shore funding agreement

Merrillville Post-Tribune

Carrie Napoleon

7/12/2014

Enough Lake County Council members got on board with the expansion of the South Shore Line to get U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Merrillville, his sought-after financial commitment. Last week, the county council approved 4-2-1 the interlocal agreement between the county and the majority of its cities and towns that provides for local funding for the estimated \$600 million expansion of the South Shore rail line to St. John. Total cost for the project is expected to run as high as an estimated \$612 million. The federal government has committed \$300 million in motor fuel tax dollars if a local match is secured. The county has agreed to contribute 25 percent of its new 0.25 percent community economic development income tax not to exceed \$2 million annually to the South Shore expansion. The other participating communities have committed a combined total of about \$1.358 million. The Regional Development Authority has committed \$8 million.

<http://posttrib.suntimes.com/news/lake/28624909-418/lake-agrees-to-south-shore-funding-agreement.html#.U8P3TJRdUbs>

Biden says national politics too corrosive, calls on governors to lead nation 'out of mess'

Greenfield Daily Reporter

Steve Peoples & Erik Schelzig/Associated Press

7/11/2014

Vice President Joe Biden on Friday condemned the political gridlock crippling Washington, calling on Republican and Democratic governors alike to lead the nation "out of this mess" while insisting that Congress approve billions of dollars to repair the country's aging infrastructure. Biden said Democrats and Republicans have long agreed on the need to invest in the nation's infrastructure and workforce development, although in the current climate even infrastructure spending is bogged down by politics. Governors have been concerned about the impending deadline for Congress to pay for the federal Highway Trust Fund, which helps states maintain their transportation infrastructure. While a short-term bill is expected to clear Congress, governors want a long-term plan. But most governors attending the event were hesitant to suggest specific solutions to bridge a funding shortfall. Fuel taxes are the Highway Trust Fund's main revenue source, but they haven't been raised in 21 years and aren't keeping pace with spending. A bipartisan Senate proposal to increase the federal gas tax has so far failed to gain traction.

<http://www.greenfieldreporter.com/view/story/ff0711246fbf4f2e9163936128f94be5/US--Governors>

Laborers union calls for infrastructure repairs

NWI Times

Joseph S. Pete

7/11/2014

A concrete chunk from a bridge was crushing a school bus in Munster on Friday, but no one was hurt. The prop was parked outside the Laborers' International Union of North America, or LiUNA,

hall on Superior Avenue Friday morning to call attention to the nation's crumbling infrastructure. Union leaders said the problem is grave, and a smashed bus is not that far-fetched a scenario. An American Society of Civil Engineers study found one in four bridges in the country is deficient or obsolete. The average bridge is 46 years old, near the average expected lifespan of 50 years. On average, 25 bridges collapse every year in the United States. Bad roads are costly, said David Frye, secretary-treasurer and business manager for the Indiana Laborers District Council. The average Indiana motorist has to spend \$391 a year on repairs after hitting potholes and on maintenance from the extra wear and tear. Potholes and poor conditions also contribute to about a third of traffic fatalities, or about 10,000 lives lost a year. The laborers union, which represents a half million workers, brought its "Getting Schooled in Infrastructure" school bus to Munster as part of a national tour to lobby Congress for a new Highway Bill. The union is calling for more transportation funding and paying for it with an increase to the 18.4 cent federal gasoline tax, which has remained flat for 21 years despite delivering diminished returns because of increased construction costs and the rise of more fuel-efficient vehicles.

http://www.nwitimes.com/business/local/laborers-union-calls-for-infrastructure-repairs/article_cce1e165-cbad-57bd-b33f-bbd17672e7df.html

'Road war' in Congress may be ending

WSBT 22 CBS

Lisa Desjardins

7/10/2014

Three weeks until funding starts to dry up for bridge and road projects across the United States, House and Senate committees Thursday put Congress on track toward a deal to avoid construction shutdowns and to keep the federal Highway Trust Fund operating until early next summer. But even as Republicans and Democrats drew closer together, some in the transportation industry decried the nearly \$11 billion proposals as short-term fixes that leave the nation's bigger infrastructure issues untouched. Without an infusion of cash to the highway fund, the Department of Transportation has warned that road projects may have to start shutting down in August. After months of failed negotiations, key House and Senate committees passed proposals Thursday that were relatively close in scope and content. Previous drafts had differed in the source and size of funding, as well as how long that funding would last. Thursday both the Republican-led House Ways & Means Committee and the Democratic-led Senate Finance Committee passed bills with the same central dollar figure, \$10.8 billion. That's enough to keep the fund in business until roughly next summer.

<http://www.wsbt.com/news/politics/road-war-in-congress-may-be-ending/26891694>

Indiana missing out on millions of road dollars, businesses say

WRTV 6 ABC

Kara Kenney

7/10/2014

Indiana could be missing out on millions of dollars to fix roads, businesses and state lawmakers say. Indiana Logo Sign Group, a private company on East 96th Street, has operated the blue logo sign program in Indiana since 1988. That's the same year the state last competitively bid the sign program, when Robert Orr was governor. Hoosier businesses pay to be on the signs, but Call 6 Investigator Kara Kenney dug through the contract and found Indiana Logo Sign Group keeps 90 percent of the revenue. The Indiana Department of Transportation receives the remaining 10 percent of sign revenue, money that goes to repair roads. "It flies in the face of logic. Somebody didn't use good business sense when they negotiated that," said Jay Ricker, who owns 50 convenience stores throughout Indiana. "I think we're missing out on tens of millions of dollars." Indiana receives \$464,000 a year from the blue logo sign program, INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield said. INDOT uses the money to fund operations or construction projects, including matching against federal highway funds, Wingfield said. The Call 6

Investigators contacted all 50 states and found that in terms of profit sharing, it appears many states have better deals than Indiana.

<http://www.theindychannel.com/news/call-6-investigators/indiana-missing-out-on-millions-of-road-dollars-businesses-say>

www.buildindianacouncil.org