



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

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U.S. 31 plan still a priority for St. Joseph, Elkhart counties

South Bend Tribune

Kyle Hannon, Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce

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ELKHART — Sometimes, I can see the future. In early May, I wrote a column about the highway funding bill that was passed by the Indiana General Assembly and signed by Governor Holcomb. On behalf of the Elkhart Chamber of Commerce, I testified in support of this legislation because our businesses need safe, efficient roads for moving people and products. I wrote about how that legislation was going to help our commerce and communities. Also, I cautioned, “it will be up to us to make sure U.S. 31 stays at the top of the list. And while I’m at it, I’m going to continue to advocate for other local projects, too.” So, here we are. Gov. Eric Holcomb recently visited Goshen to celebrate his Next Level Indiana road funding plan. I was there to celebrate with him and the other community leaders. We stood next to a growing wall near downtown Goshen that is part of a needed U.S. 33 bypass that will separate large trucks from Goshen’s vibrant downtown. This bypass is actually part of a different funding stream and the project is well underway. But it was a good backdrop for Holcomb because it is a visual of what we’ll see with the Next Level Indiana program. The five-year total for infrastructure improvements in Elkhart County will be nearly \$46 million. The total for St. Joseph County will be more than \$48 million. As road funding advocates predicted, this will have a major impact on the safety and efficiency of our roadways. Elkhart County will see 219 lane-miles of resurfacing and 31 bridge projects. St. Joseph County will see 195 lane-miles of resurfacing and 50 bridge projects. Still, we continue to push for U.S. 31. That highway doesn’t even touch Elkhart County and most of it is outside St. Joseph County. Yet, it is a vital connection between our region and the population hub of our state. My friend and colleague, Jeff Rea from the South Bend Regional Chamber, reports that the Next Level Indiana plan includes more than \$83 million for U.S. 31 improvements. Those projects include an interchange in Tipton County and a grade-separated railroad crossing. That is great news. Now, this is where my earlier prediction comes to play. I believe our efforts helped the roadway secure some of the attention it needs. But there is an issue. The plan calls for J-turns at Indiana 10 and 110. http://www.southbendtribune.com/news/business/u-s-plan-still-a-priority-for-st-joseph-elkhart/article_20d59645-ead2-5c99-b04f-784c0a533dbd.html

Roads, bridges a nightmare for some Hoosier farmers

The Herald Bulletin

Katie Stancombe

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There are two ways Phil Ramsey can reach his fields when driving a combine – cross a bad bridge, or cross one that’s even worse. “One is really narrow and overgrown with trees, and the other is a flat bridge that’s really narrow and low,” Ramsey said. “And we have to go across it with

wide equipment.” The Shelby County farmer has dealt with deteriorating rural roads and bridges for years. But as modern farming equipment gets bigger and heavier, he’s worried about what could happen. “If we slipped off the bridge I would tear up a bunch of equipment, and I’ll be really ticked off because I need that equipment,” Ramsey said. “It’d be a big financial loss.” Ramsey and other Hoosier farmers hope that such concerns are addressed in the Next Level Indiana plan, which was announced in July, to repair state roads and bridges over the next five years. About \$4.7 billion will be spent on the improvement efforts. The money comes from Indiana’s state road-funding plan that went into effect July 1. The plan included a 10-cent per-gallon gasoline tax hike and increased vehicle registration fees. Although the Indiana Farm Bureau is fiscally conservative, Schneider said the majority of its members were in support of Gov. Eric Holcomb’s road-funding plan because of roadway challenges they’ve encountered for decades. “By improving our infrastructure and transportation system, you’re going to find farmers will generally be supportive of that,” Culp said. Shelby County received roughly \$29 million for repairs in the next five years, but neither of Ramsey’s bridges is on its project list. After five years, an additional \$342 million will be available for statewide local road projects through 2024. But Ramsey doubts that money will wind up in his area. “I’ll hold my breath for that one,” he muttered. “We’re not in an area of high priority.” http://www.heraldbulletin.com/news/state_news/roads-bridges-a-nightmare-for-some-hoosier-farmers/article_63fe3ca8-3e7b-5892-bbde-22b395fd4c82.html

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