



# County Highway Report

November, 2004 A Newsletter for the Indiana Association of County Highway Engineers and Supervisors

## **A Message from the President**

**By Scott Tilden,**  
President of IACHES  
Fulton County Highway Supervisor

By now the elections are over and all of us are anxious to resume our regular schedules. The end of the year is upon us and I can't believe my term as your President will soon be exhausted and this is the last news article I will be producing.

The Board Members and I have been very busy finalizing the agenda for the County Commissioners Conference (IACC). Activities for IACHES members will commence on Tuesday with a Road Scholar Core Course Class 3 all day and concludes in the morning on Wednesday. In the afternoon on Wednesday, the IACHES part of the conference starts and runs through the afternoon on Thursday, ending with the IACHES regular member business meeting. On that agenda is the election of a new secretary/treasurer. Make sure you plan to attend the Conference this year at the Sheraton in Indianapolis. Topics include Bio-diesel, Chemicals & Pesticides, Chip Seal Quality, Lease Purchasing, Geo-Fabric for Asphalt Pavements, Bridge Deck Overlays Pavement Management, as well as speakers from the Build Indiana Council and the Indiana Mineral Aggregate Association. This conference promises to be very interesting and informative; a great place to see and meet other county officials and vendors.

And since the election is over, legislators will be in session soon. This is an excellent time to start rallying for additional funding for our roads and

bridges. In 2003, one penny of the three-cent gas tax increase was allocated for local roads, which provided some assistance that we are grateful for. Sadly, it was way too short of the needs of local government. Nearly 90 percent of Indiana's county roads are considered to have rough pavement according to industry standards. Indiana's local governments are in need of an additional 200 million dollars in annual revenues over the next decade to cover an estimated 2 billion dollars in costs to upgrade local roads, bridges and streets. We have nearly 3,700 bridges that are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete in our local road system. Only about 18 percent of our county roads are marked with pavement marking, while the rest are not wide enough. These improvements are delayed solely to lack of funding.

I encourage each of you to call your representatives before the next session starts, thank them for their support in 2003 and also remind them that it was simply a short-term solution. Our needs are greater.

May we all be thankful for our many blessings in the up-coming Holiday season and I hope to see you at the IACC in Indianapolis.

Take a look at all these programs coming up. I think you will find something useful to you. I must go now. See all of you soon.

Call 260-562-3906 or e-mail me at [iaches@skyenet.net](mailto:iaches@skyenet.net) to find out how to place your advertisement in our next newsletter

## "Budgets Can Be Like Dentists?"

By Darin Duncan, P.E.,  
Vice President IACHES  
Harrison County Engineer

Well, we've all heard the old expression of comparing something uncomfortable to a trip to the dentist. By now most of us have had the pleasure of setting our 2005 budgets, and hence I thought that might be a "good title" for this newsletter article.

I apologize to those of you who have family members or good friends in the dental field. I certainly hold no malice towards the profession. In fact, I have a good friend that is a dental hygienist, and she makes my trips to the big house bearable (as much as they can be, that is!) Besides, you can't always pick on attorneys, can you?

If you stop and think about it, a dental visit has a lot in common with a council visit, especially at budget time. We all are guilty of fearing the unknown, whether it is the cavity that you think you have or the funding request that you think will be slashed from possibility. Regardless, sometimes you come away with a clean check up and are good to go for another year. (Yeah, I know they say that you should go back every six months, but how many of us really like to do that or keep to that schedule?)

Our County Councils have a difficult job when it comes to budget time. They usually have more funding requests than money available to grant them. I firmly believe that our Highway Department budgets usually suffer from a variety of things. First, we all know how important it is to lobby and continue the effort to return more road funding to local governments from the State. Second, I wish I had a dollar for every time over my last eight years here that I heard "We can't do that, we're strapped in our County general funds". Of course, we all know that Highway budgets have nothing to do with County General funds, at least not in our minds. However, some County Councils argue that if funds are not

available for salaries or new programs in County general, it's not fair to fund any differently out of Highway funds. You know, it's that whole "fairness" thing about the clerk in the Courthouse office that should make as much as everyone else at the Highway Department. Does that ever happen to any of you guys?

Budget time sometimes inspires those old sayings from the public watchdogs about "government wasting my tax dollars". Has anyone ever heard the argument from John Q. Public about "You should pave my road, given all the taxes that I pay"? Try to explain to them that property taxes do not fund highway funds. Isn't that always a pleasant discussion! Remember that dentist analogy?

