



# **BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL**

## **Infrastructure Media Summary**

### **September 11, 2012**

#### **State Leaders: Federal Highway Bill a 'Victory' For Indiana**

Inside INdiana Business

9/4/12

Indiana is known as the Crossroads of America, and many state leaders are applauding the passage of a new federal highway bill that includes "major victories" for Hoosier highways. The bill gives Indiana nearly \$1 billion a year for highway spending, more decision-making power on how the money is allocated and less red tape to contend with, which often slowed highway projects. While state leaders caution the bill isn't perfect, they are cheering Indiana's increased funding levels. The legislation gives the state \$922 million for 2013, which is equal to 2012. In 2014, the amount increases to \$930 million, marking the first time in history that every state will receive an across the board increase. Congressman Larry Buschon (R-08) had a significant hand in crafting the bill as the only Indiana representative on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and Highway Bill Conference Committee. "The funding is based on the federal gas tax; our state sends 18.4 cents per gallon of gasoline to Washington, D.C. for the highway trust fund, and then we receive back a certain amount of money," says Rep. Buschon. "Most recently, Indiana was only getting back 92 cents on the dollar. With the increase that we'll get in fiscal year 2014, the state will get back 97 cents on the dollar." [State Leaders: Federal Highway Bill a 'Victory' For Indiana - INdiana Connections - Inside INdiana Business with Gerry Dick](#)

#### **First beam erected for Vale Park bridge over Indiana 49 in Valparaiso**

Post-Tribune

9/6/12

VALPARAISO — The bridge at Vale Park Road over Indiana 49 is taking shape — literally. Thursday night, workers put the first beam into place, over the southbound lanes of Indiana 49. Placement of the 90-foot, 44-ton beam took just under half an hour. Starting at 7 p.m. Friday, workers will begin placing beams on the stretch over the northbound lanes. Drivers can expect periodic road closures until about 6 a.m. Saturday. In all, 12 beams will reach across the state highway, a visible sign that the project is moving forward. "It will really start looking like a bridge once we've got the spans over the roadway," said Kerry Dubyel, engineer on site for American Structurepoint, one of the contract firms involved with the roadwork. She added that getting the beams in place was "a big step." Much of the work on the project, which began in early June, should be complete by late November, said Matt Deitchley, media relations director for the LaPorte district of the Indiana Department of Transportation. [First beam erected for Vale Park bridge over Indiana 49 in Valparaiso - Post-Tribune](#)

#### **Lawmakers see rough road ahead for transportation funding**

NWI Times  
9/6/12

INDIANAPOLIS | With money from the Indiana Toll Road lease set to run out in the next three years, a panel of state lawmakers Thursday began looking at how Indiana will pay for roads and bridges in the future. They discovered it won't be easy. New federal fuel-efficiency standards are expected to reduce gasoline tax revenue, typically the primary funding source for transportation projects. In addition, congressional Republicans have vowed to significantly cut federal spending, likely reducing federal funds available for state roadwork. Meanwhile, the Democratic and Republican candidates for Indiana governor both have said they plan to reduce taxes, which could reduce state funding for roads and bridges. At the same time, many local governments are already cash-strapped due to property tax limits. State Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, said the goal of the House-Senate infrastructure study committee is to "get past the political hyperbole" and determine "how big is the problem and what do we need to do to fund it long term." "We're trying to take a more empirical approach," Soliday said. One possibility is greater use of public-private partnerships for toll-road projects, such as the pending deal to rebuild the Cline Avenue Bridge in East Chicago. Lawmakers also heard details about a per-mile vehicle tax, instead of or in addition to the gasoline tax, as well as new technology to make roads last longer. [Lawmakers see rough road ahead for transportation funding : Elections](#)

**River Fields, National Trust seek to revoke federal approval for Ohio River Bridges Project**  
The Courier-Journal  
9/7/12

Two groups involved in a long-running lawsuit over the Ohio River Bridges Project are asking a judge to rule that the federal approvals for the project are illegal and the two-bridge plan should be halted. River Fields, a Louisville-based conservancy, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation allege in an amended complaint filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court that the Federal Highway Administration failed to follow environmental and transportation laws when it approved the revised bridges project in June. The project is set to begin construction early next year, and U.S. District Judge John G. Heyburn II has ordered briefs to be submitted before March. Chuck Wolfe, a spokesman for the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, said the filings were expected and do not change the state's work on a new downtown bridge and rebuilt Spaghetti Junction as part of the \$2.6 billion plan. Kentucky expects to select a lead contractor by the end of the year. "There is no injunction that prevents us from moving ahead, and the cabinet's intention is to move ahead," Wolfe said. The Indiana Department of Transportation does not comment on litigation, but the state "believes that the environmental analysis for the Ohio River Bridges Project was thorough and performed in compliance with the law," spokesman Will Wingfield said in a statement. [River Fields, National Trust seek to revoke federal approval for Ohio River Bridges Project | The Courier-Journal | courier-journal.com](#)

