

Purdue Road School Celebrates 100 Years of Transportation in Indiana

INDOT employees joined more than 2,300 transportation officials at the 100th Annual Purdue Road School, setting record attendance for the conference in its centennial year. Purdue Road School took place March 11-13 and served as a platform for organized discussions regarding the enhancement, development and maintenance of the state's transportation system.

The conference featured 27 tracks divided into 160 sessions, ranging from administration and ethics to project management and safety. INDOT played a significant role in this year's program – more than 400 employees attended sessions, more than 20 employees shaped the technical program as track advisors, and 125 employees served as speakers or moderators.



Transportation officials fill the Loeb Theater on March 11 to hear Commissioner Browning's opening address.

Commissioner Karl Browning delivered the [opening remarks](#) on Tuesday and announced INDOT's new practical design initiative and the agency's shift in focus from enhancing capacity to improving pavement and bridge quality and highway safety.

"We're going to spend more of our available funding – that's motor fuel taxes and federal highway distributions – we're going to spend more of that on preservation than on increasing capacity. And we will maintain relatively flat overall operating expenses for the next several years," said Browning.



INDOT employees Kathy Eaton-McKalip (left) and Barry Partridge are all smiles during Wednesday's luncheon.

Gov. Mike Pence delivered this year's [keynote address](#) during Wednesday's luncheon. Pence thanked INDOT for working through the difficult winter season, and explained his infrastructure vision for the state.

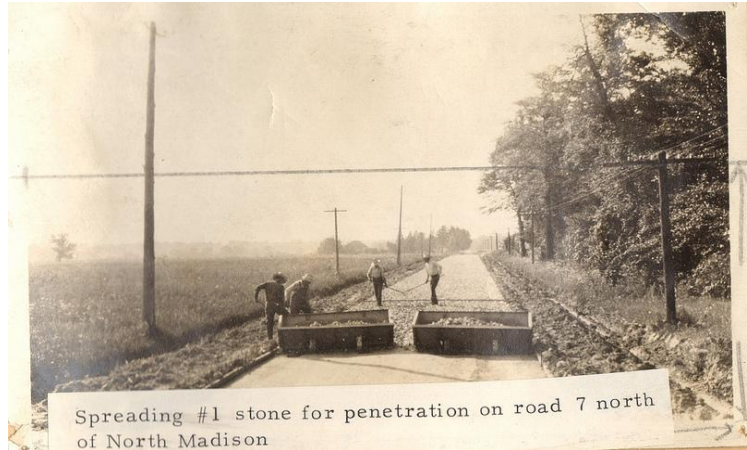
"Our administration's goal is simply to continue, as I mentioned, to build on the tremendous progress we have made and the historic advantage the state of Indiana has developed," said Pence.

Road School traces its origin to January 1913, when W.K. Hatt, head of Purdue's School of Civil Engineering, issued a call for a Civil Engineering Conference to cover the needs of county surveyors and city engineers. A similar conference in 1914 included the passing of a resolution for a provision in Indiana law that a yearly School of Good

Roads would take place. In 1915, the name of the Civil Engineering Conference was changed to the Purdue Road School.

Over the past 100 years, the Purdue Road School has evolved to remain at the forefront of transportation issues.

“Just prior to Purdue Road School being established, 94 percent of the roads in the United States were gravel or dirt,” said Darcy Bullock, co-chair of Purdue Road School and Joint Transportation Research Program (JTRP) director. “Many of the topics in the earlier Road Schools were oriented toward basic maintenance and construction of gravel roads and signing.”



During the 1920s, workers spread and level a rock roadbed (above). The photo is a part of the 100 Days of Road School Campaign.

“Who would have imagined 100 years ago that this group would be discussing an Indianapolis intermodal railroad yard that could move goods to and from Asia in 20 days?” continued Bullock.

The centennial celebration for Road School started months before the conference, with the 100 Days of Road School Campaign. The JTRP digitized hundreds of historic Indiana transportation photos and released the photos on social media leading up to the event.

JTRP shared some of its favorite photos from the campaign with INDOT. The photo gallery is available [here](#).