

HIGHWAY EXTENSION AND RESEARCH PROJECT FOR INDIANA COUNTIES SUMMARY 1975-1976

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INTRODUCTION

“The more things change the more they remain the same.” I fail to recall the author of this seemingly contradictory quotation, but in many respects it fits the pattern of activity with HERPIC. Some of the items included in this HERPIC summary are new activities—yet others are continuing, repetitive activities that more or less follow the calendar.

COUNTY BRIDGES

At last year’s Road School, we reported on the results of the county bridge safety survey that was nearing completion. The great numbers of bridges with low-load ratings was truly appalling. Some 6,500 bridges unsafe for standard school buses generates public attention.

Through the good offices of Indiana Highways for Survival—notably Art Graham and Jim Newland—the report on “Unsafe County Bridges” was given wide news publicity throughout the state.

On March 23, 1975, the *Indianapolis Sunday Star* featured a front-page, masthead story, plus a lead editorial, on the critical needs to replace or repair some 9,500 county bridges. This news story was given wide coverage by all the news media throughout the state and has gone far in capturing public attention to the critical need for county bridge replacement and repair.

To further heighten public attention to the county bridge problem, Indiana Highways for Survival selected this subject for the production of a public service movie that speaks to current highway needs in Indiana. After a flurry of field trips to select county bridge site locations that would typify the problem, the camera crew moved in to photograph the bridges.

The end result was *Bridge Out*, a 25-minute, color and sound movie that focuses on weak, obsolete county bridges in Indiana and the problems they generate for school bus transportation and farming operations. The film was made in cooperation with the Indiana School Drivers Association and the Safety Division for the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The film production *Bridge Out* emphasizes three points that bear repeating:

- 6,500 Indiana county bridges unsafe for standard school buses
- Every school day in Indiana 8,750 school buses transport 650,000 school children and travel 330,000 miles
- Over 5,000 school buses are 66- to 84-passenger capacities, having loaded gross weights of 11 tons to 14 tons.

Bridge Out has been shown on many of the TV channels throughout the state. *Bridge Out* has likewise been shown to many different public-service organizations throughout the state. HERPIC has made a concentrated effort to publicize the availability of the film and to show the film to any group, large or small, on request. It's only through public awareness and public support that we can ever hope to conquer the problem.

While the production of *Bridge Out* was solely a project of Indiana Highways for Survival, HERPIC is grateful for the opportunity to cooperate in this public service effort. And, in behalf of the county commissioners and county road officials in Indiana, we are especially grateful that Indiana Highways for Survival would select county bridges as their priority subject for current highway needs in Indiana.

As a final note on county bridges, consider this. If all of Indiana's 14,000+ county bridges were built end-to-end, it would reach from Fort Wayne, Indiana, to Louisville, Kentucky. And if one started out from Fort Wayne, in Allen County, he could go as far as the next county, Wells County, about eight miles or so beyond Bluffton, on bridges that meet safety standards for roadway width (22 feet or more). From south of Bluffton on to Louisville however, one would be on either one-lane or narrow bridges. Chances are, though, that he would not reach Louisville because a dozen or so of those bridges would probably be closed or collapsed, awaiting repair or a new bridge.

COUNTY HIGHWAY SALARY SURVEY

Last year, as for the past ten years or so, HERPIC compiled its "Annual Survey of Salaries, Work Schedules, and Benefits of Indiana

County Highway Departments.” This report is compiled from a questionnaire request to the county highway clerk in each county.

This request is usually sent out in the month of June, and on the basis of the questionnaire returns, a report is compiled to show (for each of the 92 counties) the salaries of administrative and supervisory personnel, the wage rates for all hourly employees, work schedules, overtime provisions, and authorized leave; also, retirement, hospitalization, and insurance benefits.

The salary survey report, along with the salaries of county commissioners, the most current cost-of-living index from the U.S. Department of Labor, and the current regulations from the Wage and Hour Division, is returned to the county commissioners, county auditor, county highway clerk, supervisor, and engineer of each county in late June or early July. This report provides a convenient means of comparing salary schedules between counties and is quite helpful in weighing the justification for increases in salaries, wages, and benefits.

A statistic or two may be of some interest here. Last year our 92 county highway departments had a total of 3,750 regular employees, of which 1,440 were truck drivers, with salary ranges of \$2.47 to \$4.69 an hour.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Collective bargaining for public employees has arrived in Indiana—and in many other states for that matter. The 1975 session of the General Assembly enacted Public Law 254, which authorizes public employees to bargain collectively with the public employer.

