



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

November 9, 2017

Holcomb pledges 'data driven' review of possible Indiana interstate tolls

WDRB

Marcus Greene

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Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb said Thursday he plans to be “data driven” as he weighs expanded tolling on the state’s interstate highways. A study ordered by the Indiana General Assembly concluded last week that a statewide toll system could yield tens of billions of dollars for road projects in the coming decades, helping offsetting a projected drop in fuel tax revenue. Holcomb, a Republican, has until next December to decide if he wants to pursue all-electronic interstate tolls – the method used on the Interstate 65 bridges connecting Clark County, Ind., and Louisville. “I want to do my due diligence,” he told reporters in Sellersburg. “I want to be data driven and informed by the facts and that’s exactly what (the Indiana Department of Transportation) will be doing over the course of the next about 12 months.” Speaking some 10 miles from the I-65 toll spans, Holcomb said his office will take into account lessons from the first year of that network, known as RiverLink. Indiana and Kentucky oversee the project, which has met revenue expectations even as customer service delays and billing mishaps have plagued the inaugural year.

<http://www.wdrb.com/story/36805844/holcomb-pledges-data-driven-review-of-possible-indiana-interstate-tolls>

Residents blame St. Joseph County for not fixing speed radar signs

South Bend Tribune

Ted Booker

11/8/2017

MISHAWAKA — Nearly three years ago, solar-powered speed radar signs were installed to warn drivers of a curve along Day Road in Penn Township that has played a role in traffic accidents over the years. But area residents say that only months after the two signs were installed in the residential area, they quit working. And while more than two years have passed, they still haven’t been fixed. People who live here have questioned why St. Joseph County officials haven’t yet found a solution to the problem along the stretch, which is located about a half mile east of Bittersweet Road. They say that while many drivers slowed down to abide by the 35-mile-per-hour speed limit when the radar signs were working, they reverted back to speeding through the curve after the signs malfunctioned. That has posed a safety risk, they say, for families who live along the stretch and has increased the risk of accidents. “We’re coming up on three years. It seems that by now the problem should have been fixed,” said Russell Baudler, who often tracks cars going more than 50 miles per hour using an app on his smart phone. “There are two families nearby with little kids. And to get the mail you have to cross the street and stand out there with traffic flying by.” County officials, meanwhile, say they haven’t ignored the problem. But they say

steps taken by the project's contractor and equipment supplier to correct it have taken much longer than expected.

https://www.southbendtribune.com/news/local/residents-blame-st-joseph-county-for-not-fixing-speed-radar/article_c8937844-e125-5652-bd5d-bab4ac6ded21.html

Boonville Bypass work suspended due to unexpected 'heaving'

Evansville Courier & Press

John Martin

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BOONVILLE -- Work on a section of the State Road 61 Boonville Bypass has been suspended until further notice, the Indiana Department of Transportation announced. On Nov. 2, INDOT wrote to Force Construction officially suspending pavement work on the bypass due to pavement smoothness concerns. During the course of the project, a section of finished pavement experienced unexpected heaving, or upward movement of the pavement material, according to INDOT. The cause of the heaving is being studied at this time. Due to the unexpected issues, INDOT has agreed to grant Force Construction an extension of the contract time pursuant to INDOT standard specifications associated with the company's contract. Workers will still be able to complete work in other areas of the Boonville Bypass during the suspension. Construction on the new two-lane road, which will have three roundabouts and will act as a bypass of State Road 62, started in 2016. Its price tag is about \$17.3 million, but the delay might cause the project to incur additional costs, said Jason Tiller, an INDOT spokesman.

