

Stewart County bridges on fast-track for completion

By **BONNIE LILL**
Stewart County Editor

The construction of four new bridges in Stewart County is on the fast track due to weather, according to Stewart county Roads Supervisor Jerry Cunningham.

Cunningham said that county road workers have

been hindered very little by rain this past year, allowing much work to get done.

He added that county crews should begin clearing the roadsides right after the first of the year for two concrete bridges on Gillum Hollow Road, and one each on Sidney Clements Road and Parker Lane.

These four longer bridges will be built by contractors and will cost about \$400,000.

"We're going to do a few ourselves as well," Cunningham said.

The smaller bridges, which will be about 20 feet or less, will be on Wilson Hollow, Shady Rest and

the former Bill Walker Road.

Cunningham said the county crews have the ability to build larger bridges and have done bridges as long as 50 feet, but "it's pretty rough on a three-man crew."

"We spend a lot of money on bridges,"

Cunningham said, "but we've made a lot of progress over the years."

He said that when he became road supervisor in 1982, there were 140 bridges in the county that needed replacement with concrete structures. Now there are less than 20.

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Bridges

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"We need good bridges," Cunningham said. "We have tandem trucks that can carry 20 tons. Gas prices are killing us, and so since we have to buy materials in Clarksville, we need to buy full loads."

A few months ago, residents of East Fork Leatherwood Road spoke at the county commission requesting that the road be widened and paved.

Cunningham had responded that before the road could be paved, a bridge would be needed to replace the creek ford. He said that area was one of those on the list.

Following an incident where a school bus brushed a vehicle on the narrow road, the county road crews worked to widen the road wherever it was feasible.

Cunningham said that the bulk of the funding for the bridges comes from state street aid.

"We try to take it easy on the taxpayers," he said.

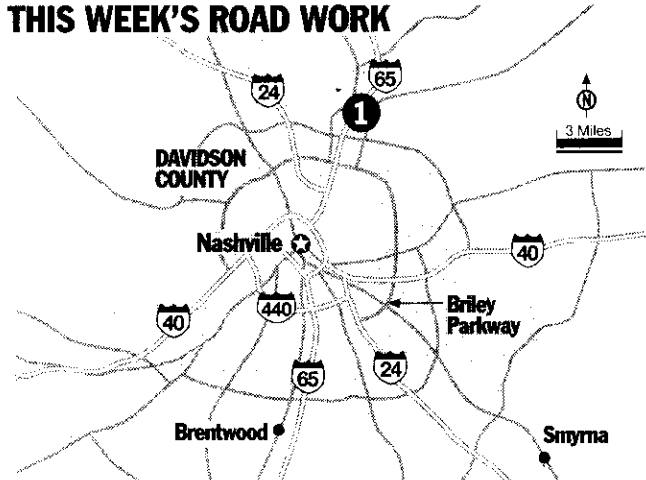
He said that the price of an average concrete bridge has doubled to about \$60,000 over the past 10-15 years, primarily because of mandated upgrades.

Today's bridges must be wider than before, and must be engineered to withstand earthquakes and other forces.

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ROAD WORK

THIS WEEK'S ROAD WORK



1 I-65 between Old Hickory and Vietnam Veterans boulevards

Between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and Jan. 3 through Jan. 4, there will be rolling roadblocks on I-65 northbound and I-65 southbound while workers move construction equipment across the interstate. The rolling road blocks should not last longer than 10 minutes.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Transportation

STAFF

INTERSTATE CLOSURES

I-65 north corridor — Between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and Jan. 3-4, there will be periodic shoulder closures for installation of ITS camera poles at I-24 westbound at Blue Hole Road, I-24 westbound at Antioch Pike, Briley Parkway eastbound just east of I-65 northbound, Briley Parkway westbound just west of Ellington Parkway and I-65 southbound just south of Apple Valley Road.

I-40 in Smith County — Between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday and Jan. 3-4, there will be several one-lane closures on I-40 for placement of permanent pavement markings.

OTHER MAJOR ROAD CLOSURES

Bridge repair on Spring Street over Ellington Parkway — Tuesday through Friday and Jan. 3-4 there will be alternating one-lane closures on Ellington Parkway northbound and southbound for the removal of a bridge-deck overhang above Spring Street.

Vietnam Veterans Boulevard in Sumner County — Today through Jan. 4 there will be one lane closed on Gallatin Pike eastbound between Saundersville Road and Shutes Lane for bridge work. The northbound and southbound ramps on State Route 386 are reduced to one lane for concrete repair.

STREET CLOSURES

Second Avenue North between James Robertson Parkway and

Gay Street — Closed through Dec. 31.

Holt Road between Nolensville Road and Edmondson Pike — Closed through Dec. 31.

Elm Hill Pike between Massman Drive and McGavock Pike — Two lanes of traffic closed through Dec. 31.

Second Avenue South between Peabody Street and Molloy Street — Closed through Dec. 31.

Edwards Avenue between Hart Lane and Virginia Avenue — Closed through Dec. 31.