**INDOT sets priorities and funding**  
WBNI  
9/7/12

With a new state budget in the works during the next legislative session, Indiana Department of Transportation Commissioner Michael Kline said he's formulating the state's priorities and how to pay for them. Commissioner Kline said he wants to look at both the short and long term future. He said, in the next year, several significant projects from the Major Moves program are scheduled to open, including portions of I-69, the Hoosier Heartland Highway and other roads and bridges. "We are very focused on getting those open so that they are in service and providing value," Kline said. Kline said the long-term focus is on finding new and innovative ways to fund the state's transportation needs by preserving the state's roads and bridges. "As we get into the budget sessions over the next several months with the General Assembly, we'll have to get into very

specific things in two-year increments,” Kline said. Kline said he wants INDOT to look at existing and underutilized resources as solutions for the state’s funding needs, but didn’t go into specifics on what those resources might be. During a discussion with a legislative study committee, Kline talked about increased tolling as an option, including plans for tolls on the Ohio River Bridges project. [INDOT sets priorities and funding | Northeast Indiana Public Radio](#)

### **Cass Area Transit seeks city funding**

Pharos-Tribune

9/9/12

LOGANSPORT — Cass Area Transit is asking the city of Logansport for funding it says will help to keep the public transportation system up and running. Beau Beard, the agency’s executive director, said the organization relies mostly on state and federal funding, but it also receives support from fees it charges to riders and from fundraising and donations. The agency revealed last year that it was under orders from the Indiana Department of Transportation to boost the level of local funding for the operation, which relies primarily on state and federal dollars. The agency receives about \$45,000 annually from the United Way of Cass County, and county commissioners this year have boosted their allocation to about \$25,000 from the current \$10,000. Beard has asked the city to contribute \$10,000. The agency operates on an annual budget of about \$950,000, a small fraction of which comes from fees charged to riders. Those fees total \$2 for riders within the city and \$3 for those outside the city. The transportation system is available to anyone and is licensed to go anywhere in Indiana. Beard says the farthest the vehicles generally travel is Indianapolis and Fort Wayne. [Cass Area Transit seeks city funding » Local News » Pharos-Tribune](#)

### **WILLIAM NANGLE: Gregg, Pence need to commit to Cline bridge**

NWI Times

9/9/12

Is there a game being played with rebuilding the Cline Avenue Bridge? It has been more than two years since the bridge was closed, deemed unsafe for traffic. And it's been two years since Gov. Mitch Daniels pledged the bridge would be rebuilt. Since that time the state highway department deemed the bridge unnecessary, plotted a permanent detour and commenced demolition of the bridge. But wait! The folks at the Indiana Department of Transportation, aka INDOT, seemed to awake to the reality that a Cline Avenue Expressway with a detour wouldn't work. They first advanced a plan to have the state finance a new bridge, but the estimated \$150 million-plus price tag killed the idea. As a second act, they began negotiations with a private company to build and operate a toll bridge. Those talks have gone on and on for more than a year with state officials occasionally reporting they are still in talks. East Chicago Mayor Anthony Copeland and the City Council have moved quickly to embrace and help facilitate construction of a new Cline bridge. The nagging question seems to be whether the state is serious about rebuilding the bridge. Are INDOT officials just going through the motions until a new governor takes office in hopes the bothersome bridge is forgotten? I certainly hope that isn't the case. [WILLIAM NANGLE: Gregg, Pence need to commit to Cline bridge](#)

### **Lesley Weidenbener | State, nation face tough calls on future transportation funding**

Courier-Journal

9/9/12

INDIANAPOLIS — As states across the nation have struggled to deal with tight transportation budgets, Indiana has been blessed with cash to fund many of the road and bridge projects on its priority list. But those days will soon be ending and public officials — and probably the public at large — will need to start making tough decisions to deal with that reality. None of the options will

be popular. They involve tax hikes and tolls or major pullbacks in government's role in not just building new highways but maintaining existing roads. And the answer may be some combination of all those things. Such discussions already are well underway in other states and some have even piloted programs to base taxes on miles traveled rather fuel gallons purchased. In Indiana, Gov. Mitch Daniels — with help from a GOP-majority General Assembly — leased the state's only toll road to a private firm for a big upfront payment of \$3.8 billion, money that's been used on projects all over the state. [Lesley Weidenbener | State, nation face tough calls on future transportation funding | The Courier-Journal | courier-journal.com](#)

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