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## **LIUNA's "Build Indiana 2010" Takes the Fight For Jobs to Gary, Surrounding Cities**

*Second Stop In Indiana Is Key Part of National Effort to Solidify Support in U.S. Senate for Investment in Indiana and America's Basic Needs*

### **Campaign To Get Hoosiers Working Includes Mobilization of Members, Billboards Warning of Structurally Deficient Bridges**

**Portage, Ind. (August 24, 2010)** – LIUNA – the Laborers' International Union of North America – and a broad coalition of allies today brought the "**Build Indiana 2010**" campaign to the state's northwest corner, continuing the fight to create over 450,000 jobs for Hoosiers by winning support in the U.S. Senate for legislation that will put people back to work building the critical infrastructure of the state and the nation.

Reflecting the support Build Indiana 2010 enjoys from small businesses, more than 200 LIUNA members, joined by elected officials, the business community and union officials, gathered at the headquarters of the Construction Advancement Foundation, a major contracting association located a short distance from the I-94 bridge over Route 20 – one of 4,111 bridges in the state that are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

Billboards warning motorists of structurally deficient bridges, appearing soon in northwest Indiana, are a "conversation starter" aimed at raising awareness of the needs facing Indiana and America and urging people to contact U.S. Senators Evan Bayh and Richard Lugar to ask them to champion the cause of creating jobs and getting America's economy moving again.

"In northwest Indiana alone, we've seen over 8,000 construction jobs disappear with no relief. Nearly one in four construction workers is unemployed and nearly one in four bridges in the region are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete," said David Frye, Field Representative for LIUNA's Indiana District Council. "We have workers. We have work that needs to be done. What we're missing is a commitment from Washington to invest in building our country, our state and our workforce."

Northwest Indiana's problems are part of a broader national crisis that is getting worse. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, the taxpayer tab for taking care of the

basics of the country soared 69 percent between 2001 and today – from \$1.3 trillion to \$2.2 trillion.

Build Indiana 2010 also includes radio ads airing throughout the state, online advertising and mobilization of thousands of LIUNA members in Indiana – many of whom began their outreach to Senators Bayh and Lugar at today's event, placing phone calls to both senators' offices, urging them to champion key legislation, including a comprehensive highway bill, that will create jobs, invest in America, and leave a legacy for taxpayers and future generations.

Earlier this month, LIUNA members made nearly 1,000 personal telephone calls to their Senators urging passage of a highway bill.

“A new highway bill will would provide construction jobs, steel jobs, manufacturing jobs and revenue to our communities, and it deserves far more attention and action than it's received” said Mark Lopez, chief of staff to Rep. Peter Visclosky, a Democrat who represents northwest Indiana. “We need people to contact their representatives in Washington, including senators Bayh and Lugar, and urge them to move this legislation forward.”

Local government leaders, including the mayors of Hammond and Portage, also voiced their support for Build Indiana 2010.

“The needs facing my city and others in northwest Indiana are staggering,” said Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott. “Our highways are stretched to the limit, and our water systems present both an economic and an environmental risk. We need federal investment if we want to remain a destination for residents and businesses.”

“We've already lost 40,000 jobs in our region – we can't ignore this crisis any longer,” said Portage Mayor Olga Velazquez. “We can't get our economy moving if we don't get people her and all over America working again. It's time for Washington to put working families first.”

LIUNA's effort in Indiana, which launched in Indianapolis in July, is part of a national Build America 2010 campaign, which has also kicked off in Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland and Kentucky and will soon expand to Ohio and other states. The campaign has drawn support from a broad range of groups, including the Sierra Club, the Associated General Contractors of America and Build America's Schools.

“Without a long-term investment in our needs, I can't hire as many people as I'd like to or purchase construction equipment,” said Doug Robinson, regional vice president for Rieth-Riley, one of the region's leading construction contractors. “We want to put people to work – all we're waiting for is some leadership from our senators.”

“I'm ready to hire workers today, but I don't have any projects to put them on,” said Ted Brunner of Milestone Contractors, one of the state's largest highway builders. “Businesses like ours are ready to rebuild our state if our leaders step up to the challenge.”

The problems facing Indiana's critical infrastructure are many. In addition to deficient bridges:

- Between 1990 and 2008, vehicle travel on Indiana's highways increased by 28 percent and the state's population grew by 15 percent.
- In 2009, there were 3.3 billion gallons of sanitary sewer overflows reported to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.
- According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Indiana's drinking water systems need an investment of \$5.9 billion over the next 20 years.

"I'm ready to work, and I'm ready to build Indiana," said Maegen Rust, a LIUNA Local 41 member who recently followed in her father's footsteps by seeking work in construction. "We need to create good, secure jobs that will allow people like me to raise a family."

For more information about Build Indiana 2010, visit [www.BuildIndiana2010.com](http://www.BuildIndiana2010.com). For more information about Build America 2010, visit [www.LiunaBuildsAmerica.org](http://www.LiunaBuildsAmerica.org).

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*The half-million members of LIUNA – the Laborers' International Union of North America – are on the forefront of the construction industry, a powerhouse of workers who are proud to build America.*