

How Southwestern Indiana Began their Central Time Zone Quest

In personal research, I found several articles that have been written about the five repititioning Southwestern Indiana counties, and how they originally began the process of petitioning the Department of Transportation for a switch to the Central Time Zone in August and September of 2005.

The Indiana Economic Digest published a series of these articles together, and they are tied together with links which vary at the bottom of each page.

I will place the URLs to the articles, which display as copies below, in their proper order.

- First article (published in Perry County News on August 18, 2005. Written by Kevin Koelling, and titled “Perry County Commissioners opt for Central time.” - <http://www.indianaeconomicdigest.net/main.asp?SectionID=31&subsectionID=76&articleID=20850>)
- Second article (published on August 25, 2005. Author is given as “By Evansville Courier and Press staff and wire reports.” Titled “Daviess County voted to ask federal government move it to Central time zone.”) - <http://www.indianaeconomicdigest.net/main.asp?SectionID=31&subsectionID=76&articleID=20949>)
- Third article (published August 27, 2005. Written by Jennifer Whitson. Titled “Time to pick a time zone.”) - <http://www.indianaeconomicdigest.net/main.asp?SectionID=31&subsectionID=76&articleID=21013>)
- Fourth article (published September 13, 2005. Written by Gayle Robbins of Vincennes Sun Commercial. Titled “Knox County to ask feds for Central time.”) - <http://www.indianaeconomicdigest.net/main.asp?SectionID=31&subsectionID=89&articleID=21320>)
- Fifth article (published September 13, 2005. Author is given as “Washington Times-Herald staff and wire reports.” Titled “Commissioners in Daviess County officially request Central.”) - <http://www.indianaeconomicdigest.net/main.asp?SectionID=31&subsectionID=76&articleID=21321>)
- Sixth article (published September 15, 2005. Written by Jennifer Whitson. Titled “Time choice clock ticking.”) - <http://www.indianaeconomicdigest.net/main.asp?SectionID=31&subsectionID=76&articleID=21371>)
- Seventh article (published September 18, 2005. Written by Jennifer Whitson. Titled “Requested shifts would put nearly a third of state in Central zone.”) - <http://www.indianaeconomicdigest.net/main.asp?SectionID=31&subsectionID=76&articleID=21419>)

I have highlighted specific sections of text in the following articles with a different color (sky blue), to highlight their specificity in the events that are occurring with the current time zone repetitions.

8/18/2005 6:01:00 PM

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Perry County Commissioners opt for Central time

By [KEVIN KOELLING](#), Perry County News Managing Editor

TELL CITY - Whether to ask the federal [Department of Transportation](#) to change Perry County to Central time "is a difficult decision" the state legislature has forced counties and towns to make, Greg Wathen told the county commissioners in their regular meeting Monday.

They opted to request a change to Central time, but are still soliciting opinions.

The legislature voted this year to put Indiana on daylight-saving time, but deferred to local governments decisions about what time zone they want to be in. Those now on Central time won't change, according to the federal Department of Transportation, which approves time-zone-change requests, but those in Eastern-time areas bordering Central counties could ask, by Sept. 16, for hearings if they want to make cases for switching.

Wathen, the executive director for the [Perry County Development Corp.](#), attended the commissioners' meeting to provide information on the degree to which Perry County interacts with surrounding counties, one of the criteria the federal agency examines when it considers a county's request.

The commissioners adopted a resolution favoring a change to Central time. The Perry County Port Authority adopted a similar resolution last week, which it forwarded to the commissioners.

Asked last week whether the county commissioners planned to request such a change, Commissioner Terry Lock said he had received some requests in favor of Central time and wanted to seek other county residents' feelings.

A number of people have said they don't want to go to daylight-saving time, but Lock stressed, "We don't have a choice." The state legislature enacted a law shifting all of Indiana to DST starting next April. Further, federal legislation extends the amount of time DST is observed each year starting in 2007.

The figures Wathen related were from 2003, he said, because data from 2004 won't be available until January. The majority of Perry County's work force goes to or comes from five adjacent areas, he told the commissioners. "The numbers are changing - more and more people are commuting into Perry County."

The data Wathen provided showed 12,239 people in the Perry County work force in 2003. Of those, 9,062 lived and worked in the county. The top five adjacent areas employing Perry County people and the numbers employed were: Dubois County, 981; Kentucky, 895; Spencer County, 661; Vanderburgh County, 152 and Warrick County, 104. The top five areas sending workers into Perry County were Spencer County, 537; Kentucky, 369, Crawford County, 90, Dubois County,

55 and Warrick County, 52.

