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### Indiana News

#### IU Think Tank Sees Belt-Tightening Continuing for Cities and Towns

Panels plan to assemble menu of policy options for 2012 candidates

By Eric Berman (eric@wibc.com)

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An Indiana University think tank predicts the fiscal troubles of Hoosier cities won't go away for another two or three years.

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The state has encouraged counties to pass local income taxes to make up the dollars lost to property tax circuit breakers. But Matt Nagle with the Public Policy Institute says income-tax collections run two years behind — one year's assessments are collected the next year, and distributed to local governments the year after that. That means cities already reeling from the circuit breakers are counting on money already lost to the recession.

Nagle says five Indiana counties haven't lost any money to the tax caps, but 12 counties are facing losses of 10 percent or more, led by a 22 percent hit in Madison County.

The circuit breakers have cut Marion County tax collections seven-percent.

State spending is already set for the next two years. But Nagle says the next governor will have decisions to make on road funding, as the 10-year financing boom created by the Toll Road lease comes to an end.

The Institute has formed panels on taxes, energy, and education and workforce development to offer candidates a menu of affordable options next spring.

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