



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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Equipment problems plague Hoosier State train

Journal & Courier
Chris Morisse Vizza
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Buses, not Indiana's Hoosier State train, have carried passengers eight of the 12 times the train was scheduled to run during the past 10 days, according to Amtrak and Indiana Department of Transportation officials. Equipment problems disrupted the four-day-a-week Indianapolis-Chicago service operated since Aug. 2 by the state's passenger rail contractor, Iowa Pacific Holdings Inc., company president Ed Ellis told the Journal & Courier. "We had a bunch of extra inspections that took place in the last week, and as a result of that we're making some improvements to the equipment," he said. "It's been running safely and efficiently the first two months, and we want to make sure we're compliant." What could cause more than a week's worth of canceled service on a train that runs round trips on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday, and one-way routes on Tuesday and Wednesday? Windows installed backward in one of the locomotives contributed to the problem, Ellis explained. "When we took some windows out, some of the windows broke," he said. "We have been doing expedited ordering and installing all week." The windows escaped the notice of Amtrak, Federal Railroad Administration and Iowa Pacific inspectors, who checked the rail cars before Iowa Pacific's equipment was cleared to begin running the route Aug. 2, he said. A recently hired INDOT inspector discovered the problem on the locomotive that Ellis said he purchased from New Jersey Transit. [Equipment problems plague Hoosier State train](#)

Indiana transportation crisis demands steps, strategies

Indianapolis Star
10/3/15

One recent crisis was avoided when the emergency bridge closure on I-65 near Lafayette occurred before the structure failed and put lives in danger. The separate crisis of addressing our state's transportation infrastructure needs remains. It will take much longer to address than the bridge repairs, but it is just as critical that the work begins now. Indiana benefited greatly from the Major Moves program that accelerated the timeline and funded a number of projects over the last decade. Those dollars are spent or allocated. It's time to move forward with the next generation of resources to drive our economy by moving people and products throughout our state and beyond. A 2014 Blue Ribbon Commission on Infrastructure established priorities for future initiatives. A soon-to-be-released Indiana Department of Transportation study on funding is expected to offer alternatives on how to pay for that essential progress. And at the top of the list needs to be adequate and reliable resources to address the current maintenance backlog — both roads and bridges — that slows commuters and puts a major dent into Indiana's longstanding logistical advantage. As the Indiana Chamber traveled the state this summer discussing the most recent Indiana Vision 2025 Report Card, infrastructure challenges and concerns were expressed.

Superior infrastructure is one of the four drivers in that long-range economic development plan. The deteriorating state of Indiana's infrastructure is far from superior. [Indiana transportation crisis demands steps, strategies](#)

Our view: Independent pavement probe needed

The Star Press

10/3/15

Hoosier taxpayers can be forgiven if they have an episode of road rage while driving over this state's poor highways and bridges. It's bad enough our infrastructure is falling apart through neglect because fewer dollars are being spent on road and bridge maintenance. Now comes word the Indiana Department of Transportation is investigating 188 roads built by 44 contractors that might have been paved with faulty asphalt that could degrade much earlier than normal, perhaps as much as 30 percent quicker. State officials are testing samples from \$71 million in pavement projects at state laboratories to see whether the asphalt was mixed properly. There's no word on whether any roads in East Central Indiana are under investigation, but no matter, these are your tax dollars that were possibly squandered. Think about that the next time you hit the road and the road hits back. Getting to the bottom of this sticky mess could take time, and already one contractor is laying blame on INDOT. That's why we believe an impartial third party ought to take over this investigation, which is exactly what some lawmakers in the Indiana Legislature want to see happen. An Indianapolis Star report last Friday revealed a Fort Wayne road contractor was on probation by INDOT while it was building a portion of the Hoosier Heartland Highway near Logansport, later found to be falling apart years earlier than scheduled. John Brooks, executive vice president of Brook Construction, disputes the allegations and says INDOT paid his firm an \$18,000 bonus "for an asphalt mix that exceeded expectations" according to The Star. Brooks said INDOT was provided with hundreds of pages of data and conducted 72 tests on the asphalt on the road in question and all were approved. [Our view: Independent pavement probe needed](#)

