

# 321 Vote on Knoxville bypass exit delayed

BY DONNA SMITH  
donna.smith@oakridger.com

**CLINTON** — Faced with many people wishing to speak on a Raccoon Valley Road interchange for the proposed Knoxville bypass, Anderson County Commission referred the issue to next month's Operations Committee.

Commissioner Ken Fritts said citizens interested in the issue had called others and there were many people who wished to speak before the Commission takes action on recommending a third exit/entrance to the proposed state

Highway 475. Commission referred the matter to Operations Committee, which will next meet at 6 p.m. May 8 in Room 312 at the Anderson County Courthouse, where Monday's full commission meeting was held.

However, several commissioners said it wasn't fair not to let some of the people talk since they'd taken off from work to speak before commission at its daytime meeting. Commission Chairman Myron Iwanski allowed representatives of both sides to speak.

**SEE BYPASS, PAGE 2A**

## **BYPASS:**

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A**

Carolyn Greenwood, Knoxville, is one of a 17-citizens panel selected to design the bypass. The committee approved a design to recommend to the state two weeks ago. It includes two interchanges, one on Pellissippi Parkway, another on Clinton Highway.

Greenwood explained that the state had not yet made the final decision on approving the bypass and has certainly not decided to fund it. She also said that contrary to what has been said publicly, more people in the area of Raccoon Valley Road opposed having an interchange there, according to information from the Tennessee Department of Transportation that accepted public comments.

David Elam, who owns land that would be used for a Raccoon Valley Road interchange,

along with his sisters, said people in the Heiskell area are in favor of the interchange. He said some people have said only people who stand to gain financially are for this interchange. He said that saying he and his siblings were gaining by selling their land to the state is like saying someone gains by getting insurance money when their house accidentally burns down.

Last Monday, the Operations Committee voted to recommend to the state that a third interchange, one at Raccoon Valley Road, be added to the planned bypass.

The 26.5-mile bypass would connect Interstate 75 in Loudon County to Interstate 75 in Anderson County. It would run roughly parallel to the Oak Ridge Highway but on the east side of the Clinch River, crossing Pellissippi Parkway near Oak Ridge Highway and Clinton Highway near Bull Run Creek.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

32 The Monroe County Airport, Madisonville, Tennessee, hereby gives public notice, that for 45 days from the date of this advertisement, The Monroe County Airport and the Federal Aviation Administration will receive written public comments, pertaining to the development of Disadvantaged Business Goals for Federal Aviation Administration sponsored projects for fiscal year 2003. These goals were established in accordance with 49 CFR Part 26. The methodology by which these goals were established are available for review at the offices of Mr. Allen Watson, county Executive, Monroe County Courthouses, 105 College Street, Suite 1, Madisonville, Tennessee 37354, Phone (423) 442-3981, during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 AM until 4:30 PM. Written comments may be forwarded to the address shown below or via E-mail to, [www.mceo@monroegovernment.org](mailto:www.mceo@monroegovernment.org). or by, FAX (423) 442-7279.

Mr. Allen Watson  
County Mayor/Executive  
Monroe County Courthouse  
105 College Street  
Madisonville, TN 37354

# County road crews begin paving work

By **BRIAN HARVILLE**  
Staff Writer

As temperatures hovered above the 80-degree mark, the county road department launched its annual roadway maintenance program this week, Wilson County Road Superintendent Steve Armistead said.

"We're getting everything cranked up today," Armistead said. "Everything has been pulled out, and we've got the equipment ready to go."

Good weather made for a productive year in 2005, allowing crews to pave about 60 miles of the county's roadways. If Mother Nature permits, Armistead added the department could top last year's maintenance efforts.

"If the weather's good, I would hope that we could even beat that," Armistead said Tuesday. "We're getting more efficient as we go ... At the first of the month, we'll go on 10-hour days, four days a week, which gives us more daylight and more work time."

The road department hopes to focus its efforts on "connector streets" across the county during this year's paving cycle, he continued.

