

Indiana Mineral Industry News

First Quarter 2000

By Kathryn R. Shaffer
Indiana Geological Survey

Production

The U.S. Geological Survey published the report *Crushed Stone and Sand and Gravel in the Fourth Quarter of 1999*. The report stated that 15.7 Mt (17.3 million short tons) of crushed stone were produced in Indiana during the fourth quarter of 1999 and that 6.3 Mt (6.9 million short tons) of sand and gravel were produced in Indiana during the same period. These figures represent a 6.5 percent decrease and an 8.5 percent increase, respectively, for the same time period during 1998.¹

Company news

In February, Rogers Group, Inc. Sieboldt crushed stone quarry in Lawrence County, was presented an award in the medium quarry division in the National Stone Association's 1999 About Face Quarries of the Year competition.²

A Kentucky sand and gravel company, Nugent Sand Co., has asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a permit to open a 500 ft. wide channel in the Ohio River to allow barge access to an abandoned sand and gravel pit at Utica to better facilitate transport of materials to customers in Indiana. They have faced some opposition from River Fields, an environmental group based in Louisville, which is concerned that the view of the barge facility and increased noise will harm enjoyment of an historic district on the Kentucky side of the river. Nugent also operates a pit in Bartholomew County.³

Construction industry developments

A new privately funded, two-month long, I-69 project study conducted by two engineers and an appraiser from Evansville concluded that construction of a new-terrain route would be less expensive and 30 miles shorter than upgrading I-70 and U.S. 41.⁴ Environmentalists took issue with many of the study's conclusions. A poll, sponsored by Friends of the Earth and conducted by an Indianapolis firm, found that 35 percent of 300 registered Evansville voters questioned preferred the U.S. 41/I-70 route and 31 percent favored the Bloomington route with 34 percent either not responding or not knowing. About 44 percent of those questioned had no opinion on whether or not the highway should be constructed at all. INDOT responded that there are at least eight possible routes under investigation, not just two.⁵ Public hearings on the I-69 extension were held by INDOT in Evansville, Terre Haute, and Bloomington during March and April.^{6,7} The president of the University of Southern Indiana gave his support to the Bloomington to

Evansville route.⁸

A study continued to identify potential routes for the \$339 million Hoosier Heartland highway which will connect Fort Wayne and Lafayette. One potential route through the historic Deer Creek area in Carroll County is causing some controversy in the region. The area may be nominated for the National Register of Historic Places. By this fall, an environmental impact region for the Logansport to Lafayette segment, estimated at \$200 million to construct, is expected to be released.⁹

A national study conducted by the road construction industry concluded that one-third of the nation's major city roads, constituting 22 percent of the nation's total roads but those receiving the most use, need repair. The study was conducted to help convince federal lawmakers, successfully, not to cut 4.3 cents from the gasoline tax.¹⁰

In March, a reception was held in Bloomington to preview plans for the new state museum in Indianapolis which should be completed in 2002 at an estimated cost of \$105 million.¹¹

In Bloomington, the old Towne Cinema lot will receive tax abatements for redevelopment into a 3 to 4 floor commercial and apartment building.¹²

Legislative developments

President Clinton's 2001 budget plan would provide \$54.9 billion for transportation, an increase of 9 percent over the current year. Gas tax revenues will generate \$3 billion more than anticipated. However, all of the increase may not go to road improvement projects. There is concern among industry groups that some of the funds are being diverted to other types of transportation programs, a plan that could cost Indiana's highway programs \$30 million. In addition, \$1.95 billion is planned for the Airport Improvement Program which funds construction projects. This is essentially the same amount budgeted for fiscal year 2000.¹³ The budget plan would also increase funding for the Mine Safety and Health Administration by \$14.2 million to a total of \$242.2 million.¹⁴

Congressional negotiators agreed to fund airport construction (AIR-21) in the amount of \$40 billion divided over three years. About \$12.7 billion will be made available for 2001. In addition, a federal tax on airline travel will increase from \$3.00 per ticket to \$4.50 per ticket which will increase funds available for airport construction projects by an additional \$700 million per year.¹⁵