The commuting patterns, compiled by the [Indiana Department of Revenue](#), show 10.7 percent of Perry County's work force coming from other areas, and 22.7 percent of its labor force going to other areas.

Of those areas, Spencer, Vanderburgh and Warrick counties, as well as Breckinridge and Hancock counties - the two Kentucky counties to which Wathen referred, are on Central time.

"I dare say we should be on Central time," Wathen said, "but that would put us in conflict with Indianapolis."

"I don't really care about Indianapolis," Commissioner Jody Fortwendel answered. "I want to know what Dubois County will do."

"When this first came out, Dubois County championed Central time," Lock said, "but now they're backing off."

"They're leaning toward doing nothing," Wathen said, explaining residents there are about evenly split. An Aug. 11 Evansville *Courier-Press* story said the president of that county's commissioners initially favored a change to Central time to align with Evansville, but the split is moving him to avoid applying for that change. The Dubois County commissioners will discuss the issue at an Aug. 22 meeting.

Wathen said informal polling has shown most counties intend to remain neutral.

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Daviess County votes to ask federal government move it to Central time zone

By Evansville Courier & Press staff and wire reports

Commissioners in one Southwestern Indiana county have voted to petition the federal government to move it to the Central time zone, while another county will host a public meeting to consider following suit.

[The Daviess County Commissioners voted Monday to request the change.](#)

[Commissioner Tony Wichman said constituents he spoke with favored Central time.](#)
[Commissioner Steve Myers said only three of 23 people who called him favored Eastern time. "It seems to be an overwhelming majority," Myers said.](#)

Other Southwestern Indiana counties along the Central time zone line have not yet acted to start a petition.

However, the Pike County Commissioners will hold a special meeting to ascertain public opinion

on switching to Central time.

Pike County Commissioner Mark Flint said two speakers will address the crowd about a change. Constituents then will have the opportunity to voice their opinion on the matter.

[State Rep. David Crooks, D-Washington, will present his argument for a change to Central time.](#)

Brian Bergsma, director of the [Indiana Chamber of Commerce's](#) Small Business and Economic Development Policy, will argue for the county to remain on Eastern time.

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Sept. 6 at Pike Central High School in Petersburg.

Flint said the meeting will be "purely informational" and no official vote will be taken. "This will just give us the opportunity to hear some so-called experts, or people who can speak knowledgeably on the subject, present both sides of the issue," Flint said.

The [U.S. Department of Transportation](#), which regulates time zones, formally invited requests in response to a state petition that asked the agency to determine whether time boundaries should be changed. The petition was required by a law that mandates statewide observance of daylight-saving time beginning next spring.

[The petition from Gov. Mitch Daniels asked the federal department to keep five counties in Southwestern Indiana and five in Northwestern Indiana in the Central zone. It also seeks to keep five southeastern counties near Cincinnati and Louisville, Ky., in the Eastern zone.](#)

But it did not state a preference for the remaining 77 counties in the Eastern zone. Those do not observe daylight-saving time but will next year under the new law.

In north-central Indiana, Marshall County, which is one county south of South Bend, is seeking the change. And St. Joseph County, home to South Bend, also may follow suit.

The St. Joseph County Council voted Tuesday to ask the U.S. Department of Transportation to switch the county - the state's fourth largest with more than 260,000 people - from Eastern time. If approved, that would put South Bend on the same time as the three counties to its west - LaPorte, Porter and Lake - and align it with Chicago.

The city councils in South Bend and Mishawaka also have voted to back the county's switch as Indiana counties face a Sept. 16 deadline to ask the federal government for changes to the state's time zone boundaries.

The St. Joseph County Commissioners, the body officially charged with making a request, has not voted on the matter.

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Time to pick a time zone

By JENNIFER WHITSON, Evansville Courier & Press Indianapolis bureau

INDIANAPOLIS - Daviess County Commissioners were the first in Southwestern Indiana to cross a threshold when they voted Monday to apply to the federal government to be moved to the Central Time Zone.

Now county workers are compiling information they will use to make their case that the county's economy would be best served by being on the same time as Evansville.

But many more Southwestern Indiana counties are still straddling the fence as the deadline looms for making an official application.

The Legislature opened the time-zone debate when it voted to move all of Indiana to observing daylight-saving time starting in spring 2006. That means most of Indiana will be on Eastern daylight-saving time.

But to get the bill passed, a provision required Gov. Mitch Daniels to ask the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#), which controls the time zone lines, to review Indiana's time boundaries. Daniels first asked the federal Transportation Department to review the issue. His letter was neutral on the proper time zone. In a later letter, he asked for statewide public hearings.