Since county highway employees were likely to be the first group in the county to be represented by a union and since the Board of County Commissioners was almost certain to be designated the “employer” for the county unit, HERPIC mounted a crash effort to develop resource materials for an orientation program on labor relations for county officials, with special emphasis on the county commissioners and county road personnel.

Collective bargaining, being somewhat foreign to county government in Indiana, provided a real challenge. However, a few phone calls to some of our county engineer associates in other states, who were experienced hands in the field of collective bargaining, followed by a review and sorting of publications on labor relations, and produced a collection of resource materials that provided county commissioners and other county road officials with an orientation and some expert guidance in the field of collective bargaining.

Incidentally, county highway departments in the state of Michigan have been involved in collective bargaining since the early 1940's. With them its a way of life—an exercise that comes around every two or three years.

The orientation on Public Law 254 and collective bargaining was presented to county road officials at six area road schools held over the state in late August and early September. The resource materials included a copy of the law plus administrative guidelines, a glossary of terms on labor relations, reprinted articles and references on labor relations, and an example of a collective bargaining agreement.

With this initial orientation completed, additional follow-up schools will be organized on this subject to meet the developing needs of county road officials in negotiating and administering collective bargaining agreements with their county road employees.

As a footnote to collective bargaining, you will be interested to know that in late December 1975, the Indiana attorney general's office handed down a ruling designating the Board of County Commissioners in each county as the "Employer for the County" within the scope of Public Law 254. Another note on the legal side is the fact that the Benton County Circuit Court has recently ruled that the law is unconstitutional on the grounds that one section denies judicial review coupled with a bill-drafting omission that failed to include a severability clause. This decision has been appealed to a higher court, placing Public Law 254 in a legal limbo until the issue is decided by a higher court or until correction is made by legislative remedy.

Notwithstanding these uncertainties, HERPIC plans a series of area meetings, probably during the month of May or June, on the subject of "Supervision and Personnel Management." This, after all, is where we need some remedies that would perhaps forestall the interest in the collective bargaining issue.

HIGHWAY FINANCE

The fall-off of highway revenue coupled with inflation (which increases the scarcity of highway funds) makes highway finance a compelling subject for many organizations, including HERPIC. It becomes a matter of curious speculation by many county highway officials (also city street officials) as to whether the monthly draw of MVH funds will stay even with last year or drop off to cause a cut-back in planned expenditures.

Looking at the highway revenue picture for the past two years is a pretty dismal exercise. A few comparisons will show why. For

calendar year 1975, motor fuel tax receipts were down by \$200,000 from the previous year; motor vehicle license fees were down by \$2.4 million. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1—COMPARISON OF INDIANA HIGHWAY REVENUE FOR CALENDAR YEARS 1974 AND 1975

	1974 (\$1,000)	1975 (\$1,000)	Difference (\$1,000)
MOTOR VEHICLE HIGHWAY ACCOUNT			
Receipts			
Motor Fuel Tax	185,524	185,285	— 239
Motor Vehicle License Fees	61,249	58,803	— 2,446
Net Receipts	248,702	254,476	+ 5,774
+ General Fund Transfer		+ 21,760	
Adjust. Net	248,702	276,236	+27,534
Expenses	42,450	46,994	+ 4,544
LOCAL ROAD AND STREET ACCOUNT			
Receipts	42,477	37,521	— 4,956

Net receipts, however are up \$5.7 million, mainly because the state police subsidy from the MVHA was reduced from 75 percent back down to 50 percent where it was supposed to be. Add to this the \$21.6 million transfer authorized by the 1975 Budget Act and the net receipts for 1975 are raised to \$276 million.

While the transfer from the general fund improved the highway finance picture and speaks well for the generosity and consideration of the state budget authorities, it is still only a temporary remedy. Meanwhile, the MVHA expenses for 1975—the overhead—increased \$4.5 million over the previous year.

Looking only at the total amount of highway-user revenues available for distribution for the past three calendar years, (1973-1974-1975) we find they are \$207.7, \$206.2 and \$207.4 millions respectively. While this indicates a period of stagnation, a better and truer measure of the highway revenue pulse is to be had by looking at the local road and street account. These funds have no overhead or expense deductions to cloud the income picture.

Looking at the receipts of local road and street funds (Table 1) for the past two years, we find that 1975 brought a decline of almost \$5 million over the previous year. One has to conclude the obvious:

highway revenues are in a steep slide. A major overhaul of our highway finance structure is needed if we are to bring any kind of order to our highway program—be it state, city, or county.

Apparently the General Assembly sees this problem in a similar perspective, since it requested, through Senate Bill 278 passed this past session, a complete study of highway finance to be completed by November 1976.

