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County prepares for bridge overhaul projects

By **JORDAN FOUTS**
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GOSHEN — County officials passed agreements related to three bridge repair projects Monday.

The Elkhart County Board of Commissioners approved task orders for two bridge projects that are in the beginning stage and accepted a warrant for a completed repair. The Elkhart County Council in April voted to ap-

propriate \$100,000 for preliminary designs and other work related to each of the two upcoming projects.

The first task order is with civil engineering firm Butler, Fairman and Seufert Inc. It involves bridge No. 156, also called the Decamp Bridge, which takes takes C.R. 18 over the Elkhart River just east of Decamp Boulevard.

The bridge is west of the three-way intersection of C.R.s 18, 13 and 115, where

a roundabout was completed in 2024. Kyle Wagner, Elkhart County Highway Department transportation manager, said the need for repair was discovered during the engineering firm's last round of bridge inspections for the county, so it wasn't known at the time the roundabout was built.

Wagner said the project is in the early stage so it's too soon to know if the bridge will need to be closed during

the repair.

"This independent task order covers the design services for Butler, Fairman and Seufert for a beam repair," he said. "Once this is signed and given to Butler Fairman, it's just under design right now. I can't answer that at this time."

The board approved an amended task order with USI Consultants Inc. for

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Photo provided / Elkhart County Highway Department
Pictured is Bridge No. 332 ahead of emergency repairs carried out last year.

A DAY FOR THE DOGS



Elkhart Truth photos / Jon Gard

Mike Freshour and Katie Freshour of Elkhart take a water break with Kayce, left, and Hank on Saturday during Dogapalooza 2026 at Ox Bow County Park.



Liam Neumann, 9, has his face painted like a dog during Dogapalooza 2026 at Ox Bow County Park.



Tim Ash and Maximus of Goshen enjoy the music Saturday during Dogapalooza 2026 at Ox Bow County Park.



Deb Jamison of Elkhart shares a nibble of her burrito with Thelma on Saturday during Dogapalooza 2026 at Ox Bow County Park.



Kelsey Brooks of Goshen crosses the 5K finish line with her friend Tex and followed by other walkers and runners during Dogapalooza 2026 at Ox Bow County Park on Saturday. Hundreds of dogs and their owners attended the annual event, hosted by Elkhart County Parks.

'We reap what we sow'

Indiana police training academy chief defends \$114M campus overhaul

By **CASEY SMITH**
Indiana Capital Chronicle

PLAINFIELD — Dozens of recruits clad in khakis and tucked-in black polos stood toe-to-toe inside the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy gymnasium Wednesday morning, snapping to attention as instructors barked commands across the polished floor.

One young recruit from Logansport was called forward and asked to recite — "Loudly!" — why he wanted to become a police officer.

"Because I wanted to make a difference, and I wanted to mean something to my family," he shouted. It was the cohort's third day of an intensive 10-week training.

Watching nearby, ILEA Executive Director Tim Harty quietly nodded.

"That's what we're trying to drill in them," he told the Indiana Capital Chronicle. "And with professionalism — that's got to start with quality training."

The scene unfolded inside a campus that barely resembles the law enforcement academy of just a few years ago.

The Plainfield facility just west of Indianapolis is nearing the finish line on a sprawling, yearslong renovation and expansion project that features college-like dorm rooms, expanded classrooms outfitted with modern technology, a newly constructed emergency vehicle operations track and a mock "scenario village" where trainees now practice responding to domestic disturbances and other real-world calls.

It's one of Indiana's largest recent public safety investments, transforming the state's main police training campus into what Harty hopes will become "the envy of training facilities across the country."

That's in spite of delays and escalating costs — and scrutiny over the higher-than-expected price tag. The project, first backed by

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