



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

September 6, 2016

State paving the way for roadwork kicks in nearly \$1.9 million for county

The Republic
Mark Webber
9/2/16

Money is now available to pave more county roads this year than at any time in at least 38 years, county officials said. The Bartholomew County Highway Department has been awarded \$999,255 through the Community Crossing matching grant program from the Indiana Department of Transportation. Since 320 city and county agencies were in competition for the available money, county highway engineer Danny Hollander said he was pleasantly surprised when his department received just short of the \$1 million grant cap. "I'm not going to gripe about the \$700 we didn't get," Hollander said. The grant will add an additional 5 miles of paving on top of the almost 27 miles approved last spring, Hollander said. In addition, some funds will be used to reimburse the county for expenses already incurred in repairing a bridge on County Road 750E, just south of Rockcreek Elementary School, Hollander said. Sufficient funds should also be available to repair a second bridge on County Road 1020E, north of 800N, as well as some smaller road projects, the engineer said. Matching monies from cities, towns and counties were required from a Local Option Income Tax, a wheel tax or Rainy Day reserve funds. Since Bartholomew County has not enacted either of the two taxes, top elected officials weren't sure what type of funds, if any, they would receive through the grant program. "But I felt like our people really made an organized and well-prepared presentation," commissioner Larry Kleinhenz said.

http://www.therepublic.com/2016/09/02/state_kicks_in_nearly_19_million_for_county_roads/

Tolls short-sighted answer to interstate maintenance

The Journal Gazette
Stephanie Kane
9/2/16

In the court of public opinion, the verdict on tolling is clear: Americans don't support tolling the nation's interstate highways. Time and again, state attempts to toll their interstates under a federal pilot program have failed amid strong, vocal public opposition. So why then is a special commission of the Indiana Senate planning a private, secretive session to consider adding tolls to existing interstate highways in Indiana? The Journal Gazette reported Aug. 22 that a task force called "Funding Indiana's Roads for a Stronger, Safer Tomorrow" plans to host a private meeting to draft a long-term road-funding proposal that the legislature will consider in 2017. Modernizing Indiana's road-funding mechanisms is critically important, but it should be done responsibly and transparently – especially when harmful policy ideas such as tolling existing interstates are on the table. The federal government has prohibited placing tolls on existing interstate lanes since the inception of the federal interstate highway system in 1956. However, through a program called the Interstate System Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Pilot Program, Congress allows up to

three states to examine and potentially implement tolling on existing interstates. Thanks to a provision in the highway bill Congress passed last year, additional states may be eligible to participate in this tolling pilot program beginning in 2017. Indiana would be wise to avoid taking part.

<http://www.journalgazette.net/opinion/columns/Tolls-short-sighted-answer-to-interstate-maintenance-15004630>

Muncie didn't apply for street repair funds

The Star Press

Keith Roysdon

9/2/16

MUNCIE, Ind. — When the state of Indiana handed out \$47 million for road and bridge repairs to Hoosier communities late last month, the city of Muncie received no funds — because it didn't apply for any. Delaware County government received almost \$1 million from the state's Community Crossings fund, which provided street repair funds to communities that could provide matching amounts. But Delaware County's award wouldn't have stopped Muncie from receiving funds, too. Wayne County and Richmond each received about \$1 million, while Anderson and Madison County each got \$1 million. Officials from the Indiana Department of Transportation confirmed to The Star Press this week that Muncie didn't receive any funding because it didn't ask. "I spoke with INDOT's local program coordinator and she confirmed that INDOT did not receive a Community Crossings grant application from the city of Muncie," INDOT spokesman Scott Manning told The Star Press on Thursday. Mayor Dennis Tyler acknowledged that the city did not apply for what might have amounted to as much as \$1 million in street repair funding. Asked if he regretted missing out on the money, Tyler said he did not. "If you look around, I think we're doing very well with grant awards," Tyler said. "I don't see where we're lacking." The state received more than 1,600 applications from 317 cities, towns and counties statewide, Manning said. Virtually all received some funding, including smaller amounts like \$78,233 for Daleville. <http://www.thestarpress.com/story/news/local/2016/09/02/muncie-didnt-apply-street-money/89733326/>

Learn more about transit plan

Indianapolis Star

9/1/16

Referendum questions aren't often on ballots in Indiana. On Nov. 8, voters in Marion County will see one about whether they want to increase their income tax to improve mass transit in Indianapolis. Here's the exact wording: "Shall Marion County have the ability to impose a county economic development income tax rate, not to exceed a rate of 0.25%, to pay for improving or establishing public transportation service in the county through a public transportation project that will create a connected network of buses and rapid transit lines; increase service frequency; extend operational hours; and implement three new rapid transit lines?" To make an informed decision, voters need to understand what that question means. That's why our organizations — all public agencies — are undertaking an education initiative. A recent IndyStar article, "Transit advocates launch info blitz," mixed our education initiative with the work that a coalition of private sector groups is doing to advocate how people should vote on the issue. We want to make clear that we are working to educate residents on the transit plan, not tell them how to vote. As part of our education effort, we are hosting lunchtime information sessions about the Marion County Transit Plan over a four-day period beginning Sept. 6 at 16 Indianapolis library branches. The short sessions will be a neutral place for people to get factual information about the referendum and the plan.

<http://www.indystar.com/story/opinion/readers/2016/09/01/learn-transit-plan/89739098/>

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