Regulatory issues

The American Conference of Government Industrial Hygienists lowered the respirable particulate limit of crystalline silica-quartz to 0.05 mg/m³ in 1999, half the previous limit allowed in the industry, and classified it as an A2 carcinogen. OSHA has stated that it will seek

tightened regulations.¹⁶

Metals

Bethlehem Steel laid off 40 people at Burns Harbor in an attempt to remain competitive by cutting costs.¹⁷ The Clinton administration agreed to impose stiffer import tariffs on certain types of steel products to protect U.S. industry and prevent further job losses. Protected will be steel-wire rod and U.S. line pipe manufacturers. Countries affected will be South Korea, Japan, Brazil, Ukraine, Germany, and Trinidad and Tobago.¹⁸ However, the U.S. International Trade Commission ruled that the U.S. cold-rolled steel industry has not been significantly damaged by imports. Therefore, plans by the U.S. Department of Commerce to impose import duties totaling \$590 million on cold-rolled steel has been halted.¹⁹

To settle a federal lawsuit, Alcoa, Inc. will pay \$8.8 million. Approximately \$5.4 million will go to reduce hazardous waste, \$1 million to investigate methods to reduce air pollution, and \$2.4 million will go to pay penalties. Waste from the Warrick County plant was found to be contaminating the Ohio River, and further downstream, the Mississippi. Air quality was also found to be adversely affected by the plant.²⁰

Peat

The state continued its battles with peat bog fires in the Chesterton area into the new year.²¹ A peat deposit was excavated and replaced with road base material for a new 4-lane highway being built in Noblesville.²²

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Indiana Mineral Industry News

Second Quarter 2000

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Company news

A 10 percent interest in Pembroke Calox, Inc. has been acquired by Baltic International USA, Inc. Cores taken of the 350-acre property in Indiana near Stinesville show approximately 42 million tons of high-calcium reserves and 6 million tons of St. Louis aggregate.¹

Aggregate Industries, Inc., acquired a 50 percent interest in the sand and gravel company Fidler, Inc., from Nova Materials, LLC. Fidler, Inc., operates three plants in Elkhart County.²

KPT, Inc., planned a layoff of 38 of 109 employees at its tile plant near Bloomfield in May due to increased competition. The plant had added several new product lines in January, but recently had dropped some product lines and decreased the workweek from seven days to five days to increase the company's profitability.³

The fifth annual Indiana Limestone Sculpture Symposium took place at the Bybee Stone Company in Ellettsville during June.⁴

Irving Learning Trails just north of Irving Materials, Inc.'s, Huntington Quarry was unveiled on Earth Day, April 24. The 5-acre park containing a rock garden, four ecosystems, and antique mining equipment will be used for educational purposes with area schools, but also be open on a daily basis to the general public. Further improvements are planned and expansion onto another three acres is possible.⁵

Construction industry developments

Public-information hearings about the I-69 extension through southwestern Indiana which also allowed the public to express opinions on the subject were conducted by the Indiana Department of Transportation in April. About 250 persons attended the meetings in Bloomington and 1,200 people attended sessions in Evansville. Hearings were also held in Terre Haute.⁶

Alternative methods of transportation such as light rail and buses will be considered in the Ohio River Bridges Project due to the efforts of an environmental group. The project is currently studying whether or not to build two bridges in the Louisville area.⁷

About 14 pieces of equipment valued at \$500,000 were damaged at a road construction site near Ellettsville in late April.⁸ An environmental group called the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) took

responsibility for the action.⁹ Ground was broken for Phase 3 of the Ind. 46 project.¹⁰ Also at Ellettsville, plans progressed to build two new schools (K-2 and 3-6) at a total estimated cost of \$27 million to replace the current Ellettsville Elementary school.¹¹ The city of Bloomington planned \$486,000 in repaving projects for the summer, most of the asphalt to be provided by Rogers Group.¹²

A deteriorating historic bridge near Freedom will be removed and donated to the Conner Prairie museum near Fishers. The bridge will be replaced by a new bridge estimated at a cost of \$2.5 million.¹³

Indiana State Day was celebrated at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington D.C. About 150,000 tons of Indiana limestone were used in constructing the cathedral.^{14,15}

Road improvement projects affected traffic on I-65, and I-465 and several of their interchanges.¹⁶

Two of four limestone buildings on Main Street in Stinesville that are on the Indiana Historic Landmarks Foundations list of most endangered historic places are being stabilized at a cost of \$83,000.¹⁷

