A truck hired to transport a new NIPSCO transformer from Valparaiso to Schererville negotiates a corner. The rig has a driver steering in the front and rear.

This is a big deal

Moving massive transformer a gigantic success

Moving a transformer is a big deal for reasons that are obvious to the eye: namely, transformers are huge. But moving one is also massive in terms of the amount of coordination among departments within a utility and external to that company.

NIPSCO completed the movement of one of these large beasts March 22 and it went monumentally well.

The transformer, one of NIPSCO's largest at 345kv on the primary and 138kv on the secondary, was moved from the Valparaiso Service Center to its new home in the St. John substation in Schererville. It traveled on U.S. 30 and south on Burr Street with a police escort and an entourage of other vehicles, including bucket trucks and warning vehicles in front and back.

The 25-mile trip to the St. John substation took approximately 90 minutes. Maneuvering the transformer into the substation required another hour. After a large amount of installation work and testing, the new transformer will be put into service May 1, replacing a transformer that had failed Feb. 8. Service was maintained to the area after the transformer's failure through circuit switching that can only serve as a temporary solution because of summer loading.

The key players in moving and installing the new transformer included:

- The company that transported the gigantic machine -- G&L
- The transformer's manufacturer -- Enerco
- Many NIPSCO departments and employees
- Tree crews that addressed vegetation issues along the transformer's route

Those closest to the situation agreed that everyone did their job exceedingly well and the complex project was accomplished in a highly professional manner with solid communication among all groups.