But the Department of Transportation chose instead to request that counties interested in moving to Central time apply by Sept. 16 so all requests could be reviewed as a whole. Counties have always been able to request a time zone change.

County officials are not happy that the issue has fallen into their lap, saying instead that it should be solved on a state level.

In fact, in Dubois County, the commissioners invited state lawmakers and even Daniels to attend their public hearing on Sept. 6, but none are going to make it.

"I wish our forum would be sooner," said Commissioner Larry Vollmer. "I've never run into an issue like this before."

"I really truly hope that people understand that we (commissioners) are just three human beings and we just have to pick one or the other," he said.

Notwithstanding the political heat the issue is generating, county commissioners across the state are now faced with the decision: Vote to pursue Central time or by lack of action, start observing Eastern daylight-saving time.

Only the Daviess County Commissioners in Southwestern Indiana have voted, but many other counties have hearings planned. Some have also tentatively scheduled votes.

Knox County Commissioner Jerry Brocksmith said the move to observe daylight-saving time has him leaning toward Central time.

"(Moving to daylight-saving time) motivates us to think harder about aligning with the Central zone simply because of the work patterns," he said. "I think the economic pressure is to go ahead and align with the rest of the (Evansville) pocket."

But Vollmer said he's leaning towards Eastern.

"In Eastern time, we'd be tied to Louisville and Indianapolis and just out of sync with Evansville," he said.

Perry County Commissioners President Terry Lock said that what Dubois County decides will vastly affect the opinion in his community. He said that of those who leave the county to work, a slim majority travel to Central time areas. But the vast majority would travel to central if Dubois joins in.

"We're being real cautious," Lock said. But he said their commission will vote Sept. 1 on whether to petition and won't wait for Dubois County to decide.

In northern Indiana, the push to move to Central seems to be gaining more speed with more county commissioners having taken concrete votes. Commissioners in Marshall, Pulaski and Starke counties have all voted for a petition for Central. In St. Joseph County, local bodies have also supported a petition though the commissioners have not yet voted.

Meanwhile, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce is sending Brian Bergsma, director of economic development policy, across the state to make the case for Eastern time to local officials.

"Counties ... have had 30 years to petition (for a time zone change) and have never chosen to do so," Bergsma said. "That only screams for the argument for why they should stay in (Eastern)."

Rep. Dave Crooks, D-Washington, was the lead rallier of pro-Central time forces during the daylight-saving time debate but said he's mostly kept a low profile while the counties consider the issue. He said that's due in part to the fact that he still thinks a statewide debate on Central time would be better.

"I told (Daviness County officials) not to move to Central because it won't help the statewide debate but they felt enough pressure to go themselves," Crooks said. "I'm a little torn at this point because I hate to see just a few more counties added to Central and that's the end of the debate."

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Knox County to ask feds for Central time

By GAYLE R. ROBBINS, Vincennes Sun-Commercial associate news editor

The county commissioners plan to petition the U.S. Department of Transportation to move the county into the Central time zone next year.

If approved, the county would then be on the same time with Evansville and Lawrence County, Ill., year round.

The petition, explaining why the county would benefit from the move, has to be filed with the

federal department by Friday.

Even though the commissioners want to move to the Central time zone, meaning there would be an hour's difference in the time between here and Indianapolis, there's no guarantee the DOT will approve the switch. Certain criteria have to be met, mainly to show how such a move would benefit the local economy.

State Rep. Troy Woodruff, R-Vincennes, whose 11th-hour vote in the General Assembly this year started the clock ticking toward Indiana's changing time, attended Monday morning's commission meeting and spoke in favor of applying to be moved to the Central time zone.

Woodruff said the move would align the county with the growing economy of the Evansville area. It would also put the county on the same time all year with Gibson County, home of the Toyota manufacturing plant.

Local manufacturing facilities such as Futaba Indiana of America and Excell USA, both in the U.S. 41 Industrial Park, make parts used on vehicles built at the Toyota plant.

Daviess and Sullivan counties also plan to petition to be moved into the Central time zone.

Commissioner Jim Bobe said results of the surveys sent out to members of the Knox County Chamber of Commerce showed a roughly 60/40 percent split in favor of moving to the other time zone.

Commission President Jerry Brocksmith said most of the comments he's received about the issue indicate public support for switching, a view with which Commissioner Jimmy Parish concurred.

Woodruff apologized to the commissioners for their having to take up the issue. He explained that the original legislation which he supported called for the governor's office to make a decision, not the county commissioners.

Woodruff had stated right up until the last minute that he wouldn't support legislation on changing Indiana's time zone unless it called for putting all the state's 92 counties on the same time.

