



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **March 20, 2012**

#### **Gas tax for funding roads in trouble**

NWI Times  
3/15/12

PORTAGE | Understanding the gas tax as a component of highway funding is not something many people do. So Build Indiana Council has created a video to "start a conversation" on finding solutions for what is becoming a problem. The council presented the video at Thursday's Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission executive board meeting. The presentation explains that, while state gas taxes vary, the average is 20.9 cents per gallon. Indiana's state gas tax is 18 cents per gallon. For every dollar the state sends to the highway account in Washington, D.C., Indiana receives back only 92 cents, making it a donor state, while some states get two to three times more than they contribute. Every year, \$144 million of state gas tax is diverted from roads and bridges to other agencies including Indiana State Police and the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. The presentation also announced the federal Highway Trust Fund "is in trouble." This year, federal obligations will be \$42 billion, but there will be only \$33 billion in revenue. [Gas tax for funding roads in trouble](#)

#### **Rail Summit in Chesterton aims to stimulate investment**

NWI Times  
3/16/12

CHESTERTON | Examining rail-shipped freight as a vital part of the Indiana economy was the key theme of a summit Friday at Sand Creek Country Club. Fisher said because Northwest Indiana is so close to the freight hub of Chicago, a more regional cooperative planning approach is needed. He also said the Illiana Expressway would be an essential piece of infrastructure that would help local economy and rail. "Rail can't do it alone," Fisher said. "You need efficient highways." U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Ind., said vast economic potential exists in Northwest Indiana through rail investments. [Rail Summit in Chesterton aims to stimulate investment](#)

#### **Mass transit is more than wishful thinking**

Indianapolis Star  
3/18/12

By Christine Altman The fight for improved mass transit in Central Indiana is alive and well. Yes, we've seen short-term setbacks, but when you're striving for something that's going to improve so many lives for such a long time, you don't let today's hurdles block you from tomorrow's great strides. The Central Indiana Transportation Authority doesn't see today's needs as disconnected from the future. We have always viewed the effort to win immediate improvements as a foundation for a much bigger transit vision.

That's why we feel the need to address Andrea Neal's Feb.1 column ("If wishes were trains") in which she concluded that an improved transit system in Central Indiana would be underused and would lose money. That declaration is reminiscent of another time when Indianapolis considered launching a new transit corridor. [Mass transit is more than wishful thinking | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

### **EDITORIAL: Despite I-69 vote, the fight to block it will go on**

Evansville Courier & Press

3/18/12

As much as we would like to declare here today that the fighting with a Bloomington, Ind., local government board is over, and construction of Interstate 69 can proceed with no further delays, we can't.

Yes, the Bloomington/Monroe County Metropolitan Planning Organization voted by the narrowest of margins on March 9 to include a 1.75 mile stretch of the Evansville-to-Indianapolis highway in its local transportation plan, an essential step if federal funds are to be used. But as we have long warned, some of these people will not give up the fight to stop the highway until travelers going north can see Indianapolis's downtown skyline from I-69 on the capital city's south side. Indeed, no sooner had the 7-6 vote been taken than Mark Stoops, a Monroe County commissioner who voted against the highway, raised the question of whether the vote count is invalid because the son of one of the other board members, Bill Williams, the county highway director, works for a company that received one of the I-69 construction contracts. Highway opponents say this represents a conflict of interest, meaning the vote would be 6-6, and the I-69 approval would be void. [EDITORIAL: Despite I-69 vote, the fight to block it will go on » Evansville Courier & Press](#)

### **Will privatized road take a toll on Indiana?**

Indianapolis Star

3/18/12

When Indiana leased its Toll Road to a foreign consortium in 2006, the state got \$3.85 billion and the consortium got the next 75 years' worth of tolls plus the responsibility of maintaining the road. So why should the federal government contribute to that maintenance? That's what Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., wondered. He authored a successful amendment to the Senate's version of a transportation bill that removes privatized highways from the calculation used to distribute federal highway funds to states.

Bingaman said it doesn't make sense for a state to get federal funding to maintain a road "once it has been shifted out of the public sphere." But Gov. Mitch Daniels called it a "backward and senseless proposal" that he hopes the House will put "directly in the wastebasket of bad ideas."

[Will privatized road take a toll on Indiana? | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

### **Costs for 5-point roundabout in Valpo increase by \$1.12M**

NWI Times

3/19/12

VALPARAISO | With plans for a five-point roundabout nearly finished, the city now knows how much land it will need for the project. The bad news is it also knows how much it will cost. Stuart Summers, executive director of the city's Redevelopment Commission, told the commission last week the appraisals are in and the cost will be about \$1.12 million higher than the \$452,778 originally budgeted for land acquisition. The roundabout will replace the intersection of Vale Park Road, North Calumet Avenue and Roosevelt Road. City Engineering Director Tim Burkman said the original estimate was made based on what officials assumed would be needed and on the estimated value of that property. The total of \$1.5 million includes the cost of having the appraisals done, having the appraisals reviewed, getting legal descriptions of the parcels,

recording the sale and presenting the offers to the property owners. American Structurepoint, which is designing the roundabout, is being paid \$70,500 for all of the work associated with the acquisition. [Costs for 5-point roundabout in Valpo increase by \\$1.12M](#)

### **Funding lined up for Hammond road improvement projects**

NWI Times

3/19/12

HAMMOND| Projects on Indianapolis Boulevard and Chicago Avenue — deemed critical by the city — now have the local funding necessary to begin. The Hammond City Council earlier this month approved taking out a \$16 million loan to leverage more federal dollars for the projects. The money will kick-start 16 projects in the city, including four trail projects, city officials said. "I was really getting nervous that I'd lose some of the federal money," City Engineer Stan Dostatni said. Dostatni said the city has gained approval from the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission for projects, but coming up with local funds was a struggle. The Chicago Avenue project will feature a total rebuild of the road stretching from the East Chicago line to the Illinois state line. Crews will make the more than two-mile stretch into four lanes and smooth out a problematic curb at Sheffield Avenue and Chicago where trucks have lost loads. A traffic circle, which is similar to a roundabout, is planned at Sheffield and Gostlin Street. [Funding lined up for Hammond road improvement projects](#)

### **Highway signs to help drivers time commutes**

Indianapolis Star

3/20/12

GREENWOOD, Ind. (WTW) — In the next month, signs along interstates will tell motorists how much longer their commute will be when traffic gets tied up in an accident. The Indiana Department of Transportation has installed 14 travel-time signs along central Indiana roadways, including interstates 65, 70, 69 and 465, which show how many minutes it will take to go a certain number of miles. One of the signs is on northbound I-65, just south of County Line Road. Once they are turned on, the signs will show how many minutes motorists' trip will take. For example, commuters headed into Indianapolis on I-65 will know how many minutes until they reach I-465 and I-70. [Highway signs to help drivers time commutes | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

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[www.buildindianacouncil.org](http://www.buildindianacouncil.org)