We have a golden opportunity if presented the road funding/property tax argument. I urge you to use this chance to explain, in general terms of course, the relationship between fuel taxes, vehicle registrations, and highway funds. Tell your concerned citizen that only your bridge funds come from property taxes (if you have a cumulative bridge fund, that is). Stress to them the importance of contact with their local and state elected officials, and their support of increased roadway funding. We've all seen the polls that indicate a majority of citizens would support a little higher gas tax if they could be assured that it would come back to them in the form of better infrastructure. I doubt very seriously that very many people have called or otherwise personally conveyed that message to their local or state legislators.

I hope that most of your 2005 budget requests have been granted by now. I also realize that it's very probable that not all made it through the process. For those that didn't, I say keep trying. They always say that you can't make an omelet unless you crack a few eggs!

In closing, I must remind each of you that those budget hearings only mean that 2005 is right around the corner. We will be working on the IACHES 2005 membership directory soon. Please review your current directory and if any changes need to be made,



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or any pictures updated, contact any IACHES officer at our upcoming conferences. Tentative plans are for the 2005 directory to be printed in the spring and distributed at the Summer Conference.

I look forward to visiting with all of you that can attend our upcoming regular members meeting at the annual Indiana Association of County Commissioners (IACC) Conference in December. I also want to take this opportunity to personally thank both Mike McTague and Scott Tilden for their service and commitment to IACHES during the past year as president. Best wishes to all of you for a great 2005.

### **NACE Update**

**By Steven A. Sherwood, P.E., L.S.:**

**Warrick County Highway Engineer**

**Past President IACHES**

**And NACE State Directory for IACHES**

The year 2004 is rapidly coming to an end. The 2004 IACC Conference will be on November 30th through December 2nd in Indianapolis. If you have not registered, please do so soon. LTAP will have Road

Scholar courses offered on November 30th and December 1st. IACHES will have seminars on December 1st and December 2nd followed by an IACHES Regular members meeting at the end of the day on December 2nd. During this meeting we will have an election for a new IACHES Secretary/Treasurer. This year the candidate must be an engineer. Please consider running for the position and contact an IACHES officer prior to the meeting to be put on the ballot.

On the NACE front, the President recently signed an eight (8) month extension to the TEA-21 (H.R. 5183) on September 30th, 2004. Lawmakers were unable to resolve many issues on a new transportation bill. The Surface Transportation Extension Act expires on May 31st, 2005. This extension essentially moves the serious work on a new bill to the next Congress (109th). The text of H.R. 5183 may be accessed on the internet at <http://www.house.gov/rules/surfranext5.pdf>. The IACHES Award Committee is selecting a NACE 2004 Rural and Urban Engineer of the Year Award.

This will be announced during our IACHES Regular Members meeting. The candidate must be a NACE member and can be either an engineer or superintendent/supervisor. This selection will be forwarded to NACE for their consideration to determine the final selection for the annual award to be presented at the 2005 NACE Annual Conference in April 2005.

Future NACE Conferences will be held at the following locations and dates:

- 2005 Bismarck, North Dakota, April 17 -21
- 2006 Grand Rapids, Michigan, April 9 -13
- 2007 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, dates to be announced
- 2008 Portland, Oregon, dates to be announced

Future sites are yet to be determined. If IACHES would like to host a future NACE Conference, it's never too early to start campaigning. Over 30 states have joined NACE and many at 100% membership. Please consider joining NACE if you haven't done so already. Applications are available through the IACHES website at [www.iaches.org](http://www.iaches.org) and through the NACE website at [www.countyengineers.org](http://www.countyengineers.org). Please help make Indiana a better-represented state through membership within NACE.



IACHES  
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**Thank You**  
From  
Brent Wendholt  
2004 Scholarship Recipient

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Indiana Association of County Highway Engineers and Supervisors for the scholarship. The scholarship will help pay for my college tuition and assist me in obtaining a degree in engineering.

I will be attending Vincennes University again this year to continue studying Civil Engineering. Vincennes University offers the first 2 years of this degree, next year I will be transferring to another college to complete my studies. While at Vincennes University, I will be playing baseball for the university team, the Trailblazers. Again thank you. It is a great honor to be selected as the recipient of this scholarship.

IACHES Directory Photos will be taken at the IACC Conference. If you are not listed in our 2003 Directory or if you just want to have your photo updated please see Cheryl at the IACHES Meeting Room on Wednesday, December 1st or on Thursday, December 2nd