

Accomplishments in 1970-1971 and Future Programs

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INTRODUCTION

The subject matter in this paper includes state highway activities and accomplishments over the past two years, plans for this biennium, with a little crystal ball gazing into the decade of the seventies. The past two years have been years of great progress; they have been years of hard work and positive action.

FIRST YEAR ACTIVITIES—1969

The activities of 1969 were centered around assisting in obtaining additional revenue for highway construction; letting as many contracts as possible in the first year of a new administration; preparing and initiating programs to attract young civil engineers in the department; increasing substantially hourly wage rates (14 percent) and the starting pay for civil engineers, 1, 2 and 3; for the first time paying employees medical insurance by the state, as well as improving retirement benefits; starting the first lettings on the "killer roads" with funds from the increased revenue; decreasing the number of personnel on the state highway payroll by over 10 percent—reducing from 5,866 in December of 1967 to 5,148 in December of 1970; reducing operational costs by implementing over 90 recommendations made by Governor Whitcomb's economy task force; plus making other internal adjustments, which have provided additional funds for the many needed highway improvements.

The personnel reduction in 1969, plus some of the other adjustments, saved well over 6 million dollars. The reduction in personnel, accomplished during the first year, is being carried forward and will continue to save at least 10 percent of our total personnel costs in the succeeding years.

This has been accomplished even though the contract work load has been increased by at least 12 percent.

Cut back in the preparation of design plans, by outside sources, was made to permit a closer balance between available funds for lettings

and plan preparation. This was done because plans become obsolete if they are forced to remain on the shelf too long.

Organization of the arterial road and street board, a highlight in which Chairman Ruel Steele skillfully set up the charter organization. In addition, Mr. Steele and our Indiana State Highway Commission provided vital assistance and direction in this local highway milestone program mandated by the 1969 Legislature.

Employment policies and practices were reviewed with progress made in equal employment opportunities. Periodic meetings were held with our district and central office supervisory people to discuss personnel policy so that they can be informed on all facets of equal employment opportunity. Additional personnel were assigned to this state highway section.

Our Research and Training Center here at West Lafayette, under the direction of Nobbie Walsh, provided important services for our entire operations by conducting many courses for inspectors, field office men, survey, and road construction layout crews.

District safety committees were organized to review and recommend improvements in highway design, maintenance, traffic controls, and to make on-site investigations of road accidents to provide added assistance in reducing traffic accidents.

In addition to the many sections of new highways let, 130 miles of highways and 35 large bridges were opened.

One of the major openings was I-70 between Terre Haute and Indianapolis—an important east-west traffic artery in Indiana.

SECOND YEAR ACTIVITIES—1970

Operations in the calendar year 1970 were even more gratifying; many programs and goals were achieved or moved along at an accelerated pace.

Indiana was able to raise its position in the use of interstate funds. On January 31 of this year, we were ranked third in the nation in the obligation of interstate highway trust funds.

During 1970, 52.3 miles of interstate freeways with controlled access, and 30 miles of new safe and more convenient primary roads were opened to traffic.

The final links of Interstate 465, the 56-mile outer belt around Indianapolis, was completed and opened to traffic—a noteworthy accomplishment in the history of the state. As an added point of interest concerning this magnificent highway, one section on the southwest corner

is now carrying over 70,000 vehicles per day and is estimated to carry 86,000 vehicles in 1975.

This I-465 beltway is the only system of its kind in the nation, which serves as a central terminus for seven interstate highways. Thirty-one interchanges efficiently distribute traffic to every section of the city and county.

A 26.3-mile section of I-65 was opened from S.R. 25 east of Lafayette, to S.R. 24 near Remington, an added important link leading to the final completion of Interstate 65 from the Gary-Hammond area south-southeast to the Ohio River at Jeffersonville. Traffic congestion on the U.S. 52 Lafayette Bypass was substantially reduced by this opening. Also, this was the first section of the interstate to have a new safety design concept used on overhead bridges. Under this modern design method, only one pier is built in the roadway area. The old design had three piers in this same area, two of which were close to the driving lanes; thereby being serious potential traffic hazards. Twelve bridges over the interstate, using this design method, were built in this link.