Road builder rejects state refund demand

Indianapolis Star

John Touhy

10/2/15

A road construction company has rejected an Indiana Department of Transportation demand that it refund \$5 million or resurface a state road the agency said is decaying years quicker than it should. In a Friday letter to INDOT, Brooks Construction Executive Vice President John R. Brooks laid the blame for a cracking and crumbling section of Ind. 25 in Cass County on INDOT's own road-building specifications and inspections. "We will not ... accept legal responsibility for an industry problem caused by INDOT's specifications and quality assurance program," Brooks wrote INDOT Deputy Commissioner Robert Tally. "We will not agree to remove or replace the pavement or return funds paid to Brooks." The dispute comes amid a widespread INDOT investigation of state road projects, the details of which were revealed last month after inquiries from The Indianapolis Star about asphalt failures. INDOT demanded that Brooks Construction refund the \$5 million or resurface the three mile stretch of the Hoosier Heartland Highway near Logansport that the agency said was decaying a year after it was finished. The \$16 million section was part of the Hoosier Heartland Highway project that opened on June 29, 2012. INDOT said the deteriorating road should last 20 years and blamed a lack of sticky binder in Brooks' asphalt mixture for the problem. Brooks said the company followed INDOT's mixture instructions and any fault should fall with those instructions. Brooks said INDOT took 72 asphalt samples at the construction site and never found any problem with the blacktop. [Road builder rejects state refund demand](#) Also, [Brooks rejects state demand to pay or rebuild | Indiana | www.journalgazette.net](#)

Asphalt plant on probation when broken highway was built

Indianapolis Star

John Touhy

10/2/15

An asphalt plant owned by a Fort Wayne construction company was placed on probation by the Indiana Department of Transportation while the company was building a state road the agency later found to be crumbling years earlier than it should have. INDOT investigators found that the Brooks Construction asphalt plant was mixing blacktop that did not always meet agency specifications. The plant was one of two Brooks-owned plants the agency placed on probation in April 2011. Asphalt from those two plants had been used in at least two other INDOT road projects, from 2008 to 2010, parts of which had to be repaved, said INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield. One of the plants, in Logansport, provided the asphalt for a 3-mile stretch of Ind. 25 in Cass County for which INDOT last week demanded a \$5 million refund or repaving for alleged shoddy construction. INDOT officials said that portion of the Hoosier Heartland Highway began cracking and crumbling a year after it was paved in 2012 because the asphalt did not have enough sticky, oil-based binder to hold it together. The road was supposed to last 20 years.

[Asphalt plant on probation when broken highway was built](#)

GUEST COMMENTARY: Hoosiers need Congress to take transportation seriously

NWI Times

David A. Frye

10/1/15

Indiana leaders have been in the news lately for eyeing state reserves as a possible funding source to help maintain our thousands of miles of roads. We've also started to see coverage of the congressional debate relating to the federal Highway Trust Fund, the primary source of funding for federal road, bridge, and transit spending. While the U.S. Senate passed a bill to fund the nation's transportation systems for six years, legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives only funds those systems through October of this year. With the pace at which the U.S. House is seeking to fix our ailing transportation infrastructure, you would think everything is fine, but actually, it's far from it. If this lack of action by the U.S. House continues, it will lead to thousands of delayed projects nationwide, including in Indiana. A state tax increase isn't even on the table; although a state increase would never be able to fill the need entirely. The federal Trust Fund will continue to be a necessary funding source and in need of Congressional support. Despite the fact that Indiana's transportation network – from roads to bridges to public transit – is essential to the state's economy, and depended upon by more than 5 million Indiana drivers, as well as the millions of non-residents who drive through the state yearly on business or leisure travel, Indiana roads aren't serving businesses or residents as they should. [GUEST COMMENTARY: Hoosiers need Congress to take transportation seriously](#)