"The big thing that we're closing in on is these con-

connector streets, like Simmons Bluff, for example," he said. "This year, we've got Simmons Bluff all the way from (Highway) 231 over to Cainsville Pike. *Armistead*

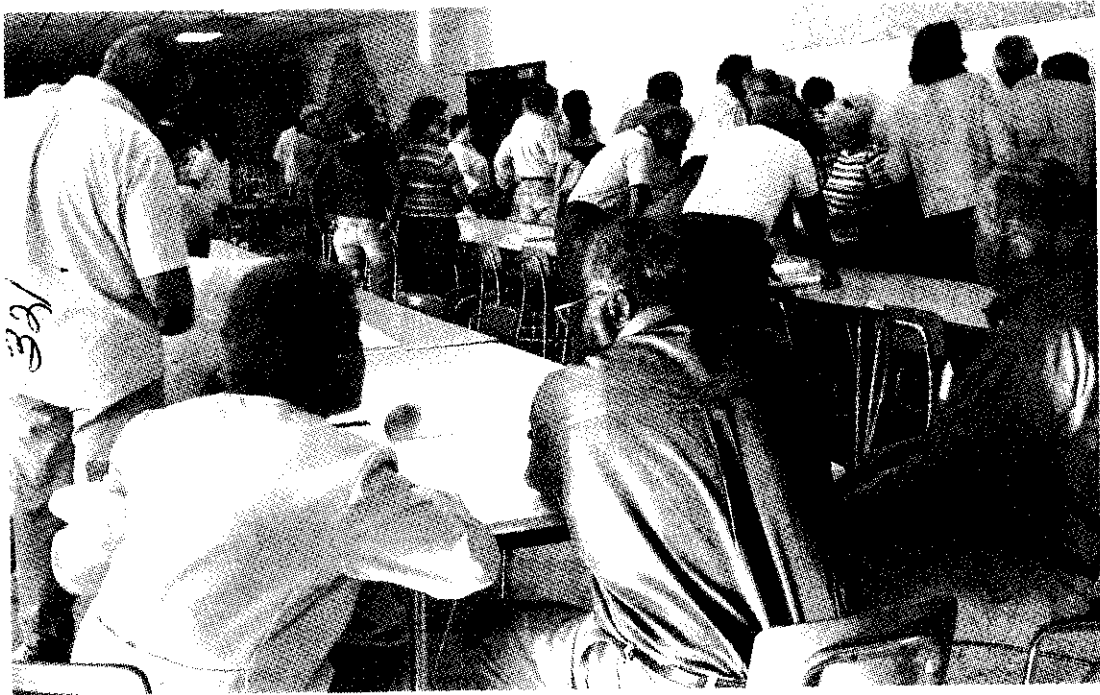


That opens up a thoroughfare for people who are going to Murfreesboro ... without having to run that small road."

Once connector routes have been addressed, Armistead said the department would be free to turn its attention to smaller roadways. Road crews will also resume work that began last fall on some county roads.

"In the fall of the year when the temperature gets down ... topping doesn't go down well. So, we start putting binder down on roads that we're going to start on in the springtime," Armistead said. "We try to keep them in an area where we can work smart ... We've got quite a few of those out there with binder on that we will top first."

**Staff Writer Brian Harville can be reached at 444-3952 ext. 16 or by e-mail at [brian.harville@lebanondemocrat.com](mailto:brian.harville@lebanondemocrat.com).**



Ocoee area residents got a chance to view the final maps for the five-laning of Hwy. 64, but some residents and business owners still oppose the project.

## TDOT airs right-of-way for first Hwy. 64 step

Property owners along Hwy. 64 in Ocoee got a look last week at how the planned 5-lane highway will affect them. While some attended the Right-of-Way hearing to protest the project, officials with the Tennessee Department of Transportation said the purpose of the hearing was to explain the process for appraising and acquiring land and determining its value. After a brief question-and-answer period, property owners met with officials and studied the map of the proposed new highway.

Plans call for four lanes with a center turn lane for 2.3 miles from just east of Hwy. 411 to just west of the Ocoee River bridge. There are 44 tracts of land affected and 14 relocations will be needed. Independent appraisers will determine the value of the land and will begin contacting property owners in June. The construction bid is scheduled to be let in April, 2007.

Bea Russell, owner of Ms. B's Purple Bus, who has been fighting the project, asked why TDOT is

creating a safety hazard by running five lanes into a two-lane bridge. She also asked why a community impact study was not done.

