

History of New Harmony Bridge

- 1930 The toll bridge over the Wabash River linking Posey County, Indiana with White County, Illinois was completed.
- 1931 Nashville Bridge Company completes and opens Bridge.
- 1937 Indiana General Assembly enacts legislation authorizing DOT to purchase Bridge, but transfer to State never occurs.
- 1930 The Bridge was owned and operated from 1930 through 1941 by several private corporations.
- 1941 Congress establishes White County Bridge Commission, authorizes bonds to purchase and conveyance to Indiana and/or Illinois when bonds were paid off. The White County Bridge Commission (the "Commission") is a private entity created by an Act of Congress. As such, it is subject to Congressional oversight. Because a transfer of the Commission's assets and responsibilities to Indiana, Illinois, or a joint commission never occurred, the Commission remains the owner, and in control, of the bridge. Once the bonds were paid off, the Act contemplated, *but did not require*, that control of the bridge be transferred to the adjoining states and the Commission dissolved.
- 1955 US Highway 460 crosses Bridge and Traffic count for Bridge was 969,313.
- 1956 Mt. Vernon Memorial Bridge opens to traffic July 7.
- 1960 During six year period an average of 716,404 vehicles per year use the New Harmony Bridge.
- 1969 Illinois Department of Transportation completes Interstate 64 bridge across Wabash River.
- 1999 Bridge traffic for year at New Harmony was 715,808.
- 1999 IN SR 69 linking Interstate 64 with Indiana Port in Mt. Vernon opens to traffic November 23.

2000 Bridge's traffic for year was 583,744.

2001 Engineering Inspection Report:

During the summer of 2001 INDOT commissioned an Engineering Inspection Report (1) on the New Harmony Bridge.

The opinion expressed in the report was that, "the bridge is near the end of its useful life, unless significant repairs are made..." The report suggests to sustain the Bridge for 10 years and replace it at an estimated cost of \$15-20 million dollars:

"Reconstruction of the existing structure for more than 10 additional years of service is not considered feasible, and is not recommended due to the inadequate horizontal clearances that render the main truss spans functionally obsolete." (p.7)

2002 Bridge tolls were increased January 1 and traffic count for year was 410,912.

2007 INDOT commissioned American Structurepoint, Inc to review previous bridge studies and present an alternative for repair. Local communities could not fund work proposed due to bridge being privately owned.

The bridge was closed on 09/25/2007 due to structural concerns, and re-opened on 04/30/2008 after repairs were made by the White County Bridge Commission.

2011 Representative McNamara requested INDOT to explore funding options for the bridge. INDOT presented a plan to the Posey County Commissioners to assume ownership of the structure. By accepting the structure, it would be eligible for federal funds. It was also proposed that Posey County accept ownership of select state routes within the county, which could provide funding to leverage further federal funds.

A public meeting was held to solicit input on the INDOT proposal. The County later deemed that they could not accept the offer.

2012 The bridge was closed by the White County Bridge Commission after an inspection by their engineering consultant.

A stakeholder meeting was held on July 5 which included local, county, state, & federal elected officials as well as Department of Transportation representatives from Illinois & Indiana. The consensus was the existing bridge is beyond its useful life. INDOT proposed to provide half of construction costs, not to exceed \$10M, toward the construction of a new bridge. The remainder of the costs would need to be provided by Posey County, White County, New Harmony, and the State of Illinois.