Additional links of Interstate 69 northeast of Indianapolis were opened permitting interstate travel all the way from Indianapolis northeast to the Indiana-Michigan State Line with the exception of a short section between I-465 and Fisher. These openings relieved serious heavy truck traffic congestion on S.R. 67, an overloaded state highway not designed to carry today's modern heavy high-speed traffic.

A section of U.S. 30 in Marshall and Kosciusko Counties from the Inwood Road east of Plymouth east 8.8 miles to Hoffman Lake west of Warsaw was opened, leaving only one section around Warsaw to complete the dual-laning of U.S. 30 from Fort Wayne northwest to U.S. 41 south of Hammond.

More contracts were let and awarded in 1970 than any other year in the 50-year history of the highway department, even with the July 9th cutback of 16 million dollars on an annual basis of federal trust fund money.

In 1970, the year of the mini's, maxi's and midi's, \$164,312,560 in contracts were let and awarded. The previous high year was \$141.5 million in 1966.

These lettings included two important final gaps on I-65—one between the I-465 outerbelt around Indianapolis north to S.R. 25 east of Lafayette, and the other south of the I-465 outerbelt around Indianapolis south to Greenwood.

Three major lettings were held on the super expressways inside Indianapolis—I-65 and I-70. One of these projects was 1.01 mile section that had two 3,700-foot overhead bridges to be constructed in a highly concentrated business area in near downtown Indianapolis, between West Street and Massachusetts Avenue. The bid price on the project was over 10 million dollars—the largest dollar value contract ever let by the Indiana State Highway Commission.

Five projects were let on I-64, the east-west interstate that crosses southern Indiana from New Albany to the Indiana-Illinois state line, northwest of Evansville. Three of these projects were east from U.S. 41 and two west from the top of the knobs west of New Albany, west to Milltown.

A large contract was let jointly by Indiana and Kentucky for the superstructure on the Ohio River Bridge on I-275, the outerbelt around Cincinnati, that extends into Indiana for 3.5 miles east of Lawrenceburg, Indiana.

I-94, the east-west interstate along Lake Michigan, the so-called “missing link” highway that joins the industrial areas in Indiana, Illinois and Michigan, had major lettings in late 1969 and early 1970.

In this area, progress on the construction of the U.S. 52 Bypass was made. Two additional major contracts were let, extending the improvement of a divided lane facility from Union Street on the east of Lafayette, to just west of the Wabash River.

Lettings on the so-called “killer road” program has exceeded our expectations. Since the added revenue became available for construction on the primary system, 51.29 miles have been let for a total cost of contract bids, engineering and land acquisition of \$57,765,109. Lettings are ahead of revenue received.

Included in these lettings were important sections of dual-laning of U.S. 41 between Vincennes and Terre Haute. On S.R. 37 in the Bedford-Bloomington-Martinsville area; U.S. 31 south of Peru; U.S. 30, the Warsaw Bypass, the final link in the dual-laning of U.S. 30 between Fort Wayne and U.S. 41, south of Hammond; replacement bridges were bid for the controversial “stop light” bridge on U.S. 31 north of Rochester; and for a new bridge over White River on S.R. 57 north of Petersburg—a section of road and bridge that has long been considered a killer section of highway.

The department and the motorist owe a debt of gratitude to the last General Assembly, which had the guts to provide the increase in revenue which made it possible to let construction contracts on these seriously needed improvements.

Our graduate civil engineering recruiting program was aggressively pursued and resulted in the commission acquiring a net of 37 young engineers.

In addition to the hard work of our recruiting personnel, this outstanding record could not have been achieved without the full support of many individuals and the construction industry.

During the year many of our personnel received two salary adjustments, in addition to their annual merit increase. This would not have been possible without the reduction in personnel initiated in 1969.

