Greenfield District Crew Makes Repairs Around Historic Underground Arch

When it comes to underground drainage arches, they don’t build them like they used to.

In August, INDOT began repairing a multi-celled drainage structure, while protecting an original limestone arch, at the center of U.S. 40 near Richmond, Ind.

INDOT Construction Engineer Rob Gill said an extension believed to be added in the early 1900s was severely deteriorated, but the historic arch, which was built around 1832, looks to be in excellent condition.

“Examining the newer part of the wall and older part of the arch, I think the older part appears to be in better condition,” Gill said. “We are doing some limited repair work on the 1832 arch, where we will be matching the condition, finish, and materials as much as possible for preservation purposes.”

Cultural Resources Office Manager Patrick Carpenter noted that due to the arch’s historic significance, the project was designed to protect the historic elements of the arch.

“The stone arch was likely built as part of the National Road, the nation’s first federally funded interstate highway, and was determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places,” Carpenter explained.

Workers dug through the eastbound right lane of U.S. 40 to replace a failing concrete culvert, repair another culvert, and perform needed maintenance on other cells of the drainage structure.
In all, INDOT is repairing five cells totaling approximately 102 feet. Work is scheduled to conclude in October.

The exceptional condition of the historic arch wall (on left) shown in comparison with the wall of the more modern extension.