FEDERAL REVENUE-SHARING FUNDS

This is a special area of local government finance that is available to counties, cities, and towns for a variety of local government functions, including the construction, maintenance, and repair of local roads, streets, and bridges. From the inception of federal revenue sharing funds in 1972, HERPIC has emphasized to county commissioners the opportunity to use these funds for county road and bridge improvements.

In order to monitor the usage of revenue-sharing funds for roads and streets, HERPIC has compiled an annual report on federal revenue sharing funds for three successive years, 1973, 1974, and 1975. Each report compiles the payments, appropriations, and road and street usage for each county, including cities and towns.

The 1975 annual report has just been compiled and will be distributed to county road officials in a few weeks. A state-wide summary for the past three years demonstrates the experience record to date.

Payments to counties for this three-year period totalled \$105 million and for cities and towns \$157 million. Of the amounts appropriated, the counties have used some \$43 million for roads, while cities and towns used some \$35 million for streets. These figures include all categories of expenditures (i.e., roads, bridges, equipment, buildings, repair, maintenance, construction). See Table 2.

In comparing the usage of revenue-sharing funds for roads and streets, one must keep in mind that there are many other authorized uses for federal revenue-sharing funds.

Many counties have used these funds for the construction of new county jails or other county buildings, while many cities have used their funds to construct or reconstruct sewage disposal plants or improved fire protection. There has also been a continuing demand for these funds to support local social services. For these several reasons we should not fault local officials for making greater use of federal revenue-sharing funds for road and street purposes.

Note that appropriations for township units were not compiled or reported, the reason being that townships in Indiana have no road or

street responsibilities. Likewise, many townships have few if any functions that qualify for use of federal revenue-sharing funds.

TABLE 2—STATE-WIDE SUMMARY
FEDERAL REVENUE SHARING FUNDS FOR
INDIANA LOCAL UNITS

Calendar Years 1973-1974-1975

PAYMENTS AND APPROPRIATIONS
ROAD AND STREET USE

	Payments 73-74-75	Total Appropriations	Percent Payments	Road and Street Appropriations	Percent Total
	(\$1,000)	(\$1,000)		(\$1,000)	
Counties	\$105,093	\$ 93,715	89%	\$43,629	47%
Cities and Towns	157,382	127,112	81	35,323	28
Township	36,825	
Totals	299,300	220,828		78,954	36

In this connection, make special note of the fact that House Bill 1343, passed this last session of the Legislature, authorizes townships to transfer funds to counties for the construction, repair, and maintenance of roads and bridges. While the bill does not mention revenue-sharing funds, its real intent was to authorize the transfer of the township's revenue sharing funds for the county's use on roads and bridges, especially for bridges.

USAGE OF FAS FUNDS

Federal-aid Secondary (FAS) funds for county road use were created by the 1944 Federal-Aid Highway Act. The FAS program to counties had its start-up in 1946 when the first appropriation was made available. During this 30-year period that FAS funds have been available to counties, the administrative policy and procedure for the use of these funds has been generally uniform and consistent.

Recently and for the next few months ahead, the administrative policy and procedure for FAS funds, as well as all other federal-aid highway funds, is in the process of being restructured. The federal requirement for an annual program request, plus the re-alignment of the federal-aid highway systems, constitute major changes in policy and procedure. The intent of these changes is to provide better planning

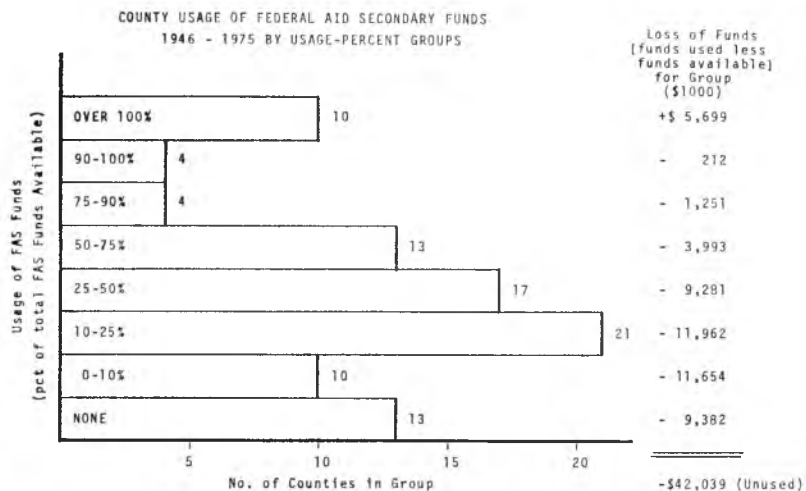
and continuity to all federal-aid highway programs. However, this redirection of policy will close a 30-year era of FAS procedure for the county federal-aid program in Indiana and will set a new course and pattern for county FAS procedure to be followed in the future.

