



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

January 10, 2013

Chamber: Ind. lawmakers may look to add tax to alternative fuel vehicles

NWI Times

1/7/13

The Indiana Chamber of Commerce, local industries and alternative fuel advocacy groups are keeping a close eye on the Statehouse this session with concerns about legislation being introduced to place a tax on compressed natural gas for vehicles. Vince Griffin, environmental director for the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission's environmental management policy committee last week about the chamber's legislative agenda. Griffin said he expects the Legislature to consider a highway tax on compressed natural gas when it is used to fuel vehicles. Currently, highway taxes are paid in part through taxes collected on each gallon of gasoline sold in Indiana. Griffin said the increased popularity of compressed natural gas to fuel large fleets is pushing the issue among lawmakers. Compressed natural gas tends to sell for about 60 percent of the cost of gasoline per gallon. Debera Backhus is senior environmental scientist and engineer for South Shore Clean Cities in Crown Point, a government/industry partnership focused on reducing dependence on petroleum and increasing the use of alternative fuel vehicles. Backhus said the road tax issue is one her organization is watching closely. "It would have big implications on on returns on investments for companies moving forward," Backhus said. Backhus noted there is a fee imposed by the state for alternative fuel vehicles. Alternative fuels vehicle owners are required to buy a decal from the state and place it on the windshield in order to legally add an alternative fuel to their vehicles. Prices for the decals vary based on vehicle type and range from \$100 to \$500. [Chamber: Ind. lawmakers may look to add tax to alternative fuel vehicles](#)

Lake County Council approves funds for bridge, road repairs

NWI Times

1/8/13

CROWN POINT | The Lake County Council voted Tuesday to give the county highway department permission to spend \$3.2 million to replace three bridges and make other road repairs. Highway Superintendent Marcus Malczewski said he expects contracts to begin bidding in three months to replace the Columbia Avenue bridge in Hammond, the Calhoun Street bridge in Calumet Township over the Little Calumet River, and the Morse Street Ditch north of Lowell over the McConnell Ditch. The council agreed to Lake County Surveyor George Van Til's transferring \$250,000 in his 2013 budget to repair a buried stormwater channel threatening to cause a sinkhole in downtown Schererville. Officials also approved a measure to help fund an aerial photo-mapping of Northwest Indiana to help future commercial development. The council voted against a proposed zoning change that would have permitted Jeffrey W. Brant to build mini storage units on the west side of U.S. 41, just south of 109th Avenue between St. John and Cedar Lake. Ned Kovachevich, the county's planning director, said the Plan Commission

recommended against changing the current residential zoning because adjacent property owners didn't want the business nearby. [Lake County Council approves funds for bridge, road repairs : St. John News](#)

EDITORIAL: Central Indiana's plan for mass transit benefits entire state

Evansville Courier & Press

1/9/13

After decades of near begging for support of an Evansville to Indianapolis interstate highway, the first major leg of Interstate 69 is completed and work will soon proceed to Bloomington. The highway is far from being completed, much less planned and financed to Indianapolis, but it is further along than anyone imagined just a relatively short eight years ago. The highway project had the magnificent support of Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels (and before him, the late Gov. Frank O'Bannon) and the Indiana Department of Transportation, but it never really enjoyed the support of power brokers in Central Indiana. Critics of I-69 suggested it either be forgotten (one called it the "highway to nowhere") or that it go way out of the way through Terre Haute. When suggested a safe, direct highway between Evansville and Bloomington was needed for Indiana University students and their parents, some suggested college students from Southwestern Indiana already had a state university in the University of Southern Indiana at Evansville and did not need to consider Indiana University as an option. We countered that this would be OK with us, if Bloomington agreed to give up IU and all of its economic benefits. It was oft suggested that it would serve Indiana better to spend the money on a rail system than on an interstate highway through Southwestern Indiana. Anyway, although I-69 appears destined now to be constructed all the way to Indianapolis, it still has never been embraced by Indianapolis and Central Indiana.

