Plans for 1969-70 Non-Interstate Highways

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INTRODUCTION

It was 50 years ago in Oregon, just after World War I, that gasoline was first conceived as a logical means of helping to finance highways and was acclaimed by both government officials and taxpayers. The petroleum industry should be given a vote of thanks by highway and street people for being able to manage the petroleum industry in such a way as to have outstanding growth and profits and still have their products provide the bulk of the tax dollars used for the construction and maintenance of streets and highways.

Indiana and the Nation started in the late 1950’s to construct the Interstate System of Defense Highways. To date 617 of the total 972 miles of this system, excluding the northern Indiana Toll Road, are open to traffic, the remaining 355 miles are under construction or being placed under contract as fast as federal and state funds are provided for the work.

The total cost of this super-safe network of highways has been placed at about $1.3 billion or well over $1 million per mile.

I am sure the construction of the interstate system of highways will go down in history as the greatest single achievement this country has ever known.

INDIANA'S ABC SYSTEM IS GO

But at this point I must call your attention to the fact that the construction of the interstate has seriously effected our construction of the ABC system in Indiana.

In 1967 the legislature returned to the state funds previously borrowed from the highway account. They specified that about half of the returned funds were to be used on preliminary engineering on the high accident or “killer highways.” About 157 miles of plans have been substantially completed. Mr. Steinkamp, our design engineer, has estimated that the right-of-way and construction costs on this work will exceed $150 million.
Governor Whitcomb and members of the 96th General Assembly recognized the serious need for improvement on these highways and other roads on the primary, urban and secondary systems, as did many organizations interested in highway improvements. The recent General Assembly took action and passed legislation that will provide additional funds for the construction of primary and arterial roads and streets.

Two-Year Statutory Construction Program

As many of you know, we are required by action of the 1959 General Assembly to prepare annually a two-year statutory construction program. Now under House Bill 1025, passed by the 1969 General Assembly, we are also required to prepare and publish annually a supplement to this report on the status of the state's primary highways and to adopt and publish a long-range program of highway construction plans.

The method used in listing projects which are included in the statutory program indicates the activities planned for each project during the two-year period—the action could include any of the following activities:

1. Preliminary engineering
2. Right-of-way activity or purchase
3. Receiving bids.

Generally, depending on availability of funds, magnitude of the project, or the complexity of acquiring right-of-way, no single project can be included in the two-year statutory program for all three activities.

Programs are prepared by our planning division; they are presented to the commission for their approval and then assigned to the responsible division to perform their activity.

Additional Money for the Primary System

The new legislation states that the added revenue must be used exclusively on the state's federal-aid primary system (as previously outlined in Mr. Steele's talk) while the statutory program includes all systems, interstate, primary, secondary and urban.

We are now in the process of reviewing, advancing, and adding new projects for additional action in our two-year statutory construction program and developing the primary road program as required by the new legislation.

First, I should say that it is a little premature and presumptuous for me to get into too detailed a discussion of our planned ABC system programs for 1969-70. Up to now I have spent a great deal of
my available time in just getting acquainted with the current programs, budgets, new legislation, personnel matters and everyday meetings with various delegations, suppliers and service-type groups.

About $41 million will be available from April 1, 1969 to July 1, 1970 in the new primary account for the first year's program. After that $36 million is estimated to be available annually in this fund.

But, I can say, our first year's program with the new primary money will include sections of US 41 and 63 along the west side of the state, sections of US 31 between Indianapolis and South Bend, and sections of SR 37 in the Bloomington-Bedford area.

Since, as I mentioned earlier, the preliminary engineering is well along we will immediately start to acquire right-of-way and our right-of-way department says we will have enough purchased to start placing some of our first year's primary program under contract before the end of this year.

*The ABC System and the Two-Year Statutory Construction Program*

Now to talk about the ABC system in the two-year statutory construction program. This is the program that we are required to finance from the old tax revenues and is the same account on which our cash balance was down to $600 thousand in January of this year. Because of this low cash balance we were forced to defer some of our 50/50 financed road projects until our cash balance could be improved.

Fiscal year 1969-70 funds for the primary, urban and secondary roads in this program are provided as follows:

Federal Funds:  
- Primary $12,000,000  
- Secondary 4,355,335  
- Urban 6,078,000

or $22,433,335 (excluding the interstate) that must be matched by the state on a 50/50 basis. The roads in these systems are the ones we are having trouble preserving state funds to do the matching with.

In this program for early construction, to list a few, are the following:

*Primary*
- SR 3 in Henry County from I-70 to SR 38
- SR 12 in Porter County from Burns Ditch to SR 149
- US 31 in Miami County from Howard County line to SR 218
- US 30 Warsaw Bypass

*Urban*
- SR 7 in Columbus
- US 30 in Fort Wayne
US 41 in Evansville
SR 51 in Lake County is in for engineering
I-65 spur in Gary to US 12 and 20, P. E.

Secondary

SR 44 near Franklin
SR 48 in Jasonville
SR 56 East of Salem
SR 149 in Porter County
SR 258 Bridge over White River west of Seymour

In each category I have only attempted to list some of the major projects that are in the various programs for construction and have not in most cases mentioned the projects that are in the programs for preliminary engineering or purchase of right-of-way.

INTERSTATE AND TOLL ROADS

I think it's only fair at this point to mention that because of the lag in providing funds for the ABC systems, the failure of the Department of Transportation to allow Indiana a greater number of miles of interstate and the fact that the new tax cannot provide funds fast enough to pick up the lag in rebuilding these systems, thought should be given, where traffic and other conditions warrant, to building and paying for the construction of some of the needed roads with a user fee.

Concerning the interstate, I should mention that we will have all of I-65 under contract, from I-465 near Indianapolis to Gary, yet this year and all of I-65 from Louisville to Indianapolis, under contract in 1969, except from Greenwood to and including parts of the Indianapolis inner belt. I-70 from Indianapolis to Terre Haute will all be opened this year.

CONCLUSION

You can see that the Indiana State Highway Commission will have a busy year in 1969-70 and for many years to come.