



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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Visclosky calls on leaders to resolve transit problems

NWI Times
Susan Erler
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MERRILLVILLE | U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky on Wednesday called for a March 31 deadline to resolve issues thwarting improvements to the South Shore rail line and the creation of a regional bus system. Solve the problems and then, "Go and build it," Visclosky said during comments to about 650 participants in the 2013 One Region annual luncheon in the ballroom at the Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza. He said the region should seize on the opportunity to avail itself of more than \$200 million the federal government would give the region to help pay the more than \$400 million needed to expand the commuter rail line, which he said is key to economic development. Visclosky, D-Merrillville, likened Northwest Indiana to the hamlet depicted in the 13th-century tale of the "Pied Piper of Hamelin," whose leaders asked someone else to fix their problems, refused to pay him and then suffered the loss of all the village children. His speech was forceful and impassioned, as he spoke of what already has been accomplished in the region and what still needs to be done. Visclosky said doing away with the Regional Development Authority, a funding mechanism for projects benefiting the region, would be "a catastrophic decision," though it has been suggested by some. "Work still needs to be done," Visclosky said. He exhorted residents and officials to press Indiana's General Assembly in the next session that begins Jan. 1 to ask for more money for the economic development agency. He cited Chicago's sprawling mass transit system, able to get people to jobs throughout the city and suburbs, while Northwest Indiana continues to have just one rail line. Polls of young people indicate they're more willing to use mass transit than their elders, and that they want transit available close to their homes, Visclosky said. [Visclosky calls on leaders to resolve transit problems : Crown Point](#)

INDOT Begins Hoosier State Line Negotiations

Inside INdiana Business
9/24/13

Indianapolis, Ind. -- The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) announced it has begun contract negotiations with Amtrak over continuation of the Hoosier State passenger rail service, which operates four days per week between Indianapolis and Chicago. In 2008, Congress voted to end federal support for Amtrak routes of less than 750 miles. Seven of the 19 states impacted have signed operating agreements as of Sept. 13. Amtrak has said that it would not terminate service with states holding good-faith contract negotiations by Oct. 1. Governor Pence authorized INDOT to begin negotiations with local partners last week. INDOT has been having ongoing discussions with the communities that have stops along the Hoosier State passenger rail service. Mayors and other public officials expressed an interest in keeping the Hoosier State service operating and are making local funds available as part of the financing package. "Governor

Pence supports the joint local and state effort to continue this passenger rail service, but with the negotiations, there are still a number of hurdles to be cleared," said INDOT Commissioner Karl Browning. "There's common interest among state and local officials to ensure that the service is accountable for the tax dollars being invested." Communities that contribute funding would also be involved in overseeing performance of the service on a recurring basis. Specific contributions among all parties will not be known until negotiations with Amtrak conclude. [INDOT Begins Hoosier State Line Negotiations - Newsroom - Inside INdiana Business with Gerry Dick](#) Also, [Negotiations signal hope for imperiled Amtrak line | Journal and Courier | jconline.com](#), [Negotiations begin to save Amtrak's Hoosier State service - Post-Tribune](#)

States Move Forward on Illiana Expressway

Inside INdiana Business

9/24/13

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Finance Authority (IFA), the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) have reached an agreement on how to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the proposed Illiana Corridor project. The IFA/INDOT and IDOT will each procure their individual sections of the 47-mile access controlled highway that would extend from I-65 in Indiana to I-55 in Illinois. Both states will use their respective Public-Private Partnership laws to enter into a long-term concession agreement to develop and build the expressway. Each state expects to issue a Request for Qualifications this fall for private firms who are interested in the project. This will include information about the upcoming Requests for Proposals for the Illiana, as well as the project's expected commercial and financial timing. The two states will continue to work together to coordinate schedules, technical provisions and tolling operations. They will also continue to coordinate under the National Environmental Policy Act as required by the federal government. "We look forward to working with our partners at IDOT on this very important project to the entire region," said Kendra York, Public Finance Director of the State of Indiana. "The residents of Chicago's south suburbs will be thrilled by the benefits the Illiana corridor will bring to the region," IDOT Secretary Ann Schneider said. "The Illiana project is a 'win-win' for both Illinois and Indiana and will result in a reduced financial burden while creating much needed infrastructure. It will save millions for Indiana and Illinois taxpayers while producing huge economic benefits for both states, and that is good news." The IFA/INDOT and IDOT plan to begin construction on the Illiana in the spring of 2015. When built, the Illiana Corridor Project will reduce truck traffic on local roads, improving safety, travel times and access to jobs. Beyond the regional benefits for freight and intermodal connections, the Illiana Corridor will provide an opportunity for jobs and economic development. Potential benefits include the creation of more than 9,000 construction jobs and access to more than 25,000 long-term jobs. [States Move Forward on Illiana Expressway - Newsroom - Inside INdiana Business with Gerry Dick](#) Also, [States will seek private investors for Illiana Expressway : Lowell News](#)

Lake County quickly coming around to roundabouts

Post-Tribune

Matt Mikus

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Roundabouts are planned for three Lake County communities, and though the unusual intersection design is only now making inroads in the area, it could become more common as planners look for ways to reduce congestion and accidents. Valparaiso installed one of the first in the region in 2008 on Indiana 130 near Valparaiso University as a joint project with Indiana Department of Transportation and the city. "A roundabout has been proven to effectively move traffic in a safe, more efficient manner than a signalized stop or a four-way intersection," Dammarell said. Schereville's project on Cline Avenue will combine Seberger Drive, Rohrman Road, and West 77th Avenue, and include the Pennsy Greenway bicycle trail. "A traffic light

wouldn't accommodate anyone out there," Volkmann said. "The traffic circle plan would eliminate a lot of conflicts." The project is estimated to cost \$1.4 million, with contracts finalized in early 2014 and construction completed by early fall 2014. In Crown Point, the 90-degree turn from 93rd Avenue to Chase Street will be replaced with a roundabout, as well as a staging and parking area for the Erie Lackawanna Trail. Miles said the design will help relieve a stormwater drainage problem. The project is estimated to cost \$1.4 million. [Lake County quickly coming around to roundabouts - Post-Tribune](#)

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