The Monroe County planning commissioners amended its ordinance to control development in karst areas. Under the revision, no development will be allowed "...within 25 ft. of the rim of any sinkhole of a quarter-acre or less in size, or the area within 50 ft. of the flooding zone for any sinkhole larger than a quarter-acre. A roadway is an exception if safety factors outweigh storm drainage issues at the site."^{18,19}

A 7,500 acre tract of land called the Mogan Ridge area in the Hoosier National Forest will be protected from road construction under a federal plan to protect about one-fourth of the national forest system.^{20,21}

Legislative developments

Several pieces of federal legislation were introduced to eliminate or reduce the federal gas tax due to high gasoline prices. The construction industry appears to have defeated those efforts. The road construction industry receives about \$5.8 billion each year from these funds.²²

Regulatory issues

Occupational Safety and Health Administration has delayed its plans to propose a silica standard this summer. Current plans are to hold a general stakeholder meeting Oct. 3-4 in Washington D.C. and another stakeholder meeting for the construction industry Nov. 8 in Atlanta.²³

The National Aggregates Association is contemplating litigation or legislation in response to the U.S. Army corps of Engineers new rule NWP 44 (replacing NWP 26) which severely restricts

mining in 100-year floodplains. The new rule was to take effect in June.²⁴ Some district offices may choose to revoke parts or all of NWP 44, or to add restrictions.^{25,26}

Metals

The U.S. Department of Justice and the European Commission allowed Alcoa Inc. to complete its acquisition of Reynolds Metals Co. under the condition that Alcoa sell all of Reynolds' interests in several alumina refineries and a smelter.²⁷

Steel Dynamics, Inc., released a report indicating that company sales increased from \$117.5 million in the first quarter of 1999 to \$189.2 million in the first quarter of 2000, reflecting improved markets and record production. Steel Dynamics, Inc., is building a consolidated steel building products plant called New Millennium Building Systems near its Butler steel plant, a corporate headquarters building near Ft. Wayne, and is still waiting to receive permission to begin construction of a structural steel plant in Whitley County. Steel Dynamics, Inc., also reported that the Iron Dynamics plant restarted in January.²⁸ The company, which was cited by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management for air permit violations, will also build a recycling center as part of the settlement.²⁹

Bethnova Tube LLC, a joint venture between Bethlehem Steel Corp. and Nova Tube based in Quebec, Canada, will open a steel tube plant at the Clark Maritime Center in Jeffersonville. The company will invest \$4.6 million in building improvements and work in association with Voss Clark Steel which also operates a plant in the Center.³⁰

A fire temporarily stopped production at the Qualitech Steel Corp. mill in Pittsboro on March 29.³¹

The Institute of Museum and Library Services has awarded a grant for \$19,000 to Indiana University's Digital Library Program to digitize historic photos of the U.S. Steel Gary Works and the developing city of Gary that had been donated to Indiana University Northwest.³²

According to steel companies in the Gary area, property tax rates could discourage further investment in the area, or encourage current steel plants to move elsewhere.³³

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Indiana Mineral Industry News

Third Quarter 2000

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Company news

Nationally, aggregate production continued to increase in the second quarter of 2000, according to data published by the U.S. Geological Survey, with crushed stone showing gains of 3.8 percent and sand and gravel 7 percent over the same period of 1999. However, Indiana, with production of 17.1 million mt of crushed stone and 7.3 million mt sand and gravel, experienced decreases of 1.8 percent and 7.1 percent, respectively for the same time period.¹ Also on the national front, the aggregate industry organizations National Stone Association and National Aggregates Association began merger proceedings which were completed on Sept. 11. The new organization is temporarily being called NAA-NSA.^{2,3}

Mulzer Crushed Stone, Inc., is purchasing J. H. Rudolph & Co., Inc., an asphalt and concrete paving and construction business with offices in Evansville, Troy, and Huntingburg. The acquisition should be completed by December 31.⁴ Mulzer's Tower Quarry and I-164 Sand pit received the Certified Aggregate Producers of the Year award for the Vincennes district.⁵

Lafarge Corp. has acquired Presque Isle Corp., a crushed stone quarry located in Michigan. The quarry provides metallurgical stone by barge for steel plants on Lake Michigan.^{6,7} Lafarge has also signed an agreement with Ispat Inland, Inc., to process blast furnace slag. The company is building a \$27 million slag-processing plant at the steel mill, to be completed by spring 2001.⁸

