

NICAN has a viable solution

May 30, 2004

The writer of the guest opinion entitled "NICAN needs to propose a bypass alternative" obviously did not attend the NICAN presentation at the City Forum, nor did any of our local politicians.

An excellent computer model showing alternative Westside routes was presented indicating a route from Algoma to Springy Point with minimum environmental impact, a grade of less than five percent and minimal disruption to private property...

Many of the questions raised by the writer concerning cost, environmental and property impact of a western route should have been addressed by the ITD. If only a fraction of the detailed planning devoted to the Sand Creek Bypass had been considered for an alternative route, the citizens of Bonner County would have a better opportunity to make an intelligent choice.

The Westside route rejected out of hand by the ITD was a red herring designed to be the most disruptive to private property and incur the most opposition by those concerned.

For years, the ITD has been locked into the Sand Creek route and has too much invested in its plans to be confused by the facts"

- 1) The Sand Creek Bypass is a band aid which will not solve the traffic problem in Sandpoint.
- 2) The Sand Creek Bypass does not solve the east-west traffic problem.
- 3) There is a crying need for another bridge across the river.

What is really needed is a transportation corridor on the Westside which would include a truck and railroad route that would eliminate the non-local trucks and trains from Sandpoint.

The BNSF is already planning to build another bridge across the lake and another track along Sand Creek. This money could be combined with ITD funds to build a true transportation corridor on the Westside, and eliminate the existing railroad bridge and train passage through Sandpoint.

Ed Bittner

Sagle