



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **August 18, 2015**

**The road to ruin**  
**Infrastructure neglect has hit critical point**  
The Journal Gazette  
8/17/15

Once again, Indiana was lucky beyond measure. Many of the motorists forced to take long detours around a 37-mile stretch of northbound I-65 might have other words in mind to describe the emergency bridge closure last week. News that the closure will probably last until mid-September might even have elicited more choice responses. This week, thousands of students will be coming to Purdue's West Lafayette campus. For students driving in from the south, at least, the Boiler Gold Rush will be more like a crawl. But it is unsettling even to imagine what might have happened if the bridge over Wildcat Creek had failed while trucks and autos were whizzing across it at 70 mph or more. "Lucky" is truly the correct word to describe the fact that the bridge's critical problems were detected in time. Hoosiers were similarly fortunate in September 2011, when construction workers discovered cracks in the Sherman Minton Bridge over the Ohio River at New Albany in time to close it without incident. That closing, though, meant four months of traffic chaos for southern Indiana and Louisville. But as the Indianapolis Star reported, engineering concerns about the Wildcat Creek bridge have been on the record since at least 2005. Could better maintenance, earlier, have prevented the mega-traffic crisis that is descending on west-central Indiana? This isn't just about a bridge or two. The evidence suggests the state is far behind schedule on infrastructure maintenance and repair. Roadways and other types of infrastructure are in need of attention as well, of course, but bridges are a special kind of worry. [The road to ruin | Editorials | Journal Gazette](#)

**INDOT Approves Multi-Million Dollar Contract To Resurface State Road 257**  
WBIW  
8/17/15

The Indiana Department of Transportation has approved a multi-million dollar contract to resurface State Road 257. The Washington Times Herald is reported that state officials have awarded a \$7.8 million contract to J.H. Rudolph to fix the road between Washington and Otwell. When Governor Mike Pence visited Washington this summer several residents gave him an earful on the poor condition of the road. Local officials say people have become so frustrated they would complain to anyone who would listen. President of the Daviess County Commissioners, Michael Taylor says repairs have been attempted and didn't work so now it looks like INDOT will rebuild the road entirely. The road will be milled down 4 inches and blacktopped. Some of the old sub pavement will be removed and there's work planned on the Veale Creek Bridge. The bridge over Veale Creek work will be extensive enough to close the road for a time. State officials had originally had State Road 257 on their schedule to be upgraded next year. But the contract calls for the work to begin this September or October. Work will run through fall, into next summer and

possibly next fall. The State Road 257 project will be one of several going on in the area. The state has begun work on a project to rehabilitate a bridge on SR 54 in Bloomfield. Another project has crews out doing spot paving on I-69 in several locations in Daviess County. A construction crew is also working on the U.S. 50 bridge over Boggs Creek in Loogootee.  
[INDOT Approves Multi-Million Dollar Contract To Resurface State Road 257 - WBIW.com / Local](#)

### **Rethink highway funding**

Palladium-Item  
The South Bend Tribune  
8/13/15

The Senate passed a highway funding bill Thursday that enables the federal government to continue reimbursing states for highway and mass transit projects. But it's a short-term fix that keeps the Highway Trust Fund solvent only through Oct. 29. Congress needs to come up with a long-term solution to this issue. An article published last week in USA Today explained the passage of the highway funding bill is the 34th short-term extension approved by Congress since 2009. The Senate did pass a longer, six-year funding bill, but only as a bargaining chip to be used in negotiations with the House until a long-term solution can be found. For years states and communities have had difficulty planning major construction projects because Congress keeps passing bills that fund transportation projects only a few months at a time. But that's not the only issue that needs to be addressed. Fairness in funding allocations is another key component. Sen. Joe Donnelly is doing his part to ensure Indiana gets its fair share of highway and bridge funding. Without Donnelly's amendment, Indiana stood to lose \$240 million in funding over the life of the bill. The fund currently is financed with a per-gallon tax on gasoline. But that method of generating revenue is becoming increasingly outdated as higher fuel-efficiency standards mean vehicles use less gas. Additionally people are buying more fuel efficient cars and they're driving less. That translates into less money for road projects and fewer jobs for highway construction crews. The Associated Press has reported that Indiana's gas tax revenue has fallen in the past decade to about \$527 million from \$582 million. Congress needs to come up with a different funding formula to maintain this country's highway system. One such idea that's been talked about is raising revenue based on the number of miles vehicles travel.

[Rethink highway funding](#)

### **Lake Station Toll Road exit reopens**

NWI Times  
Keith Benman  
8/13/15

A two-year, \$10 million reconstruction project on a key interchange between the Indiana Toll Road and Borman Expressway has wrapped up, with the last of three rebuilt ramps opening to traffic at 9 a.m. Friday. The Toll Road westbound ramp at Lake Station was closed and then demolished two years ago, after it was found to be beyond repair. The ramp's closure meant motorists had to proceed to the Interstate 65 exit to get off the Toll Road. "This heavily traveled interchange is a critical part of the ITR," said Ken Daley, Indiana Toll Road Concession Co. CEO. "The project restored it and improved upon its previous function, and we are very pleased with the final product." The westbound entry ramp for the Indiana Toll Road at the interchange was demolished in April, and reconstruction was completed and it reopened at the end of June. In June 2014 reconstruction began on the ramp that passes over the Borman Expressway near its mile-marker 16. That project concluded in November 2014. The interchange's reconstruction is the first major project completed by the Toll Road's new owners, who bought it out of bankruptcy earlier this year.

[Lake Station Toll Road exit reopens](#)

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