To satisfy increased demand and to modernize the plant, Essroc Cement Corp. will apply for permits to construct a new kiln at its Speed plant to replace an aging one. The improvement will cost the plant more than \$100 million, but increase efficiency by 75 percent and bring production up to 1.75 million mt per year. The new kiln should also improve ability to meet environmental standards. The plant holds a permit to allow it to burn waste tires for fuels, but the company currently has no plans to do so.⁹ The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) continued recycling tires at many waste sites around the state. The tires are being shredded and offered to landfills to use in place of crushed stone for drainage purposes or as daily cover. The project will last through 2000 into 2001.¹⁰ An article appeared in Cement Americas about Lone Star Industries' new semi-dry operation and how it has nearly doubled the plant's capacity from 750,000 to 1.3 million tpy.¹¹

Construction industry developments

The Indiana Department of Transportation made awards totalling \$15.7 million for transportation

projects that were non-highway related. The money was made available under the Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. Many of the projects will involve construction projects.

The State of Indiana awarded \$440,000 in historic preservation State Grants. Many of the projects involve rehabilitation work for historic buildings. In addition, the Delphi Lime Kilns will be nominated for the National Register of Historic Places.¹² Also, 28 projects along the Wabash River received state grants totaling \$5 million for development of parks and historic preservation.¹³

Bloomington received a \$125,000 Build Indiana grant for utility improvements for a planned high-tech business park on 40 acres on the north side of the city. A plan for the park is being developed. The city also received \$22 million for Indiana University Bloomington campus projects. The possibility of developing Crane into a high-tech business park is also under consideration by some concerned about the Naval Center's future.¹⁴

A new round of public hearings on I-69 were held in August in Jasper, Vincennes, and Indianapolis. The meetings were an effort to explore the purpose and need of the project and to increase public participation.^{15,16} An official web site for the I-69 project has been established at <http://www.i69indyevn.org>.¹⁷

Upgrades to U.S. 24 from Huntington to Fort Wayne, begun in 1998, were completed. The road is considered a doorway to the Hoosier Heartland Highway and the improvements brought it up to the same standards as the new highway which should be completed sometime this year.¹⁸ The interchange of U.S. 24 and U.S. 31 was also completed.¹⁹

The first "Revive 65" I-65 renovation project this year was completed near Sellersburg.²⁰

A new midfield airport terminal is planned in Indianapolis at a total cost of \$890 million. Design and engineering plans were funded with \$20 million by the City-County Council. Although about \$200 million could be provided from federal funds most of the funding would need to come from airlines. Some airlines are hesitant due to the costs which would then be passed along to the passenger. The project is planned for completion by late 2005 or early 2006.²¹

A decision was made to postpone a project to expand the Memorial Coliseum in Fort Wayne until next spring because all bids that were received exceeded the \$28 million cap set by the county and left out part of the construction.

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) broke ground for a \$3 million dollar subdistrict headquarters and maintenance unit in Paoli in July.²²

Work continued on a \$7.5 million railroad underpass on S.R. 327 in Garrett.²³

About \$50,000 will be spent to repair a road in Schererville. The road is called a floating road

because it is built over a peat bog, suspended by 3,3000 polystyrene blocks.²⁴

Legislative developments

In an effort to prevent environmental groups from preventing progress on highway projects, ARTBA backed a provision that was incorporated into the fiscal year 2001 EPA funding bill and was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives making the implementation of tighter ozone regulations by that agency dependant upon a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court allowing them to proceed.²⁵

The U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate each passed fiscal year 2001 federal transportation bills at a total of about \$55 billion each, with the federal highway program funded at a level of approximately \$29.6 billion. This is an increase of about \$2 billion over fiscal year 2000. The U.S. Senate refused to pass legislation in July for the third time this year to repeal or suspend the federal gas tax. This proposal had been made due to the high price of oil.²⁶ Indiana suspended its gas tax on July 1, and then extended the suspension for the third time on September 27.²⁷

Federal funding for military construction work was also passed in the amount of \$4.2 billion.²⁸ The legislation had also carried a provision to stop the EPA from issuing a total maximum daily load rule under the Clean Water Act. However, the EPA issued a final version of the rule, which requires states to set discharge levels for impaired bodies of water, before the legislation could be signed by the President. Industry groups believe the rules should be more simple and flexible.^{29,30}

