



INDIANA COMMISSION *for*  
HIGHER EDUCATION

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**Governor Holcomb sends Indiana students on a 'roadtrip' to career success**  
*Statewide effort to engage Indiana employers, offer resources to local schools*

Indiana Governor Eric J. Holcomb joined state education and business leaders today at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for a send-off celebration featuring three Hoosier students chosen to travel the state in a distinctive green RV this month. The students will interview leading employers and spotlight some of the key industries driving Indiana's economic growth.

Filmed for an upcoming public television documentary, "*Roadtrip Indiana*" is part of a statewide push for intentional career exploration and work-based learning opportunities for Hoosier students. The initiative also features career-themed classroom resources for local schools and a free, online "Share Your Road" platform to encourage Indiana workers to share their personal and professional journeys.

"The students featured in '*Roadtrip Indiana*' are some of our state's best and brightest, and I am grateful for their participation in this national initiative to encourage more Hoosier students to explore their future career paths through direct contact with Indiana employers," Gov. Holcomb said. "Empowering our students to find a meaningful, in-demand career while showcasing the dynamic range of job opportunities right here in Indiana is an important step in keeping our state's best asset – our people."

"*Roadtrip Indiana*" was developed in partnership with Roadtrip Nation, a career exploration organization that empowers people to define their own roads in life through an award-winning television series, best-selling career guide, extensive online content archive and innovative classroom curriculum. Combining self-reflection with real-world exposure, Roadtrip Nation's tools enable individuals to connect their interests to compatible life pathways and to find meaningful work.

Led by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, "*Roadtrip Indiana*" is made possible with additional support from the Strada Education Network, Cummins, First Source Bank, TechPoint, EmployIndy, the Indiana Department of Education, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and Indiana INTERN.net.

"This is an all-hands-on-deck effort that's bringing together educators and employers with government and philanthropy to help Hoosier students understand the changing landscape of Indiana's economy and to ensure they are equipped for success," said Higher Education Commissioner Teresa Lubbers.

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### Meet the Indiana Roadtrippers

The Indiana roadtrippers were selected through an online application and interviewing process conducted by Roadtrip Nation this spring. To qualify, the students had to be at least 18 years old and pursuing—or planning to pursue—some form of education or training beyond high school (two- or four-year college, vocational school, trade school, etc.).

- **Shannon Newerth**

*(Age 21, from Beech Grove, IN)*

A 21st Century Scholar currently studying plant science at Purdue University, Shannon’s love for the field is no joke: when she was in high school, she discovered a new species of microorganism, a bright pink phylloplane yeast that will be named *Foliophilomyces newerthii* in her honor! But even after attaining such a high level of success at a young age, she’s facing the same struggles every college junior faces: What should she specialize in? Should she continue her education beyond her bachelor’s degree? And if so, how will she pay for that? Driving these decisions is her desire to help people—and specifically, to help the farmers of Indiana. A lover of travel—she recently returned from a study-abroad program in Australia—she’s ready to use this new adventure to not only explore her home state, but to find out what its farmers need most.



- **Dengke Wang**

*(Age 19, from Portage, IN)*

After emigrating from China to industrial Northwestern Indiana at the age of seven, Dengke was interested in engineering from a young age. But his first dream was to follow in his older brother’s footsteps and join the military. The National Guard felt like a great fit for Dengke—who counts leadership and discipline among his key strengths—but a paperwork snafu ended his service early. It was a tough setback, but he quickly pivoted to plan B, and recently finished his first semester of a general engineering program at Purdue University. He knows he still wants to be a leader someday—someone who can inspire and motivate others to reach their true potential—but still so early on in his education, he first needs to see as many different engineering paths as possible to figure out where he can plug in his skills.



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- **Jaedyn Zavala**

*(Age 18, from Kokomo, IN)*

“If you don’t love life, you’re doing it wrong.” This is the mantra that Jaedyn tries his best to live by; it was coined by one of his best friends, who passed away suddenly last year. After losing his friend, the high school senior dealt with some tough roadblocks: he sunk into a depression, let his grades slip, and questioned his path to college. But he realized that the best way to honor his friend is by getting back to doing what he loves, and what he loves is helping animals. After he received a personal sympathy card from his veterinarian when his guinea pig passed away, Jaedyn knew he’d found his dream career; now entering his first year of community college, he hopes he can sit down with Indiana’s best vets to get the inspiration he needs for what he knows could be a challenging road to veterinary school, and beyond.



### **Follow the Indiana Roadtrippers**

Learn more about the Indiana roadtrippers, explore their route and follow their journey online at [LearnMoreIndiana.org/Roadtrip](http://LearnMoreIndiana.org/Roadtrip) or on Twitter @RoadtripNation.

### **Indiana Employers: Share Your Road**

Employers interested in contributing to the “Share Your Road” career advice hub are encouraged to visit <https://roadtripnation.com/share-your-road>.