What is sand and gravel?
Sand and gravel is actually a mixture of rocks and minerals that are the byproduct of erosion and transportation by running water. During the warm periods between major glaciations of Indiana, the melting glaciers unleashed torrents of water that carried boulders, rocks, gravel, and sand away from the ice front to form thick deposits of coarse sediment called outwash plains and valley trains. A valley train is little more than an oversized stream valley that is enriched in sand and gravel. The sand and gravel takes the form of terraces and channel bars. Today these relics of the Ice Age are mined for sand and gravel along most of the major river systems in the state.

Because sand and gravel deposits are presorted by natural process, they are ideally suited as sources of aggregate for road building and the manufacture of concrete, asphalt, and so forth. Aggregates producers actually crush the gravel in some deposits to increase the angularity of the aggregate, which becomes a key ingredient in a special road paving material trademarked as Superpave.

The Indiana aggregates industry produces more than 26 million tons of sand and gravel annually, making the Hoosier state thirteenth in the nation as a producer of this valuable commodity.