Berry Street between Third and Lischey avenues — Closed through Jan. 12.

Lischey Avenue between Marina and Berry streets — Closed through Jan. 12.

Franklin Street between Second and Fourth avenues south — Closed indefinitely for the Gateway Project.

Demonbreun Street Bridge between 10th and 12th avenues south — Closed until further notice.

Lischey Avenue between Berry and Foster streets — Closed through January 2007.

North Third Street between Berry and Foster streets — Closed through August 2006.

Lischey Avenue between Meridian and Foster streets — Closed through January 2006.

Treutlan Street between East Meridian and North Third streets — Closed through January 2007.

— COMPILED BY AMBER NORTH

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Walnut Grove work on hold

Construction of the big Walnut Grove project at I-240 stops today for the holidays.

Limited work to replace bridges and widen Walnut Grove resumes Jan. 2, and the project returns to normal construction levels Jan. 9.

EAST MEMPHIS

Holidays to limit highway construction

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The Tennessee Department of Transportation announced Thursday road and interstate construction through Jan. 4.

TDOT officials said a holiday construction schedule is designed to ease congestion on Tennessee interstates and major state roadways during the holiday travel period.

"We will have no construction related lane closures on any roadways beginning at midnight Dec. 23. Construction will resume Monday night at 8 p.m., Dec. 26," said Chief Engineer Paul Degges in a release. "Then we will halt construction again beginning at midnight on Friday Dec. 30, through 8 p.m. on Jan. 2."

Degges said all possible lanes will remain open for holiday travelers for their convenience. "The department wants people traveling on the interstates to get to their destinations safely and with as few disruptions as possible."

Several long-term construction zone lane closures must remain in place. Some of those locations include:



- In Davidson County, I-40 east and westbound at the Donelson Interchange will remain reduced to 3 lanes.

- In Shelby County, the Jackson Avenue Bridge over I-40 will be closed for replacement.

- In Shelby County, the Faxon Avenue Bridge over I-40 is closed for replacement.

Construction in Middle Tennessee areas includes:

- **I-65 between Old Hickory Boulevard and Vietnam Veteran's Parkway.** Through Friday and Tuesday, Jan. 3 through Wednesday, Jan. 4, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. each day, motorists should be alert for possible rolling roadblocks on I-65 north and southbound in order to move construction equipment across the interstate. The rolling roadblocks should not exceed 10 minutes in duration. (Lojac)

- **Bridge Repair on Spring Street over Ellington Parkway.** Tuesday through Friday and Tuesday, Jan., through Wednesday, Jan. 4, motorists should be alert for alternating one-lane closures on Ellington Parkway north and southbound for the removal of a bridge deck overhang above Spring Street. (Mid-State Construction)

- **I-65 North Corridor (ITS).** Tuesday through Friday and Tuesday, Jan. 3 through Wednesday, Jan. 4, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. each day, motorists should be alert for periodic shoulder closures at the fol-

lowing locations for installation of ITS camera poles:

- I-24 westbound at Blue Hole Road

- I-24 westbound at Antioch Pike

- Briley Parkway eastbound just east of I-65 northbound

- Briley Parkway westbound just west of Ellington Parkway

- I-65 southbound just south of Apple Valley Road (Mastec)

- **Vietnam Veterans-Sumner County.** Through Wednesday, Jan. 4, there will be one lane closed on Gallatin Road eastbound between Saundersville Road and Shutes Lane for bridge work. The north and southbound ramps on State Route 386 are reduced to one lane for concrete repair. (Rogers Group)

- **Smith County (I-40 over SR53).** Tuesday through Thursday, Tuesday, Jan. 3 and Wednesday, Jan. 4, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., motorists should be alert for various one-lane closures on I-40 for placement of permanent pavement markings. (Mid State Construction)

The information is provided to TDOT by the contractors.

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East Valley water project

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Dunlap City Commissioners approved a nearly \$3 million project to bring water to residents in the East Valley community, during a specially called meeting December 15. Commissioners Dan Barker, Gordy Hickey, Rachel Hixson and Mayor George Wagner approved the project, with Jennifer Greer voting no due to questions on funding.

During the meeting, Mayor Wagner explained growth in the East Valley area has increased, and at the same time, problems with sulfur water have left some residents needing a new source of water. Wells are used throughout the community currently.

The cost of the project was calculated at \$2.985 million by an engineer, said City Recorder/Treasurer Norman Hatfield. Dunlap is responsible for approximately two-thirds of that amount, \$1.9 million, which will be paid with a loan through Rural Development.

Hatfield explained a Rural Development grant of \$568,000, combined with a \$500,000 grant obtained by Sequatchie County, supply some of the funding. He added a rate increase for those in the project area could be required to help offset a shortage, as a Community Development Block Grant was not able to be secured. The increase would be about

eight dollars above an average \$37 monthly bill, he said.

"This loan will be at a set rate of 4.25 percent," Hatfield explained. "It's a 38-year loan."

The project will bring Dunlap city water to at least 138 homes in the community, Hatfield said. The number came from a survey taken in Fall 2003 and Spring 2004. The total does not include any new residences built since the survey.