Those asking questions regarding the project were encouraged to call the community relations person. Russell asked why TDOT was working on Hwy. 64 when Hwy. 411 is not done yet. Jackie Wolf, right-of-way officer, said Hwy. 411 is in the construction phase and the Hwy. 64 project is in the right-of-way phase. There was a complaint about the fact right-of-way acquisition was done on Hwy. 411 but the construction is still not done. Wolf said funding is up to the legislature and reminded property owners that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss right-of-way acquisition for this project.

TODT has considered three different alignments for the project. The first plan, presented in October 2002, called for a divided highway with four 12-foot lanes, 12-foot outside shoulders (10 feet paved) and four-foot paved inside

shoulders. It would have caused 11 business relocations, including several outfitters, and nine family relocations. A total of 51 tracts would have been affected.

In August, 2003, the proposal was for a bypass that would take the four-lane highway about a third of a mile north of the existing one, which reduced the number of businesses that would be affected. The existing highway would remain. Opposition was voiced to this concept for a variety of reasons, including concern about the fate of the existing highway and bridge.

The current plan has five lanes — two in each direction and a center turn lane — and 12-foot shoulders. The new highway follows the current alignment, with most of the new roadway being south of the current road. Among the businesses that face the loss of major structures and/or parking space were Nantahala Outdoor Center, Cherokee Corners, High Country, the Duff, Lew's Deli and Ms. B's Purple Bus.

# Claxton residents to give 'Orange Views'

331  
BY GREG JOHNS

greg@hometownclinton.com

## County will hear both sides concerning proposed Orange Route interchange

The Anderson County Operations Committee will listen to Claxton residents next month voice their desire for or opposition to a proposed interchange on the future Orange route – state route 475 – connecting Interstate 75 from Loudon County to Anderson County. The route will relieve traffic congestion, according to officials, in the Knoxville area.

The Operations Committee heard from area representatives last week during its meeting, but county commissioners deferred any action on the interchange resolution until the committee hears from county residents.

Area residents are at odds with the proposed interchange at Raccoon Valley Road, with one side saying it does not want it and the other side claiming it would bring business to the Claxton-Powell area.

Only two exits are planned off 475, one on Clinton Highway and the other on to Pellissippi Parkway. Another exit is being proposed at Hickory Creek in Hardin Valley.

County Commissioner Chuck Fritts said he had received several calls from concerned residents and wanted to make sure they all got their chance to speak.

Four individuals did speak, briefly, during Monday's commission meeting, pointing fingers at the other side.

Clark Hamilton, president of Better Roads in North Knox, claimed the committee that planned the exits "is flawed" and "doesn't reflect the views of the community."

Carolyn Greenwood, a member of the Knoxville Regional Parkway Resource Team, said its research showed "consistently more (people) opposed than supported the exits". KRPRT was tasked with studying the route, including the exits. That committee reduced the number of planned exits from six, down to the remaining two.

Hamilton last week at the Operations Committee meeting likened a 22.5-mile route with only two exits to having "a house with no doors or win-

dows." He reiterated that point again Monday.

County Mayor Rex Lynch last week also voiced his support for the exit, saying it would be good for the county.

Both sides are expected to be present next month when the Operations Committee will consider a recommendation to the full commission for whether or not to approve the resolution calling for the Raccoon Valley Exit.

In other news:

- County commissioners Monday unanimously approved Anderson County Economic Development Association President Tim Thompson to go after a \$500,000 Tennessee Fast Track Infrastructure grant that would pay for extending water and sewer lines to 20 acres in the David Jones Industrial Park.

The grant requires a local match of \$169,000, which commissioners approved.

At least \$120,000 will come from the sale of the 20 acres and another \$40,950 from 5.4 acres recently sold to Seneca

Medical.

The work on the grant will help the county compete for an interested automotive parts manufacturer. That manufacturer is also eyeing North Carolina. The company, if it decides to move here, would provide 40 jobs and an hourly wage averaging \$13.86.

- County commission unanimously approved plans for the detention facility's initial phase of expansion and reconstruction.

The architectural firm, Barge Waggoner Sumner & Cannon will now let the project out for bid. Commissioners last year designated no more than \$3 million for the project set to increase inmate-bed capacity, storage and administrative space.

