

# Removing tracks bad for business

This letter is a response to Mayor Kevin Burke's statement in the Tribune-Star dated June 27, 2005, concerning the removal of the CSX industrial rail spur on First Street.

ConAgra and Graham Feed have used and continue to use the CSX industrial rail spur on First Street to create and sustain over 100 jobs in the Vigo County. ConAgra has a mill on South First Street where it receives 65-car unit trains of grain on a regular basis. Graham Feed uses the rail spur to deliver rock salt to its Terre Haute location and is one of the largest suppliers of rock salt in the Midwest.

Bottom line, if the track is removed, over 100 jobs will be lost. Period.

Secondly, I am working with several entities to build an ethanol production facility at the TDK Properties site within the next two years. The facility will create 50 high-paying jobs, create \$2 billion in economic activity over the next 25 years and pay over \$4 million per year in local taxes. To operate the facility, 65-car unit trains of corn will need to be transported into the facility with 65-car unit trains of ethanol transported out to various locations via the First Street industrial spur.

Therefore, removing the track is a negative for economic development. We would be going backwards. The road could be raised to the level of the track just like they did in South Bend and New Orleans, and I am sure many other towns. There could be four lanes of traffic, but when a train is on the track, traffic lane signals would have a red cross, instead of green arrow, to move vehicular

traffic into single lanes north and south.

This would allow the infrastructure to stay in place to serve businesses and future businesses north and south along First Street.

Regarding accidents, I cannot recall an accident involving a train and car on First Street, correct me if I am wrong. The speed limit on the track is 10 mph.

Furthermore, I have heard from elected and appointed public representatives that they propose for CSX to use the track by Pizza Hut to switch rail cars for Graham Feed and ConAgra. Sorry, that's another rail line that will not support the length of the unit trains to be switched, does not have the switches necessary to move unit trains, and will not support the weight.

I have spoken with CSX at length concerning this project. They vote no. So do I.

– **Derrik Hagerman, president**  
**TDK Properties, LLC**  
**Terre Haute**