On the premise that past experience provides a useful guide for the future, HERPIC has compiled a summary report on the usage of FAS funds by our Indiana county highway departments over the past 30 years. (See Table 3.) Hopefully, the past experience record of the individual county, as well as the the 92 counties as a group, will provide a useful guidance and perspective to Indiana county road officials in approaching this redirection of federal-aid policy and procedure.

TABLE 3—FEDERAL-AID SECONDARY HIGHWAY FUNDS

Apportionments to State of Indiana : 1946-1975			
Year	Indiana Apportionment	Year	Indiana Apportionment
1946	\$3 622 366	1961	\$6 549 726
1947	3 623 057	1962	6 728 628
1948	3 577 626	1963	6 678 936
1949	1964	6 979 435
1950	3 193 419	1965	7 067 512
1951	3 179 477	1966	7 107 822
1952	3 648 852	1967	7 109 892
1953	3 616 889	1968	7 094 974
1954	4 020 406	1969	7 072 289
1955	4 028 914	1970	7 674 524
1956	4 667 153	1971	7 632 064
1957	5 952 360	1972	7 770 708
1958	5 460 115	1973	7 843 132
1959	7 388 093	1974	9 016 681
1960	5 730 357	1975	9 343 217
Total Fas Apportionments to state of Indiana for 30-Year Period, 1946-1975.....\$173 378 624 Available to Indiana County Highway Depts.....\$ 86 689 312 (50 percent of total)			

Through a diligent search of the records maintained by the Indiana State Highway Commission, HERPIC has compiled what is believed to be a complete historical report on the county FAS projects undertaken for the period 1946 through 1975. This report consists of a computer-



ized listing of each project (see example for Adams County that follows) with a record of the following:

- (a) Year of award
- (b) Project number
- (c) Contract number
- (d) Total cost
- (e) Federal funds used
- (f) Project length
- (g) Project description

This project data is listed by county unit and by type of project (i.e., road projects, bridge projects, and flasher projects). A summation is made for each type of project as to the number and totals for total cost, federal funds, and length of project. A county total summation of each of these items is also compiled. These same items of data are also listed as a grand summary of county totals and ending with state-wide totals. (See Table 4.)

An important highlight of this report is the fact that, over the past 30 years, Indiana county highway departments (as a total group) have used only a little over one-half of the FAS funds available to them, allowing approximately \$42 million in FAS funds to lapse to the use of the state highway department.

For the period 1946 through 1975, FAS funds apportioned to Indiana totaled \$173,378,624. Federal regulations require that 50 percent (\$86,689,312) be made available for county use. During this same period, the 92 counties used only \$44.6 million of the \$86.6 mil-

SUMMARY OF INDIANA COUNTY FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY PROJECTS

Award Year	Project Number	Contract Number	Total Cost (\$)	Federal Funds (\$)	Project Length (Mi.)	Project Description
1-Adams County						
51	S - 215 (1)	R-3423	36388	18194	2.986	Extend N from SR 124
51	S - 215 (2)	R-3423	25540	12770	2.818	From 1.5 Mi. to 4.3 Mi. N of US 224 at Preble
53	S - 264 (1)	R-3642	10358	5179	2.123	From Piqua Rd. 0.25 Mi. NE Decatur to FAS Rt. 613
53	S - 265 (1)	R-3642	16504	8252	3.046	From US 27 west 3 Mi., S. of Decatur
55	S - 313 (1)	R-3902	27035	13517	3.000	FAS 617—From SR 118 S 2 Mi. then E 1 Mi.
55	S - 215 (4)	R-3902	29127	14563	3.007	1 Mi. N of SR 118 to 2 Mi. S of SR 124
56	S - 265 (3)	R-4052	17290	8645	1.976	1.976 Mi. E from Wells-Adams C/L 3 Mi. S of US 224
56	S - 365 (1)	R-4052	20878	10439	2.183	2.183 Mi. E from 1 Mi. S CF Salem
57	S - 313 (2)	R-4191	61503	30751	4.039	Between SR 118 + Salem 2.7 Mi. W of Ohio State line
58	S - 503 (1)	R-4463	57020	28510	3.015	SR 101 2.5 Mi. N of US 224
58	DS - 365 (4)	R-4514	17000	11333	.950	5 to 4 Mi. W of US 27 3 Mi. N of SR 118
62	S - 503 (3)	R-5807	48973	24486	.846	Jct. US 27 + 33 E for 0.846 Mi. N of Monmouth
71	S - 1081 (3)	R-8550	140244	70122	2.047	1.3 Mi. NW SR 101 to 0.5 Mi. S US 224, FAS 615
71	S - 1016 (2)	R-8550	95833	47916	1.342	SR 101 Decatur W 1.029 Mi. on Co Rd W SR 101 NW 2.362 Mi.
73	S - 1145 (1)	R-9559	555866	280155	5.706	Co Rd from SR 218 E edge of Berne to S edge of Monroe
***15 RCAD Projects—Totals			1159559	584832	39.084	