- County commission unanimously approved setting the posted speed limit in the Glen Alpine subdivision at 20 mph, after the recommendation of the sheriff's department, and several complaints from citizens who live in the subdivision.

AROUND THE COUNTY

# It's a long road to better street in Spring Hill

Residents, officials say construction projects add to dangerous conditions

By SUE McCLURE  
Staff Writer

**SPRING HILL** — If we had to sum up the state of Spring Hill's roads it would be succinct: bumpy.

And the possibility of fixing them in the near future: stalled.

Despite the fact that 10,000 more building lots have been approved in the city, the main arteries to take those people and others to their destinations are not slated for improvements, widening or paving anytime soon.

Which really burns commuters.

"Whoever is approving these lots doesn't have to drive (or should I say sit) in this traffic nightmare that all this building is causing," said James Lynn of Thompson's Station. "Before any more houses, subdivisions or commercial developments are approved the roads need to be addressed.

"Our roadways are 10 years behind the explosive growth Spring Hill is causing," Lynn said.

Mayor Danny Leverette sympathizes.

"People need to let their legislators know that these roads are dangerous," Leverette said. "Of course, TDOT (the Tennessee Department of Transportation) covers a large area and more and more communities across the state are



Hilly Beechcroft Road in Spring Hill.

DIPTI VAIDYA / STAFF

looking for road projects."

Spring Hill residents have four particular roads on their radar — Duplex, U.S. Highway 31, Beechcroft and Port Royal.

The first three are the state's responsibility; the last is the city's.

## Duplex perplexing

"Duplex is the worst," said longtime resident Katherine Osborne. "You had to be careful 30 years ago traveling it, and look at it now."

Duplex has never been widened and still

sports steep drop-offs.

"They ought to put pressure on the state to widen the road and make it safe," Osborne said.

TDOT officials agree.

"There's no question of the need," Dennis Cook of TDOT said. "It's just the money."

In an attempt to speed up the process of fixing Duplex Road, Spring Hill officials agreed to pay \$250,000 for an engineering study.

That study will take about six months to

complete, according to City Administrator Ken York.

No construction date has yet been set for Duplex Road, said TDOT spokeswoman Kim Keelor.

"A planning study is under way that involves widening Duplex to a three-lane typical section," Keelor said, explaining that the third (turn) lane would extend the entire length of the roadway.

## Harrowing Highway 31

"We were told by TDOT recently that 31 won't be widened until 2015," York said. "That's not very good news to us."

Actually, the date is 2016, according to Keelor.

"It's from Old Kedron Road to Buckner Road — three miles, \$7.2 million — to widen it from two to five lanes to match existing lanes through the south end of town," she said.

Also included is a 9.6-mile, \$29 million project from Buckner Road to Henpeck Lane in Franklin.

That project would widen the road from two to four lanes in the county and from two to five lanes through Spring Hill, she said.

Neither project has been funded, which frustrates Spring Hill officials.

"The need is here and now," York said. "Improvements need to be made north to Thompson's Station and all the way to Goose Creek."

## Building along Beechcroft

Beechcroft Road used to be a little-traveled straightaway favored by bicyclists.

Now it's a heavily used connector route for folks traveling from Carters Creek Pike and its environs into Spring Hill.

Subdivisions are springing up along it and a new middle school may be built just off it, on Cleburne Road.

"It's becoming imperative that this road become a high priority," York said. "But it has yet to have any priority with TDOT."

Something needs to be done soon, he added. "They've already approved 232 houses out there, and a developer has purchased another 500-plus acres."

## Port Royal pain

Now for a road the city can do something about.

Trouble is, construction traffic makes it difficult to do any significant widening, city officials say.

"There is an apartment complex and two subdivisions and a condo complex under way right now," York said. "And there will be a commercial development just north of all that."

"The construction forestalls any work we can do," he said. "We will keep it passable, but we won't widen the road until the construction vehicles are finished."

But relief could come quicker than expected, York said.

"The houses here are being built out very quickly," he said. "So we may be able to work on the road in a year or a year and a half."

So, if you're stuck in Spring Hill traffic, you can always ponder the possibility of an airport. ■