Regulatory issues

New MSHA noise level regulations, as discussed further in the fourth quarter of 1999 report, became effective on Sept. 13.³¹ The National Stone Association negotiated with MSHA to change certain provisions of the regulation.^{32,33}

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear a case to determine whether the U.S. Corps of Engineers has wetlands jurisdiction over isolated waters if migratory birds could possibly use them. The National Stone Association is involved in the case because this expanded jurisdiction increases the Corps permitting capability. The Corps estimates that income from its new NWP 44 regulations as discussed in last quarter's report will require issuance of 4,000 permits and bring in about \$48 million, based on the proposed version of the rule, with most of that due to new restrictions in 100-year floodplains.^{34,35} The energy and water development appropriations bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives includes language requiring the Corps to prepare public reports on the effect the new wetlands rule will have on industry.³⁶

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration is attempting to pass revised regulations regarding hours of service for commercial motor vehicles, revoking an exemption to the

regulations for truck operators working within a 100-mile radius of their home base. A transportation bill has passed the Senate with a provision that would block this proposal.³⁷ The proposed FMCSA regulations would require intrastate regulation of trucking. The comment period for the proposed changes has been extended to the end of October. ARTBA presented remarks at a U.S. Dept. of Transportation public hearing stating that the construction industry should be exempted because most work is completed near the companies' homes and much time is spent loading and unloading.³⁸

A new federal rule implementing Executive Order 13101, Greening the Government through Waste Prevention, recycling and Federal Acquisition, went into effect on Aug. 7. The rule requires that federal agencies give preference to the use of recycled products when making purchases.³⁹

Metals

The American Iron and Steel Institute says that excessive imports are still a problem. In a September news release the association states that total steel imports for year-to-date 2000 are 17 percent higher than for the same period of 1999 and 3 percent higher than in 1998, which was a crisis year for the industry. The U.S. Dept. of Commerce released an Administration's Steel Report stating that the industry still faces the same international trade problems that brought it to crisis in 1998.^{40,41,42} Several steel companies met with the U.S. Secretary of Commerce to discuss the situation.⁴³

Bethlehem Steel Corp. and Novamerican Steel, Inc., broke ground for a plant that will produce steel tubes for automobiles and trucks. The facility, located in Jeffersonville, will be called BethNova Tube, LLC.⁴⁴

Steel Dynamics is still waiting for permits to begin building a \$260 million structural steel mini-mill. The company was denied an environmental air permit, which must be modified by environmental regulators.⁴⁵

Qualitech Steel Corp. is recovering from filing bankruptcy last year. The company is still looking for a buyer. The company is now called Qualitech Steel SBQ.⁴⁶

Weirton Steel received a \$25.5 million dollar federal loan under the Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Act.⁴⁷

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Indiana Mineral Industry News

Fourth Quarter 2000

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Company news

According to data published by the U.S. Geological Survey during the third quarter of 2000, national production of crushed stone reached 451 million metric tons and production of construction sand and gravel reached 341 million metric tons, demonstrating gains of 0.8 percent and 1.6 percent, respectively, over the same period of 1999. However, Indiana with production of 19.4 million mt of crushed stone and 8.1 million mt experienced an increase of 1.5 percent and a decrease of 6.2 percent, respectively for the same time period.¹

U.S. Aggregates, Inc., is considering the possible sale of its company due to the current trend of consolidation. It has held discussions with several companies.²

J. M. Huber Corp., a ground limestone plant in Portage, was purchased by Global Stone, a subsidiary of Oglebay Norton, for approximately \$12 million. There are plans being made to expand the facility and to operate under the name Global Stone Portage. Additional products, in addition to ground limestone currently being produced for electric utilities, will include roofing materials and industrial fillers. Stone will be brought in from Global Stone quarries in Michigan.³

Aggrock Quarries, Inc., near Sellersburg was acquired by Hanson Building Materials America.⁴

The Monroe County Plan commission rejected a petition by Indiana Limestone Company, Inc., for rezoning of 50 acres of its property for heavy industrial use. The stone at that location is deemed unsuitable for quarrying. The petition was rejected due to concerns about how the property might be developed. The company was urged to refile its petition with a modified zoning designation.⁵