57	S - 313 (3)	B-4420	23788	11894	.150	3 Mi. N SR 118 on FAS 617, Bridge
60	S - 215 (5)	B-5068	37600	18800	.180	John Barger Ditch on Co Rd 1.4 Mi. S of US 224 at Preble
60	S - 365 (5)	B-4971	19435	9717	.197	John Fuchs Ditch on Co Rd 2.04 Mi. W of US 27 in Berne
61	S - 365 (6)	B-5400	22259	11130	.095	Little Blue Cr on E-W Co Rd 1.25 Mi. E of US 27
64	S - 793 (1)	B-6458	65283	32641	.199	John Barger Ditch on Co Rd NW of Decatur
65	S - 1015 (1)	B-6820	39223	19611	.189	W-S Co Rd, Louis A Staub Ditch 3.5 Mi. N of US Rd 224
66	S - 1016 (1)	B-7106	46442	23221	.208	Piqua Rd, Twenty Seven Mile Cr 2.1 Mi. NW of SR 124 in Willshire
67	S - 215 (7)	B-7405	180262	90131	.603	Wabash R at Linn Grove 0.6 Mi. S of SR 218
68	S - 1081 (1)	B-7776	56299	28149	.340	Piqua Rd over Cr, 1.5 Mi. NW of SR 101
68	S - 1088 (1)	B-7806	75787	37893	.137	E-W Co Rd 650N, Holthouse Ditch 0.2 Mi. W of U.S. 27 at Decatur
72	S - 1135 (1)	B-9202	240785	120393	.423	Co Rd, Wabash R 0.8 Mi NE of US 27
***11 Bridge Projects—Totals			807163	403580	2.721	
56	S - 265 (4)	FL	9325	4610	—0	NYC RR at Curryville
62	S - 215 (6)	FL	10722	5361	—0	NYC + St L RR at Peterson
67	S - 1081 (2)	FL	33030	16315	—0	Erie RR, 1.5 Mi. S of Decatur, FAS 615
*** 3 Flasher Projects—Totals			53077	26486	0	
1-Adams County						
Grand Totals			2019799	1014898	41.805	

Listing of County FAS Projects Awarded to Contract in Adams County, Indiana, for Period of 1946-1975

***Herpic 03/04/76

TABLE 4—COUNTY USAGE OF FEDERAL-AID SECONDARY FUNDS

Type of Project	1946-1975 BY TYPE OF PROJECT			
	1946-1975 Number of Projects	1946-1975 By Type of Project Total Cost (\$1,000)	Federal Funds (\$1,000)	Project Length (miles)
Roads	199	\$18 831	\$ 9 568	408
Bridges	598	67 432	34 286	150
RR Flashers	108	1 590	794
State Totals	905	87 854	44 649	558

lion in FAS funds available to them, thus losing the potential use of some \$42 million in FAS funds.

The state-wide summary of county usage of FAS funds by type of project during this 30-year period indicates that some 905 county FAS projects were constructed, with 598 (66 percent) of the projects being county bridges, representing about 77 percent of the FAS funds used.

The full spectrum of usage is represented in the 92 counties. Contact HERPIC. Thirteen counties have not seen fit to use FAS funds during this 30-year period, while 10 counties, through the waiver system, have used more than 100 percent of the FAS funds available to them.

The completed report on usage of FAS funds by county highway departments, including the historical record of all the county FAS projects, is planned for distribution to county road officials in the next few weeks.

Hopefully, the report will stimulate Indiana county highway departments to make a fuller utilization of the available federal funds in the future. The current needs and mounting demands for county road improvements makes it incumbent on county road officials to maximize the use of all funds available for county road improvements, including federal-aid highway funds.

CONCLUSION

It has been indeed a privilege to share with you some of the highlights of HERPIC activity during the past year. The items reported focus mainly on the county highway extension side of the HERPIC program. Perhaps at some future road school there will be the opportunity to give some added emphasis to the HERPIC research efforts.