But as the clock wound down on the legislative session he switched his position, voting in favor of the bill which would call for some counties, including Knox, to begin observing Eastern Daylight Time next year.

Woodruff told the commissioners that both the governor's office and the Indiana Chamber of Commerce could provide information needed to prepare the county's application to switch to the Central time zone.

The transportation department will review the application and, if officials there believe it has merit, agree to hold public hearings in the county to solicit additional comments on the county's switching time zones.

9/13/2005 5:24:00 PM

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Commissioners in Daviess County officially request Central

Washington Times-Herald Staff and Wire Reports

At their Monday meeting, Daviess County Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution to request that the county be moved to the Central time zone because residents do most of their business in Evansville, which also hosts the closest major airport and state college. Most television broadcasts come from Evansville or Terre Haute, they reasoned, and many residents work at the Toyota Motor Manufacturing plant in Gibson County.

“Just because you put in the petition doesn’t mean you will get the switch,” said Ind. Rep. Dave Crooks, D-Washington, who plans to request a state-wide voter referendum on the issue.

Since at least 11 other counties have requested Central time, and Greene seems to be leaning that way, commissioners felt they could safely take their chances.

However, said Crooks, Vigo County, which dominates the area’s television coverage, has not endorsed Central time. He feels this will be a major factor when the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#) decides which time zones to approve.

Commissioners in Dubois, Knox and White counties also voted Monday to seek a switch to the Central time zone.

Commissioners in Dubois County, which borders a section of five counties on Central time, voted 2-1 to seek a switch to that zone.

The board’s president, Lawrence Vollmer, voted against petitioning for a change. He noted that the General Assembly passed a law this year that will mandate statewide observance of daylight-saving time starting next spring, and said he wanted to wait a year to see if people liked Eastern Daylight Time before considering a change.

But he acknowledged that the other two commissioners said that most of the people who had contacted them wanted to go to Central time.

Knox County commissioners voted unanimously Monday to ask for the switch to Central time saying most residents in the southwestern Indiana community prefer it. Knox borders Gibson County, which is on Central time.

Freshman Republican Rep. Troy Woodruff of Vincennes, cast the deciding vote in April for the entire state to switch to daylight-saving time. He said Monday that the county is connected economically to southwestern Indiana counties that are on Central time.

White County commissioners voted 2-1 to petition to make the switch. Part of White County borders a section of five counties in northwest Indiana that already are on Central time, and two of White’s neighboring counties — Carroll and Cass — also have voted to seek a switch to that zone.

But commissioners in Tippecanoe County, which borders White County to the south and includes the cities of Lafayette and West Lafayette, have decided against seeking a switch to Central time.

White County includes parts of two large lakes and the Indiana Beach amusement park, and several tourism businesses want to switch because much of their clientele comes from the Central zone.

Under the current schedule, Indiana counties have until Friday to petition federal officials for a

change. Commissioners in St. Joseph County are expected to vote today on whether to request a change to Central time. There is no timetable for the agency to decide on approving or disapproving the requests.

Eighty-two of the state's 92 counties are currently in the Eastern zone.

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Time choice clock ticking

By JENNIFER WHITSON, Evansville Courier & Press Indianapolis bureau

INDIANAPOLIS - [Martin County Commissioners voted Tuesday to petition for a switch to Central time. The 2-to-1 vote for Central boosts the total number of counties petitioning to 15.](#)

But commissioners in neighboring Orange County decided Wednesday to stick with Eastern time.

Orange County Auditor Diann Mathers said commissioners there talked to residents, businesses and schools and took an unofficial polling that showed 84 in favor of Eastern and 46 for Central, so the commissioners decided not to vote for a petition.

But, she said, the decision was made tougher by Dubois County's move to ask for Central because the commissioners "didn't want to go against them."

[The last vote in Southwestern Indiana is scheduled for today when Perry County Commissioners will review a finalized petition for Central time. On Aug. 15, the body passed a resolution stating a preference for Central and county officials have been working on a formal petition, according to Perry County Attorney Christopher Goffinet.](#)

The [U.S. Department of Transportation](#) will consider the petitions, which are due Friday, together and then will publish a proposal for where a redrawn time zone boundary will go. Federal hearings then will be held in the affected counties.

9/18/2005 3:41:00 PM

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Requested shifts would put nearly a third of state in Central zone

By JENNIFER WHITSON, Evansville Courier & Press Indianapolis bureau

INDIANAPOLIS - As the dust settles in the time-zone fray, 19 counties have asked federal officials to move them to Central time. If their wishes are heeded, almost a third of Indiana counties would be in the Central time zone.

