



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

December 4, 2014

Guest column: Major Moves critics off track

Journal and Courier
Eric Holcomb
12/4/14

Having worked for Gov. Mitch Daniels back in 2005, I vividly remember the Indiana Toll Road lease conversation, as I was responsible for organizing all the coalitions of supporters eager to benefit from important upgrades to our aging infrastructure neglected for years by prior administrations. Now, everyone is entitled to their own personal opinion, and mine is as follows. After eight years of record-breaking road construction all across Indiana, some folks still just don't get it and some probably never will. For example, the recently announced bankruptcy of the Indiana Toll Road operator prompted a high-ranking Democratic office holder to dub the 2006 public-private partnership a "mess of epic proportions" (NWI Times, Oct. 14). That made me wonder if he was just playing politics or if he didn't understand the contract, similar to any other highly regulated utility. The facts illustrate a very different picture than he paints, as does a string of misrepresentations parroted by a LaPorte County Democratic operative and a liberal think tank, the Center for American Progress. The former has shared little by way of actual facts, relying instead on a single report conducted by a professor at William & Mary University in Virginia, a tiresome tactic of lease opponents on the left. The latter has suggested "Indiana has many ways to raise money to fund its infrastructure needs without resorting to complex and uncertain lease agreements" (Indianapolis Star, Oct. 25). In Washington-speak, this means raising your taxes. <http://www.iconline.com/story/opinion/2014/12/04/guest-column-major-moves-critics-track/19885977/>

\$60 Million Per Year Needed To Fix Indiana's Bridges

Indiana Public Media
Brandon Smith
12/3/14

The Indiana Department of Transportation today provided the State Budget Committee with a sobering look at the state's future infrastructure maintenance costs. Indiana's bridges were built to last 75 years, and half are at least 50 years old. INDOT Commissioner Karl Browning says about 7 percent are in what he calls "poor condition." They are not unsafe, but it will just cost a lot to fix them. At current funding levels, that percentage will rise to 12.5 percent in 10 years. In order to keep the percentage of bridges in poor condition at about 8 percent, Browning says funding needs to increase about \$60 million a year for the next ten years. He says an ideal level is less than three percent of bridges in poor condition. "In order to achieve that, that's nearly a \$100 million more a year than we have available to spend today for the next 20 years," Browning says. Roads are in a similar state: Browning says to reach an ideal maintenance level, funding would need to increase about 170 million dollars a year over 20 years. The INDOT Commissioner says

a report due at the end of next summer could help provide solutions. "We will have a model system that will say, 'Here are ways to raise revenue that are specific and targeted to the kinds of problems that we need to solve,'" he says. Browning says he does not recommend raising the gas tax.

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Negotiations continue to save Hoosier State Line

WLF1

Holly Campbell

12/2/14

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (WLF1) – The future of the Hoosier State Passenger Rail Line is still up in the air with a contract to keep it running set to expire next month. "There would be no agreement beyond that point, so it's really important that some type of agreement is reached here in this window of opportunity," Lafayette Mayor Tony Roswarski said. "So, this is a very critical time that we're in." Negotiations with another private company fell through last month. With time running out, Roswarski said the Indiana Department of Transportation is now in negotiations with communities along the line, Amtrak and Iowa Pacific to keep the service alive. "To see if there is a way that Amtrak could continue to be the operator of the train, and that Iowa Pacific could play a role maybe helping with marketing and some of the amenities," Roswarski said. "There is encouragement on the end of INDOT for us to be a participant in the continuation of this service," West Lafayette Mayor John Dennis said. "We're looking at another private contractor to possibly take over that route, and that's where we are currently in that negotiation." Dennis said the city will not continue to pay \$16,000 a month to support the line come Feb. 1. "Our understanding now is that in the event that we do need to be financially involved, it's going to be at a much, much lower rate," Dennis said. With the contract coming to an end and the legislative session about to begin, both mayors said they hope funding for rail is included in the state's budget.

<http://wlf1.com/2014/12/02/negotiations-continue-to-save-hoosier-state-line/>

Salisbury Road repairs delayed until next year

Palladium-Item

Bill Engle

12/2/14

Construction work on the next phase of Salisbury Road on Richmond northwest side is finished for this year. That means the complete road reconstruction, which was scheduled to be completed in November, won't be done until June 2015. It also means that Salisbury, from the southern edge of the Wayne County Fairgrounds to just north of West Main Street, won't be open until spring. Richmond Common Councilman Larry Parker raised the issue at council's Monday night meeting, expressing what some in the community have felt about the project. "That's a six-month project that is going to take two years. That's not acceptable," Parker said, questioning Mayor Sally Hutton about the delay. Hutton said that delays in moving utilities along the road have slowed the project. "We've had to wait for the utilities. It is a major project and it will be done in the spring," Hutton said. It is a \$2.95 million project that is paid 90 percent with federal highway dollars, through the Indiana Department of Transportation, and 10 percent, or \$295,795, local money. Dave O'Mara Contractors of North Vernon, Ind., is doing the work. That company had the first phase of phase two -- from 1,000 feet north of North West L to the abandoned railroad tracks near the south edge of the fairground, done in June in time for the county's 4-H fair.

<http://www.pal-item.com/story/news/local/2014/12/02/salisbury-road-construction/19814669/>

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