Bethlehem Sand and Gravel began production in mid October near Bethlehem in Clark County. Production is shipped by barge on the Ohio River. In October the company provided music for a local festival to raise money to help renovate a historic schoolhouse in the area. Archaeological artifacts are being donated to the school by Nugent Sand Co. also located near Bethlehem.⁶ Nugent Sand Co. has purchased the old Martin Marietta Utica Sand property in Clark County and is preparing a barge loading facility and redistribution site at that location. No sand will be produced on that site. All product from its Bethlehem dredge is processed on site and then shipped by barge to Louisville.⁷

For 2001, the Indiana Geological Survey has prepared a calendar depicting scenes from Indiana's limestone heritage.⁸

Construction industry developments

About \$30.7 billion of federal funds will be appropriated for highway construction programs during fiscal year 2001, \$7 billion more than in 2000, and \$3.2 billion will be appropriated for the Airport Improvement Program.⁹ The transportation funding bill also stops, for this fiscal year, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration from passing a final rule on new proposed limits for trucking hours of service.¹⁰

A survey about issues and needs concerning growth conducted by an advisory arm of the U.S. Congress, the General Accounting Office, determined that the major concern of local governments will be providing for adequate roads and other infrastructure.¹¹

The Indiana Department of Transportation announced locations for 14 possible I-69 extension routes through southwestern Indiana. The 14 routes can be viewed at <http://www.I69indyevn.org> as an option under the Reports heading. The three to five best routes should be picked by mid to late 2001 and a preferred route by sometime in 2002.^{12,13} A \$1.8 million study will be conducted to look at possible metropolitan area routes for Evansville and Henderson, Kentucky for the I-69 extension. A federal grant and the state of Kentucky will also help to fund that study.¹⁴

A new \$455 million Daimler Chrysler transmission plant was announced for Kokomo. The plant will be built alongside the existing plant. Another \$77 million will be spent on an existing Daimler Chrysler plant in New Castle.¹⁵

A master plan for improvements totaling between \$390 to \$619 million to the Gary airport was unveiled at a public meeting in December. Improvements that would triple the current size of the airport would include building another terminal and a four-story parking garage, and extending the runway.¹⁶

A \$12 million Meijer super store and \$4.4 million shopping center covering a total of 50-acres may be built in New Albany if the proposed property can be annexed and funding arranged to pay for improvements to the Charlestown Road and other roads and a bridge in the area.^{17,18}

An archaeological dig was completed at a proposed hotel site for the Caesar's Palace casino along the Ohio River in Harrison County in mid September. A report was to be prepared by Indiana State University archaeology professor Russell Stafford for state and federal agencies in October, which should clear the way for the hotel development to continue. The project has been delayed for five years while the archaeological study was completed.¹⁹

A \$60 million multidisciplinary science building is being proposed for the Indiana University Bloomington campus.²⁰

S.R. 162 in Dubois County was opened in October with a ceremony attended by Lt. Governor Joe Kernan. The new road connects U.S. 231 to old S.R. 162 and was constructed in part to help with transportation to manufacturing areas in Jasper.²¹

A proposed bridge location across the Ohio River in the Louisville region that had been dropped was added back into the mix, increasing the options to nine. The addition of the option will not increase the length of time for the study, which has been ongoing for two years. The study has one more year to run.²²

A proposed Simon mall at S.R. 334 and I-65 near Zionsville in Boone County will not be built following an extensive economic study by the company.²³

A small 3.9 earthquake centered five miles west of Evansville in Vanderburgh County in early December did not cause any damage to area bridges and no other significant damage.²⁴

Environmental and regulatory issues

Forest Service officials are engaged in rewriting the management plan for the Hoosier National Forest as required by law every 10-15 years. A group comprised of a coalition of environmental groups called the Indiana Public Lands Coalition submitted their concept of how the Hoosier National Forest should be managed, including plans for expansion by adding four more wilderness areas.^{25,26}

The federal Water Resources Development Act of 2000 will provide funds for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers efforts to help study and restore parts of the Ohio River through the Ohio River Program. About 65 percent of costs will be funded by federal money, the remainder to come from matching funds from other state and local sources. The Ohio River program may cost about \$307 million over 15 years. Federal money should be allocated next year.²⁷ Various environmental groups pressured Congress to make changes in the way the U.S. Corps of Engineers manages projects. The environmental groups would like a review by an independent group of large projects exceeding \$25 million in cost. The environmental groups would also like to see more of the costs being borne by local project sponsors and suggested the possibility of having civilians lead the Corps.²⁸ The Corps will have to reevaluate changes to its nationwide wetlands permitting rules and also costs of the program due to legislation passed by Congress.²⁹