<http://www.courierpress.com/story/news/2017/11/07/boonville-bypass-work-suspended-due-unexpected-heaving/840933001/>

UPDATE: Eisenhower Bridge lane closure moved to Monday

Herald Bulletin

Ken de la Bastide

11/7/2017

ANDERSON – Beginning next week, work to replace the Eisenhower Bridge is expected to start with the demolition of the deck on the westbound lanes. Chuck Leser, Madison County engineer, said the westbound lanes of the bridge on Eighth Street will be closed Thursday. Construction on those lanes is not expected to be completed until July 2018. Leser said work on the replacement of the eastbound lanes is expected to last until March 2019. The fiber lines crossing the bridge will be removed at a future date, which will require the fiber optics to be shut down while the work takes place. Leser said the bridge completion date is tentatively set for June 2019. “There is some additional work to be completed after the south lanes are replaced, such as connecting the two spans and landscaping,” Leser said. After seven years of trying to obtain a federal grant to replace the Eisenhower Bridge, Madison County received a \$13.5 million federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or TIGER, grant to replace the bridge. Primco Inc. of Fort Wayne was awarded a contract for \$13,481,784 by the Indiana Department of Transportation.

http://www.heraldbulletin.com/news/eisenhower-bridge-work-starts-thursday-with-closure-of-west-lanes/article_341f608c-c426-11e7-ba12-0f35a9ca4727.html

Messmer: I-64, I-69 tolls unlikely

Dubois County Herald

Candy Neal

11/6/2017

INDIANAPOLIS — A recent state study found that if the state's interstates were made into toll roads, they could generate between \$39 billion and \$53 billion over 30 years. But it's unlikely that

all of Indiana's interstates would be made into toll roads, State Sen. Mark Messmer, R-Jasper, said Friday morning. He especially doubts that Interstate 64 or Interstate 69 from Evansville to Indianapolis would be converted. "The only way you can put a toll on a road is if you upped the capacity of the road," he said. "If you widen the bridges or increased the number of lanes, then you could toll it because of the new construction costs." According to federal law, you can't toll an existing road if you don't increase its capacity. That pretty much knocks I-64 out of the running, Messmer said. "Interstate 64 will most likely never need additional capacity" for handling traffic, he said. "Paving and other road maintenance is not increasing the capacity for more traffic." Because of that, it is very unlikely that it will become a toll road, he said. In the road-funding bill approved during the Indiana General Assembly's last legislative session, the Legislature requested that the Indiana Department of Transportation conduct a tolling feasibility study. "The comment last year was if tolling is feasible, what kind of dollars could be generated, and where does it make sense to do it," Messmer said. "We thought we had those answers, but no one had studied it." The study, which was released by INDOT Wednesday, looked at how much toll revenue the state's six interstates would generate over 30 years, from 2021 to 2050. <https://duboiscountyherald.com/b/messmer-i-64-i-69-tolls-unlikely>

2017 Bridge Inventory: States get proactive on funding, expect to lower rate of poor bridges

Equipment World's Better Roads

Marci Gruver Doyle

11/6/2017

States continue to take the lead on road and bridge funding, with eight states to date in 2017 either raising gas taxes or approving other funding. And once you factor in states that passed road funding during the past four years – 27 plus the District of Columbia, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures – then state trailblazing becomes even more clear. In California, for example, Senate Bill 1 created the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program, which included a 12-cents-per-gallon increase in the state's gas tax starting in November. The Idaho legislature passed a \$320 million-plus road bill authorizing \$300 million in bonds that allow the state to borrow against its future federal highway allocations to fund big projects now. In August, Oregon's governor signed a bill authorizing \$5.3 billion in transportation funding to be spread over 10 years, while incrementally increasing the state's gas tax by 10 cents per gallon over seven years. And in Tennessee, legislators increased the gas tax by 6 cents per gallon over the next three years. The initial 4-cent increase started in July. Other states increasing funding this year include Indiana, Montana, West Virginia and South Carolina. The Federal Highway Administration is transitioning from defining bridges of concern as "Structurally Deficient" (SD) to "Poor" under its newer Good/Fair/Poor condition rating system. Also being transitioned out are the terms "functionally obsolete" and "sufficiency rating." The goal is to eliminate "sometimes confusing, unclear, misleading or alarming terms from the language of bridge engineers," said Joey Hartmann, FHWA director of the Office of Bridges and Structures. While this language served engineers well, FHWA now recognizes they do "not translate well in a transparent world," Hartman said. More than half of the states and areas responding to this year's survey say they expect in the coming year to lower their rate of SD bridges – which again, would be termed "Poor" under the new classification system.

<https://www.equipmentworld.com/2017-bridge-inventory-states-get-proactive-on-funding-expect-to-lower-rate-of-poor-bridges/>