



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

August 25, 2015

Editorial: Indiana needs road map to fix its highways

Indianapolis Star

8/22/15

Mike Pence talked a lot about a road map to Indiana's future when he ran for governor in 2012. The emphasis then largely was on finding the best routes to create more jobs, to bolster workforce development and to improve student achievement. Now, as governor, Pence needs to help develop a different map — one that enables Indiana to invest aggressively in its long-neglected roads and bridges. The need for such investment has been dramatically highlighted this month after a stretch of northbound Interstate 65 was shut down when the Wildcat Creek bridge sank 9 inches while a road crew was working to widen the highway. The closure of a 37-mile stretch of the interstate near Lafayette — projected to last until mid-September — has caused deep frustration for motorists because of travel delays. It's also harmed the quality of life for residents and communities suddenly forced to deal each day with thousands of vehicles diverted onto roads that weren't built to handle such high volumes of traffic. Even more alarming, lives have been put at risk. Police responded to six major accidents associated with the detour, including two fatal crashes, in one eight-day stretch earlier this month. To be clear, the current problems on I-65 likely were not caused by a lack of funding. They're the result, state officials say, of unstable soil and the work that was underway to improve the bridge.

[Editorial: Indiana needs road map to fix its highways](#)

Officials must accept highway spending reality

The Lebanon Reporter

8/22/15

Well, that was fast. The Indiana Department of Transportation installed a four-way traffic light at U.S. 52 and Indiana 47 two days after Sheriff Mike Nielsen called out the agency in a Facebook post that rapidly went viral. It may be a record for INDOT's reaction to a problem. Traffic through the intersection has soared because northbound Interstate 65 is closed from Lebanon to the other side of Lafayette, while INDOT and Walsh Construction Co. find a way to shore up a bridge over Wildcat Creek. There have been more than a dozen accidents along U.S. 52, one of them a fatality, since the interstate was closed. It's refreshing to see state officials acknowledge a problem and find a solution so quickly. It's also time for the Indiana General Assembly to address other highway problems. No study committee is needed: It's well-known that the state's bridges and highways are falling apart. When they meet next year, our legislators must accept that repairing the state's disintegrating infrastructure will mean spending money. Indiana has a \$2.5 billion surplus. It should be used to repair the state's roads and bridges. Nor is that the only money pool. Hoosiers should insist on their fair share of federal highway spending. That means our representatives in Washington need to choose between rhetoric and reality.

http://www.reporter.net/opinion/officials-must-accept-highway-spending-reality/article_4fb681f2-

006d-5c7a-8c2f-6df10bc95447.html

Commentary: On the road again

The Statehouse File

Abul Hakim-Shabazz, IndyPolitics.org

8/21/15

I spend a lot of time on Indiana's roads. Whether it's taking I-74 back to Central Illinois to practice law, I-69 to visit my wife's family in Fort Wayne or using I-70 to head to St. Louis to reconnect with friends from college, I travel Hoosier highways frequently. Oh, and of course there is I-65 to head back to my hometown of Chicago, albeit I have been using I-74 to I-57 north to make that trip lately. As you are likely aware, I-65 north of Lebanon has been closed in the northbound lane due to the bridge work over Wildcat Creek. The closure has caused a lot of conversation about the conditions regarding Indiana's infrastructure and a lot of folks want to use to score points and go after the Pence administration by saying it is ignoring Indiana's road and bridges so it can brag about a surplus. The problem with that statement is that it is patently false. First of all, the closure of I-65 over Wildcat Creek has nothing to do with "a crumbling infrastructure." If anything, it is the result of the state spending money to widen the road to three lanes between Indiana state roads 25 and 38 to the tune of \$85 million. According to the Indiana Department of Transportation, the problems with the bridge began when the contractor used steel piles to widen the piers and hit what was described a sandy layer where the water was under pressure. The sand and water bubbled up from beneath the bridge pier and it tilted, causing a safety hazard. Please tell me how that sounds like years of neglect to build up a surplus.

Commentary: On the road again - TheStatehouseFile.com | TheStatehouseFile.com

Commute about to worsen due to project

The Republic

Julie McClure

8/21/15

If repaving the State Road 46 corridor were a good news/bad news conversation, it might go something like this: The good news is that repaving may start as soon as Monday on Second, Third and State streets through downtown Columbus into the city's east side. The bad news is that the repaving will result in lane closings and travel delays during the next two weeks for motorists heading across Columbus — east or west — on State Road 46 through downtown. An estimated 13,235 motorists travel each day along the route that is being repaved, the state's traffic count statistics show. Among them is Christine Soedel, who works at Columbus Regional Hospital. She said traffic in Columbus already has increased now that school has started. "My drive time to work has increased 15 to 25 minutes," she said. More trains at the State Road 46 and State Road 11 intersection have increased her morning commute time coming in from the west side, she said. She described the traffic across the Robert N. Stewart Bridge as a choke point, something that is worse now than in previous years. With work, school and after-school activities, Soedel said, her family might cross the river and train tracks eight to 10 times a day, and she now uses a back route between 4:45 and 6 p.m. because of the delays on State Road 46. "It is longer but faster because of all the construction and lane closures in the downtown area," she said. Electronic signs have been placed at the city's State Road 46 entry points to warn motorists entering the construction zone that delays are expected and that the work is continuing during overnight hours.

Commute about to worsen due to project

New rail bridge could mean big development for county

Times Herald

Lindsay Owens

8/20/15

ODON - A new \$14 million railroad bridge located just north of Elnora is expected to help attract more economic development to the I-69 corridor. Thursday morning, U.S. Senator Joe Donnelly, State Senator Eric Bassler, Congressmen Larry Bucshon and Marlin Stutzman and Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann were on hand to commemorate the opening of the bridge that spans over the White River two miles north of Elnora. Also on hand for the opening was gubernatorial candidate John Gregg. Donnelly, Bucshon and the Indiana Department of Transportation were all a part of securing the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery or a "TIGER" grant that helped cover part of the costs associated with the construction of the up-to-date bridge that can handle speeds of up to 40 miles per hour and loads up to 286,000 pounds. TIGER grants help the U.S. Department of Transportation invest in projects involving roads, rails, ports, and transit. "With our Odon Transload's proximity to Naval Support Activity Crane and I-69, we see a host of economic development opportunities for the town of Odon and the entire I-69 corridor," said Indiana Rail Road President and CEO Peter Mills, adding several area businesses also helped bring the new bridge to fruition. "With a combination of superior customer service and aggressive co-marketing of the region with our local partners, we can bring a lot of opportunities for growth." [New rail bridge could mean big development for county - Washington Times Herald: Local News](#)

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