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service temporarily halted studies that could add new species to the endangered and threatened species list in November so that the agency could complete court-ordered work that would label habitat for those species that are already on the list.³⁰

Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) reported an increase in mining fatalities in the U.S. during the first half of 2000 over the same period in 1999, with 29 miners losing their lives in metal and nonmetal mining, six more than in 1999.³¹ However, for the entire year 2000, there was a decrease in metal and nonmetal mining fatalities with 47 deaths compared to 55 for the

year 1999.³² Model Job Safety Analysis guidelines have been developed by that agency for tasks associated with quarrying dimension stone.³³ Mine operators with a mine or contractor identification number are now able to prepare training plans over the Internet at MSHA's website, <http://www.msha.gov>.³⁴ Under a new MSHA regulation owners of sand, gravel, and crushed stone operations will be required to provide information to their employees on any potentially hazardous materials used or produced at the mine, including silica. The new regulation is called HazCom and should become effective in October 2001.³⁵

At congressional hearings Thomas Warne, Utah, representing the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, expressed concern that regulations proposed by the Federal Highway Administration would not streamline the process of procuring needed environmental approvals for highway construction projects as was mandated under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century.³⁶

Metals

A \$166 million steel-processing plant employing 129 persons may be built by L.E.O. Development Co. either in Indiana at Clark Maritime Centre, or in Kentucky at Jefferson Riverport International. The plant will produce hot rolled coils.³⁷

LTV Corp. filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in December.³⁸ A loss of \$80 million in the third quarter of 2000 was reported, primarily attributed to high levels of imported steel.³⁹ The company reported that they had lost 40 percent of their business and are in danger of having to permanently close down the facility, which would affect 18,000 employees in the U.S., Canada, and Britain, with 3,000 of those in Indiana.^{40,41} There are now nine U.S. steel companies in bankruptcy.⁴² LTV Corp. will also sell its tin mill products business, located in Indiana Harbor, East Chicago, Ind., and Aliquippa, Pa., to U.S. Steel Group. The business primarily manufactures tin for use in food cans and other containers. The Aliquippa facility will be closed, and some equipment may be moved to the Indiana Harbor mill.^{43,44,45}

Weirton Steel reported a net loss of \$26.2 million in its third quarter, due primarily to continued high levels of steel imports and a softened market. About 6 million of this amount was attributed to start-up costs and market conditions associated with the Indiana galvanizing plant joint venture GalvPro.⁴⁶

Trade violation cases were filed by several U.S. steel companies in November against 10 countries selling hot rolled steel to the U.S. Most of those steel companies have Indiana ties: Steel Dynamics, Inc., Weirton Steel, Bethlehem Steel Corp., LTV Corp., National Steel Corp., and U.S. Steel Group. Three additional U.S. mini-mills located in North Carolina, Kentucky, and Illinois are involved in the trade case. Hot rolled steel imports have risen from 600,000 tons in 1997 to 3.6 million in the first three quarters of 2000 from the 10 countries.⁴⁷ In December the U.S. International Trade Commission ruled in the steel companies' favor, which will allow the U.S. Dept. of Commerce to begin its own study of the situation.⁴⁸

The number 4 blast furnace continued to be idled at U.S. Steel Gary Works because of a decrease in demand due to a high level of imports. It has been idled since July.⁴⁹ The company has taken other steps, including layoffs at other mills.⁵⁰

Some analysts believe that the answer to the steel import problem is for mergers among steel companies to occur.⁵¹

The Bethlehem Steel Corp. slab mill at Burns Harbor will be closed. The company will also stop producing ingots at that facility. The production will be moved out of Indiana to its Sparrows Point and Coatesville mills. This will affect about 100 Burns Harbor employees.⁵²

Nucor Corp, which operates several mills including one mini-mill at Crawfordsville, will be required to spend a total of \$98 million for pollution control and for federal fines. This is the largest government environmental settlement ever reached with a steel producer.⁵³

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