Because of the expiration of the federal highway trust fund law during 1970, and the groups in the nation that were trying to exploit this source of revenue for other than highway construction, our department, the highway and equipment industry, and many in our congressional delegation worked hard to assist in getting a nation-wide acceptable new federal highway trust fund law so badly needed to carry on highway construction programs in the state. An acceptable law was approved by the congress and signed by the President on December 31, 1970, making possible continued federal participation in the nation's road programs.

Safety and spot improvement programs were also given special attention.

During the year our secondary system, major bridges and resurface contracts were kept on a high level.

You are, I am sure, conscious of the many changes in attitude toward legal responsibility of engineers and public officials.

THIS BIENNIUM AND THE FUTURE FOR INDIANA'S STATE HIGHWAY PROGRAMS

As I pointed out in a talk before our Indiana congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., on September 17, 1970, the Indiana State Highway Commission has 4,367 miles of primary and urban highways and 5,986 miles of secondary roads that have not received, since the end of World War II, the many critical improvements needed to make these highways safe for the traffic load they are forced to carry today.

Over 1,500 miles of our total primary and urban systems are in immediate need of major new construction and reconstruction. Also, an equal or larger mileage of the secondary system needs similar type construction.

Studies show that over 500 major bridges need replacement, either because of their age, condition or inability to safely serve today's traffic volumes.

Railroad grade separations have been another of the forgotten programs which have not moved because of the lack of sufficient funds.

Eighty-nine miles of the interstate system have yet to be placed under construction at an estimated cost of about 250 million dollars.

Today's total price tag estimated for these needed programs is three billion dollars, or a little over twice the estimated cost of the total 977 miles of interstate when completed.

I have only attempted to list our major immediate needs—how fast these needed improvements should be provided, depends on the motorist who is traveling the nation's highways at an increasing mileage of about 5 percent per year and what he is willing to pay for.

You, I am sure, can see from these figures that any method of providing additional funds for these needs will improve Indiana's overall highway picture.

It should be pointed out that if the motorist who is interested in modern highways and better maintenance doesn't take a more active part in supporting highway programs, dedicated funds for this purpose will certainly go to other modes of transportation leaving the state with many obsolete roads and without funds to make the necessary improvements.

Because of the reduction in the federal highway trust fund money to Indiana for the completion of the interstate, total dollar value for contracts let during this calendar year is estimated at about \$155 million or about 6 percent less than last year.

Our personnel section is at work on our engineering recruiting program, and has, to date, signed up 19 graduates from the January classes with an additional 28 being considered from later classes.

Safety spot improvement projects will continue to receive special attention; the maintenance and traffic divisions will continue to work toward improving the safety of the highways for the motorists; and the bituminous resurface programs will stay at about the 1970 level.

Even though many of the federal programs attached to the trust fund money are difficult to administer, we will continue to cooperate with all federal agencies in working toward improving the ecology; taking active part in safety and E.E.O. programs; plus the many ramifications associated with trying to get back Indiana's share of the federal excise tax dollar.

We will continue to hold the total number on our payrolls very close to the 1970 level. Effort will continue to be made to encourage younger engineers in the Indianapolis office and in the districts to accept more responsible managerial positions at the higher echelon.

Bids for construction of the killer road program will be kept current with availability of funds and the majority of the original 157 miles spelled out in the 1967 needs study will be under contract during this biennium.

This paper has dealt generally with construction-related activities and has not touched on the individual activities of the many other supporting divisions, districts and sub-districts in the department.

Their records and contributions have been equally outstanding and there has been a unified support of all programs by all personnel. Also, credit should be given to the engineers and administrators who, in past years, have made substantial contributions to a number of accomplishments that have been realized during the period covered by this report. It would be impossible to name all of these fine public servants.

CONCLUSION

Governor Whitcomb has given Indiana's highway program outstanding support as has Mr. Steele and all members of the commission and the highway industry. The motorist can be thankful for their dedicated interest.