That outcome, according to some, would mean a jagged boundary between the zones and was not at all what the Legislature intended. House Democratic Leader Pat Bauer, D-South Bend, said "pockets of lost time are all over the state" in the current scenario.

"It's a mess by asking every county to apply," Bauer said. "It's a mess that never should have happened."

But Gov. Mitch Daniels, who pushed the Legislature to pass the daylight-saving time bill that opened the debate on time zones, said he had no concerns with how the time-zone debate is playing out.

"From what I've seen, it looks to make common sense," Daniels said.

Even if all counties petitioning for Central are moved, he said, the state will still be better off and less divided, because all of it will be on daylight-saving time.

But there's no denying that some Hoosiers are holding Daniels responsible for the outcome, including several who wrote to the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#) about the issue.

Frances DeJoy of Noblesville wrote of her preference for Central time, closing with: "P.S. to Governor Daniels: I voted for you for daylight-saving time because you said you favored Central time, that is, until you flip-flopped."

But many businesses wrote in to support Eastern time, including a letter from [Vectren Corp.](#) In it, Niel C. Ellerbrook, Vectren chairman, president and CEO, concedes that the five counties in Northwest Indiana are "inextricably linked" to Chicago and should stay on Central.

But, he said, not only should no more counties be added to Central, but the five counties in Southwest Indiana that already are in the Central time zone - Gibson, Posey, Spencer, Vanderburgh and Warrick - should be moved to Eastern "in an effort to align them with the majority of the state."

Now that counties have voted, it comes down to simply waiting for federal transportation officials to announce a proposed rule change - their decision on a time zone boundary.

When announcing the requirements for a petition, the U.S. Department of Transportation promised to review requests on an "expedited schedule."

But agency spokesman Bill Mosley said Friday he had no idea how long a decision might take.

"I couldn't give you a specific time frame," Mosley said.

After a proposed federal decision comes out, the USDOT will open the proposal up for public comments and hold hearings in any affected areas. Mosley again said he had no idea if those hearings would be held regionally or county by county.

Federal officials would then review public comments and issue a final decision. Again, Mosley said he couldn't say how long that process might take.

And while federal officials aren't saying much, [Indiana Chamber of Commerce](#) President Kevin Brinegar said he's confident that USDOT won't add any counties to the Central Time zone. The chamber lobbied aggressively for daylight-saving time and then to keep most of Indiana in the

Eastern time zone.

"I'll be very surprised if they approve anywhere near this number of petitions," he said.

Brinegar said some county commissioners voted for Central before compiling the data that was supposed to make their case. He said some contacted the chamber trying to get economic trends data that would point toward Central and were told no.

And some feel USDOT won't move many counties to Central. Rep. Dave Crooks, D-Washington, an outspoken backer of Central Time, said he's not sure what will happen. He said the current setup, with counties "pitted against each other" and battling to sway neighbors into Eastern or Central, isn't helpful.

"If I were the governor, I think I'd intervene at this point and tell (USDOT) to take no action until the General Assembly addresses it next session," Crooks said.

He said he could carry legislation in 2006 to require a statewide referendum on whether the majority of Indiana should be in Eastern or Central time.

Others say that if the eight counties in Southwestern Indiana that want to join the Central time zone are added, it could be a boost to the region. Ken Robinson, executive director for [Vision-e](#), an economic development corporation for Gibson, Posey, Vanderburgh and Warrick counties, said time-zone unity could be attractive to businesses.

"We could communicate some real continuity in Southwest Indiana," Robinson said. "There are companies that are really interested in being on the same time."

He said having more counties in sync with Evansville would eliminate some shipping and delivery confusion for companies who buy and sell parts and goods within the region. And Robinson said the fact that so many counties opted for Central shows the unity of the economy in the region.

"(Counties) must be thinking: 'Who do we relate to?'" Robinson said. "Evansville really is the central city to the region."

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The commissioners and residents of the five Southwestern Indiana counties united and chose to join Evansville in the Central Time Zone in August and September of 2005, and continued to unite and press for Central Time all the way through to the DOT's final ruling in January of 2006. These articles are truly local viewpoints on why the time zone situation progressed and finished the way that it did.

I am placing these articles into the docket to refresh everyone on why our six counties were moved from the Eastern Zone into the Central Time Zone. Our six counties need to remain in the Central Time Zone because the businesses, chambers of commerce and politicians who are leading this repetition effort are unable to supply sufficient evidence to support their claims that we need to observe Eastern Time. These five repetitioning counties can show no proof of an inconvenience of commerce, and there are no provable signs of economic distress.

Respectfully,
Rocky Lee Byrd