

US Route 50 Four-Lane Coalition

Meeting 3/20/15

The US Route 50 Four-Lane Coalition held a meeting with IDOT Assistant Secretary Rich Brauer, on March 20th, in Olney. The meeting was well attended; including Representative Reis, Representative Cavaletto, Engineer Gregory Jamerson of IDOT District 7, Engineer Kirk Brown of IDOT District 8, and many supporters of the US 50 Four-Lane Project. Assistant Secretary Brauer stated that he wants to work with local mayors and representatives. The Coalition took advantage of this opportunity to brief Brauer on our history, and current workings with the corridor from Olney to Lawrenceville and the Lebanon By-pass.

The Olney to Lawrenceville corridor has received funding for a Phase 1 study. The Lebanon By-pass has received funding for Phase 1 and Phase 2 studies. IDOT is currently working on Phase 1 studies for both projects; which involves preliminary engineering and environmental effects. The Coalition anticipates design approval, on both projects, near the end of the year.

Representative Reis complimented the Coalition on coming together and saying let's get started somewhere. Representative Cavaletto back Reis stating the Four-Lane Project started with two groups, noting the West and East sides of the corridor. In joining together, the Coalition has been instrumental to the cause. Cavaletto made note of what condition US 50 is in; stating that it sees a heavy amount of traffic and needs fixed. Cavaletto spoke of a possible capital bill and that the Coalition has to be ready to go, iterating that the Coalition "cannot be left behind this time." The Representative went on stating "for the sake of the growth", explaining that this Four-lane Project will help surrounding counties.

The Coalition has identified bottle necks in Salem and Carlyle. As we continue moving forward with the Four-Lane Project, the Coalition will focus on these areas. Salem Mayor John Raymer spoke of the Salem bottle neck and stated that they are ready for a truck by-pass. Mike Burton, Mayor of Carlyle, noted approximately 3.5 million people visited Carlyle last year and they pull a large amount of people from within a 30-50 mile radius. Burton mentioned the neglect of past governmental funding in Southern Illinois, and the importance of the Four-Lane Project for growth. Charlie Gillespie, representing Lawrence County, also asserted that the Four-Lane project is not only important for safety, but it's a constant for economic development. Gillespie affirmed "this is America's road."

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