[EDITORIAL: Central Indiana's plan for mass transit benefits entire state » Evansville Courier & Press](#)

INDOT awards \$58.4 million contract for U.S. 31 expansion work in Hamilton County

Indianapolis Star

1/9/13

Now that most of the U.S. 31 expansion work is done south of the 146th Street bridge in Carmel – new ramps and exits to and from Clay Terrace Mall, Keystone Parkway and Rangeline Road – it's time to turn our attention to the north side – the Westfield side. INDOT announced today it has awarded a \$58.4 million contract for a 2013 project that will span from the bridge to 169th Street – including the construction of new exits at 146th, 151st and 161st street intersections. Those interchanges will replace the traffic signals that are currently in place. Rieth-Riley Construction, based in Goshen, was the low bidder among the five companies who submitted bids. INDOT says the final bid award came in \$5 million less than the original estimate. The work is being done as part of the larger U.S. 31 upgrade from I-465 to South Bend, converting the stop-light laden highway to a mostly uninterrupted freeway with few lights. It includes a new bypass around Kokomo and big changes in the South Bend area. This spring, Rieth-Riley will begin working on the highway. New ramps will be built to connect the bridge with Greyhound Pass and 151st Street, using a "split-diamond" interchange. The exit at 161st Street will be a roundabout interchange. And for local Westfield traffic on Union Street and 156th Street, they will pass under a new U.S. 31 bridge, but have no direct access to the highway at 156th Street. During construction, the highway will remain two lanes in each direction, except for occasional traffic shifts and temporary closures as needed. The state is planning an open house in the early part of spring. [INDOT awards \\$58.4 million contract for U.S. 31 expansion work in Hamilton County | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

Fort Wayne Mayor: Infrastructure Among Key Challenges

Inside INdiana Business

1/9/13

The mayor says in past years, the city would receive seven or eight million dollars per year in gas tax revenue. However, since the recession hit and people began driving less and buying more fuel-efficient vehicles, that money has been cut nearly in half. Henry says while he knows most people don't want to hear about any kind of tax increase, state lawmakers understand the struggle communities are facing. He believes there will be support for a potential increase in the legislature. Henry says an increased gas tax is not the only option to help fund infrastructure projects. Lawmakers may also consider a Bureau of Motor Vehicles transaction fee. The mayor says education is also a significant challenge. Henry says multiple union leaders have approached with concern about a decrease in the number of students deciding to learn a trade rather than pursuing a four-year degree. [Fort Wayne Mayor: Infrastructure Among Key Challenges - Newsroom - Inside INdiana Business with Gerry Dick](#)

End of the road for Cline Avenue Bridge

NWI Times

1/9/13

The Cline Avenue Bridge has met its end. On Tuesday, the last chunk of the bridge was dropped by explosives, marking the end of the bridge that first opened to traffic in 1983. The last span to be dropped was on the west bank of the Indiana Harbor and Ship Canal. Indiana Department of Transportation officials had thought the job would be done by the end of last year, but bad weather delayed the finale, said INDOT spokesman Jim Pinkerton. It was just more than three years ago that the 1.2-mile span was condemned, after being closed on an emergency basis in November 2009 when parts of it were found to be gravely weakened. In addition to the community's desire to see the demolition finished, completion of the job also is required before the state can turn over the bridge right-of-way to a private company that wants to build a toll bridge there. Under an August agreement between INDOT and United Bridge Partners, of Tallahassee, Fla., the land swap that will give the company possession of the bridge right-of-way cannot happen until the demolition is complete. A date will be set for the land swap following the completion of cleanup work and demobilization of contractor Walsh Construction Co. from the property, said INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield. United Bridge Partners continues to work behind the scenes on design and permitting for a new Cline Avenue Bridge, Wingfield said. Walsh Construction Co., of Crown Point, won the \$8.9 million contract to demolish the bridge. Work on bringing it down has been in full swing through the spring and summer months, including several explosive demolitions. Residents of some nearby neighborhoods have complained of the noise of both the hydraulic jackhammers and explosives used to demolish the bridge. The Cline Avenue Bridge has had a troubled history, with 14 construction workers killed during a collapse as the bridge was being built. [End of the road for Cline Avenue Bridge : Inbusiness](#)