

The I-65 Southeast Indiana Design Build Best Value project consisted of a complete reconstruction and added travel lanes construction of 14 miles of I-65 in Southern Indiana, from Seymour (MM 50) to Columbus (MM 64). This three-year project included over a half-million cubic yards of excavation, almost one million square yards of concrete paving, and 27 bridge widenings or rehabilitations. Because of the massive size and scope of this project, the job was divided into three sections, all happening roughly independent of each other. Each would be a massive job in their own right - the fact that all were taking place at the same time is a testament to the efficiency and dedication of the crews of E&B Paving.

One of the biggest challenges of this project was the state's chosen project delivery method. As a design build best value contract, the project team, consisting primarily of E&B Paving as the prime contractor and United Consulting as the lead designer, started with zero designed plans. The only scope of work provided by INDOT was a proposal of design goals given a set lump sum amount of money. Our task was to complete as many components of the design proposal as possible given the funds allotted. By combining the technical know-how of the design team with the experience and eye for practicality of the construction team, we were successfully awarded the contract. The awarding of the project was not based on a full set of design plans - only a preliminary scope. Designs were developed and approved by INDOT for future areas of work while work along the site was taking place. This brought both unique challenges and benefits to the job - project managers had limited time to plan ahead due to the fast-paced nature of the design-to-construction process, but the construction team could also relay lessons learned from early phases to improve and optimize later aspects of the design.

Traffic along I-65 was maintained at all times. Two lanes of traffic in each direction were required to be open and accessible from 6 AM to 9 PM. This meant that the project team had to come up with unique and innovative ways to maintain traffic while also keeping the schedule of work moving as planned. Mother Nature did not always comply with this plan - this region of the state received unprecedented rainfalls in 2018 and 2019. To keep the project moving forward, crews had to tighten gaps and lags between activities, and find ways to accelerate activities along the critical path. This was one of the key major successes our team had during this project - our estimated percent of work complete based on concrete paving was only at 20% by the end of 2018. By the end of 2019, paving was 80% complete. Many of our crews had a record year, hitting productions previously thought impossible.

With this project complete, the capacity of a key component of Indiana's vast network of interstate highways has now greatly increased. The project serves to keep commercial traffic efficiently on the move through the state, reinforcing Indiana's title as the 'Crossroads of America.' With growing commerce and manufacturing opportunities not only in the state but locally within Jackson and Bartholomew counties, the added travel lanes ignite an already booming region. The project not only benefited INDOT and the state of Indiana but has also benefited E&B Paving. Techniques and methods learned on this project are being put into action on similar major interstate projects, keeping an efficient flow of traffic moving on Indiana's busiest highways. The lessons learned from this project will lead to further successful improvements of this region's interstate highway system, expanding capacity and safety for all users.



