



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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Rokita hits Braun over gas tax increase

Pharos-Tribune
Brian Slodysko
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INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Rep. Todd Rokita has started a new feud in Indiana's bitter Republican Senate primary, attacking a rival — whom he calls "Tax Hike Mike" Braun — over the former state lawmaker's vote for a GOP-backed infrastructure plan that raised fuel taxes. The issue offers considerable upside for Rokita, who is trying to present himself as a conservative outsider despite nearly 20 years in elected office. There's just one problem: It wasn't long ago that Rokita called for the same kind of tax increase. That opens Rokita up to charges of hypocrisy as he campaigns against Braun, fellow Republican Rep. Luke Messer and several others. Already he's been accused of a willingness to do — or say — anything to win the race that will decide who faces Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly next year. "Todd Rokita attacked Mike Braun for supporting a permanent solution to fix Indiana's roads and bridges," said Braun spokesman Josh Kelley. "It is typical of career politicians like Todd Rokita to say one thing and do another." Indiana's neglected infrastructure became a political fiasco in August 2015. An Interstate 65 bridge in Rokita's district sank several inches, forcing a month-long emergency closure. As traffic snarled and accidents piled up, Rokita weighed in on the issue during an interview with Indianapolis radio host Abdul-Hakim Shabazz. "There have already been 19 or 20 states that have raised their gas tax, because the federal government won't, and as a result are going to have a better infrastructure," Rokita told Shabazz, a conservative commentator. "And by the way, I don't know of a politician that's been unelected for that yet. So, I encourage all those in elective office — from the federal, to the state, to the local level — to look at these ideas."

http://www.pharostribune.com/news/state_news/article_633a30be-e853-53c3-a24c-95bea77cc23e.html

Would you pay to drive on i-70? Governor says tolls a possibility.

WTHI-TV
12/1/17

VIGO COUNTY, Ind. (WTHI) - Indiana's governor said turning I-70 into a toll road to help pay for improvements is possible. But the state is a year away from making a final decision. According to Governor Eric Holcomb, toll roads were mentioned as part of a feasibility study. That study went to state lawmakers on November 1st. Now, the administration is working on what they call a "strategic study." This is where Holcomb's team will analyze their options, which include tolling. The study must be finished one year from December 1st. There was an increase in the state gas tax that started in July. Holcomb said it's clear there's a need to improve safety and the flow of traffic on I-70. "We know that potential third lanes are needed...not just on I-70 to satisfy those requirements, but probably on I-65 and other stretches around the state that will get the same

attention," Governor Holcomb said. When asked if he favors tolling on I-70, Holcomb said he can't rule it out, but referred to the strategic study that he says will help the state reach the best conclusion. <http://www.wthitv.com/content/news/Would-you-pay-to-drive-on-I-70-Governor-says-tolls-a-possibility--461368393.html>

Indiana lawmakers want to add tolls to more highways

WSBT

Kaitlin Connin

12/1/17

INDOT is working on a study that could affect your travel plans. State lawmakers want to add tolls to more highways. Interstate 80-90 generates a lot of revenue. The company that leases the road paid the state \$4 billion. That money was used for infrastructure improvements all over the state. Northern Indiana drivers have been paying at these booths for decades. Now they say it's time for southern drivers to chip in too. "We've been supportive of the concept of additional tolling in Indiana," said Jeff Rea, resident/CEO of the South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce. "We haven't thought it's fair that only northern Indiana gets the opportunity to pay tolls." But fairness isn't the only motivation for research on tolling. "As the state's trying to figure out how to fund infrastructure long term, gas tax just doesn't fund it at enough of a level to do everything that's needed," said Rea. Senator Ryan Mishler says gas tax increases in recent years were only designed to last for seven years. "At the end of seven years, if you don't have tolling to maintain a long-term funding stream, you'll have a gap," said Mishler. State lawmakers tried to toll I-69 south, but were met with outrage. "Tolling isn't very popular," said Rea. "People don't like the idea of having to pay to drive on the road." <http://wsbt.com/news/local/indiana-lawmakers-want-to-add-tolls-to-more-highways>

Transit Triangle nears end of demonstration phase

Herald Argus

Jon Gard

12/1/17

La PORTE — Enough funding is available to continue Transit Triangle bus service through May, but officials are working on a new arrangement to keep the wheels turning well into the future. The original three-year agreement among Michigan City, La Porte, Purdue University Northwest in Westville and La Porte County is scheduled to expire in January. An amendment to extend the deal by a few more months will be presented to the various governing bodies starting Monday. Money to continue running buses for the short term is already available. However, ensuring the service continues through the summer and beyond will require a new funding agreement, according to La Porte TransPorte Director Tom MacLennan, who is also president of the Transit Triangle advisory board. In the first three years of service, ridership has not been as robust as organizers hoped, "but it's important to the people who use it," MacLennan said. Adjustments in fares and a simplification of routes are among strategies to be considered by the advisory board to boost ridership, he said. In 2015, buses covering the three legs of the triangle had 4,927 passengers, according to Robin Tillman, director of Michigan City Transport, the lead operating agency for Transit Triangle. The next year saw an increase to 6,861 passengers. http://www.heraldargus.com/news/transit-triangle-nears-end-of-demonstration-phase/article_1896c431-c836-5bd1-b114-022316441865.html