



Association of Indiana Counties

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Intermodal Solutions to Indiana's Infrastructure Woes

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With the designation earlier this month as Infrastructure Week by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Council on Competitiveness and more than a dozen allied organizations, now is a good time to contemplate the difficult job county governments and others face in maintaining and enhancing our transportation infrastructure here in Indiana and nationally.

The current federal act for infrastructure funding, called MAP 21, is set to expire on Sept. 30 of this year. It is critical for economic development, public safety and the quality of local communities that Congress finds a way to increase funding for all modes of transportation.

Local governments face severe limits on what we can do to support our infrastructure. While we are expected to maintain a larger share of the roadway system than state or federal governments, we have the most restrictions on the funds we can rely on to handle the increasing loads that our roads carry.

Fortunately, there are ways besides additional funding that we can look to as solutions to the threats to the quality of our local pavements. One such alternative is through greater use of intermodal transportation, especially of freight and heavy loads.

Intermodal means that we ship goods on different vehicles for different parts of trips the goods take. Although intermodal trips occur every day all around us, it's good to point to an example. One example of such an intermodal event received media coverage in central Indiana just this month because of the unusual load involved.

A 200-ton electric transformer travelled hundreds of miles from a factory in Wisconsin by rail, to be unloaded in Martinsville, Ind. Those miles of rail travel saved highways and local roads from having to carry such a load, and avoided wear and tear on the pavement; the rail was a more energy-efficient means of transportation as well. Once the transformer was within 15

miles of its final destination, it was transferred to a special multi-axle trailer and driven at 10 miles-per-hour to a substation south of town.

One particularly bright spot in Indiana and across the nation is the high level of investment we see in the privately owned freight rail network. Right here in our state, intermodal activity can succeed because of private capital spending on rail like CSX's \$48.3 million investment near Indianapolis and Evansville or Canadian National's \$58 million intermodal terminals in Indianapolis to help freight bypass congested Chicago. The terminal represents a multi-million-dollar investment by Indiana Rail Road Co. and CN to serve Indiana shippers who move goods to and from Asia.

Some Indiana local governments even invest in rail for their own economic development purposes. Perry County's port authority, for example, helps local industries move goods to market.

Freight railroads invest over five times more than the average manufacturing company each year, and they are on track to invest a record \$26 billion to maintain, grow and modernize their networks in 2014 - at no expense to taxpayers. We cannot afford to underestimate the importance of infrastructure in attracting and retaining jobs and to our overall quality of life.

There is no doubt that America needs high-quality infrastructure to continue our economic recovery and to keep us competitive. Investments by railroads help reduce the taxpayer burden, and help to save local governments from having to invest even more in our local roads.

Jeff Quyle serves on the County Council in Morgan County and has also served as Morgan County Commissioner. He has extensive economic development experience through his work in the private sector, and service through his other board appointments.

Note to Editor: To download image of Jeff Quyle, [click here](#).

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About the AIC

The Association of Indiana Counties was established in 1957 for the betterment of county government. The various functions of the AIC include lobbying the Indiana General Assembly on behalf of counties, serving as a liaison between counties, state and federal agencies, and providing technical assistance and training to county officials and employees.

