

I-69 Corridor in Southwest Indiana Receives Federal Approval

In March 2004, federal approval of the I-69 corridor connecting Evansville and Indianapolis made the new interstate a soon-to-be reality for the 1.3 million people living in the nine counties the corridor runs through; that is, if one's definition of soon encompasses the next eight to fourteen years.

The approved corridor is to improve access to communities and businesses throughout southwest Indiana by linking Daviess, Gibson, Greene, Johnson, Marion, Monroe, Morgan, Pike, and Warrick counties (see Figure 1). I-69 would also be particularly important to the Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center in neighboring Martin County.

Of the nine counties in the I-69 corridor, three counties have average weekly wages that exceed Indiana's (Gibson, Marion, and Pike), but the overall regional weekly wage of \$586 is just 94.1 percent of the state average (see Table 1). At \$441 a week, those in Daviess County earned the least, receiving just 70.8 percent of the state average.

When looking at median household income from Census 2000, it was Monroe County that came in at the bottom at \$33,311, likely due to the Indiana University (IU) student population. Greene, Daviess, and Pike counties also had median incomes below \$35,000. Six of the nine counties had median household incomes below the state median of \$41,567.

Educational attainment varies from Daviess County, where nearly 30 percent of the population over age twenty-five has not completed high school, to Monroe County, where 39.6 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher (once again, because of the presence of IU).

During the next phase of the I-69 project, final alignment will determine the exact route within the two-thousand foot buffer zone. The 142-mile corridor will be broken into six sections, and local officials and residents along the route will help plan and design the highway that works best for their respective communities.

The Indiana Department of Transportation estimates I-69 will cost \$1.78 billion to build, with 80 percent of that paid with federal funds and 20 percent paid with state gas tax revenues. ◀

Figure 1
I-69 Corridor in Southwest Indiana

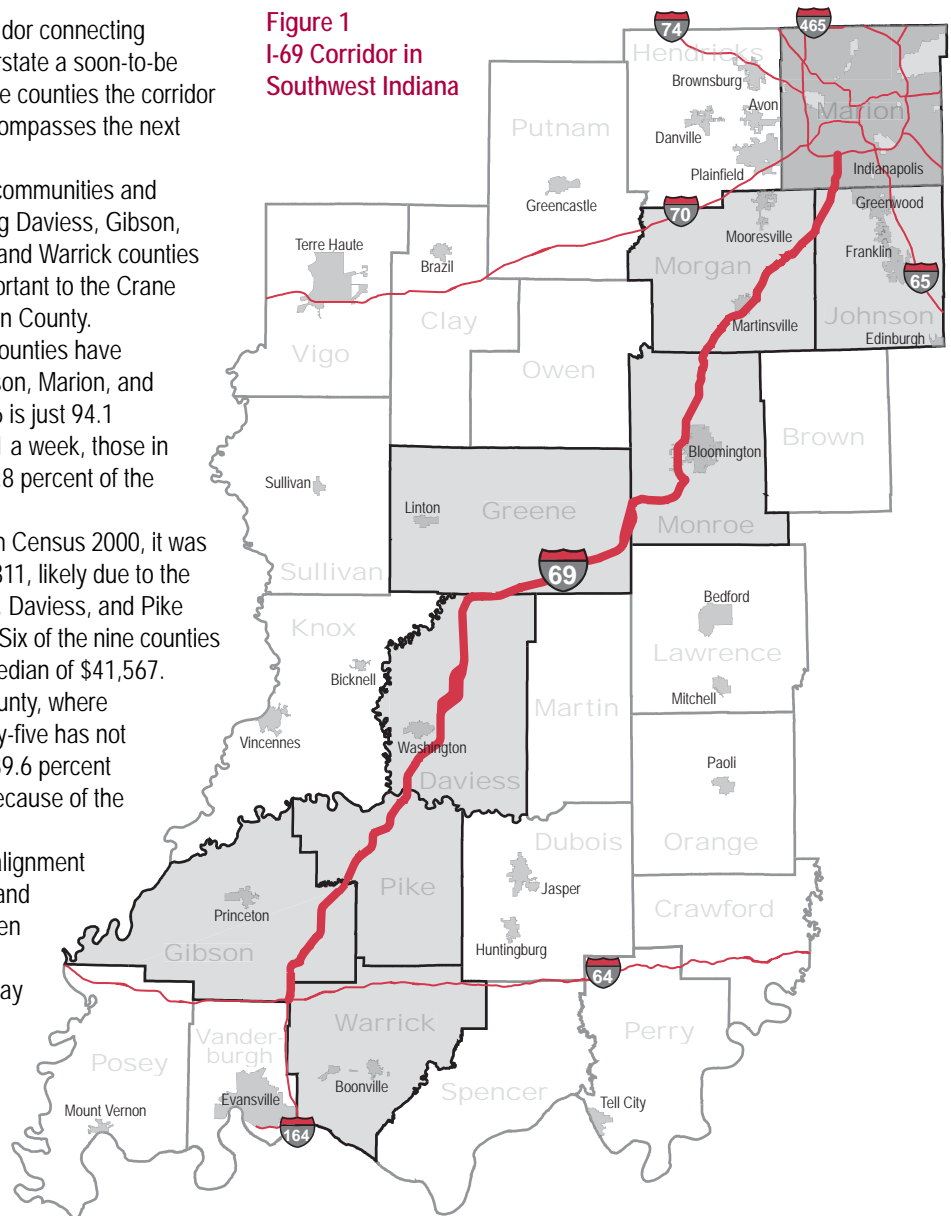


Table 1
Demographic Overview of Counties in I-69 Corridor

County	Population		Weekly Wages and Annual Income			Educational Attainment	
	Population Estimate, 2003	Percent of Indiana	Average Wage Per Job, 2003:2	Percent of Indiana's Average Wage	Median Household Income, 2000	Percent with High School Diploma, 2000	Percent with Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2000
Indiana	6,195,643	100	\$623	100	\$41,567	82.1	19.4
Daviess	30,047	0.5	\$441	70.8	\$34,064	71.8	9.7
Gibson	32,991	0.5	\$794	127.5	\$37,515	80.9	12.4
Greene	33,244	0.5	\$474	76.1	\$33,998	79.2	10.5
Johnson	123,256	2.0	\$521	83.6	\$52,693	85.7	23.1
Marion	863,251	13.9	\$727	116.7	\$40,421	81.6	25.4
Monroe	122,903	2.0	\$561	90.1	\$33,311	88.5	39.6
Morgan	68,656	1.1	\$502	80.6	\$47,739	80.7	12.6
Pike	12,931	0.2	\$649	104.2	\$34,759	75.6	8.4
Warrick	54,744	0.9	\$609	97.8	\$48,814	86.3	21.8
Region	1,342,023	21.7	\$586	94.1			