The Recorder/Treasurer explained refurbishment of the steel water tank on Dunlap's South Ridge is part of the project, at a cost of \$146,350.

Some residents from East Valley attended the meeting, with many applauding the commission's vote.

3/1

Pink-water snafu can help La Vergne deal with problems

In a city government the size of La Vergne's, one would think communication would be a fairly simple process. It isn't Metro-Nashville after all.

But when it came to warning residents not to drink pink-tinted water last week after a chemical leak at the water treatment plant, city employees simply didn't send the word to each other or their residents.

In fact, La Vergne's initial Dec. 14 message to people — the few who got it — was that excessive amounts of Caruso 20, a liquid permanganate solution added to water to remove impurities, had leaked into their water but wouldn't hurt them.

And even when the state Division of Water Supply advised the city to tell customers to avoid drinking pink or dark-tinted water, they never did it.

Apparently, the word never made it from Ronnie Weaver, director of La Vergne's Water Treatment Plant, to Angie Mayes, the city's public information officer.

The problem at the water plant was identified around midnight of Dec. 13, and by 8 the next morning the water plant received some 30 complaints about pink water.

It's easy to understand the concerns of La Vergne residents, since most people don't drink pink lemonade for breakfast or during the winter months at all.

State Department of Environment and Conservation officials said this week they had no immediate way to determine whether the water was safe or unsafe, so they felt it best to tell people not to drink any until tests could be completed.

Unfortunately, few La Vergne residents got word from the city, and if they did, it was the wrong one. Even though they were told it was harmless, most were smart enough to realize they shouldn't use it.

Some said it turned their clothes pink, while others said it held a nasty stench. Even after treatment plant workers flushed the system, city residents reported still seeing discoloration in the water.

In defense of La Vergne employees, they'd never run into this problem before with city water, so it caught them by surprise. Yet a little better communication would have solved all of their problems.

This experience should encourage the board of mayor and aldermen to set up a policy for responding to utility problems and city emergencies. Quick and efficient response is vital.

But in the absence of a better way to send the right message across the city, La Vergne residents would be wise to adopt an attitude of complete caution.

In other words, if it smells funny and looks funny, it's probably not a laughing matter.

The road less traveled



Greg Williamson/The Leaf-Chronicle

Linda Horton, owner of Oakwood Food Market, inside her Dover Road business. State Highway 79 has opened a new section of the road leaving her business to survive on local residents.

Dover Road widening hurting local market

By **REGAN LOYOLA HUNEYCUTT**
The Leaf-Chronicle

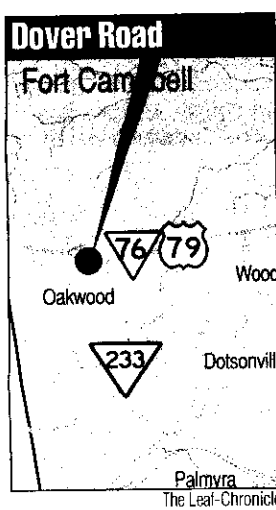
Linda and Buddy Horton feel cut off.

Thousands of cars normally passed by the Horton family business, Oakwood Food Market, every day. But since late November when the section of Dover Road fronting their business was closed, sales have dropped by 50 percent.

The couple opened their market in 1952 and since have sold gas, groceries and other necessities to customers traveling between Montgomery and Stewart counties.

Now, they feel isolated.

As part of a massive road widening project by the Tennessee Department of Transportation, the section of Dover Road where Oakwood Food Market is located has been closed to normal traffic and a new section of roadway has opened nearby. It means motorists don't pass the market and therefore, don't stop to fill up with gas or buy groceries.

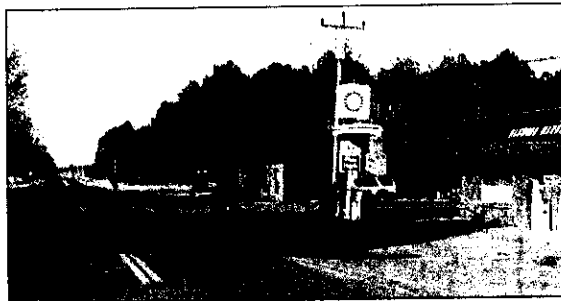


The Leaf-Chronicle

"We used to get all the business because we were convenient," Linda Horton said. "We had a good business, but when you take the traffic away, we have nothing."

Work ahead of schedule

The project, which was started last year, was scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2007. However, crews are currently working a year



Greg Williamson/The Leaf-Chronicle

Oakwood Food Market on Dover Road once thrived with passers by. The road is now closed 200 feet away and the new section of the road is open to traffic.

ahead of schedule, meaning the new road should be completed next summer. The project is being completed in sections.

From the Stewart County line, the existing road is being widened to four lanes, then splits into a new multi-lane section that skirts the Fort Campbell reservation north of the existing roadway in the Oakwood community. It's the section affecting the Hortons.

Similar improvements are being made on the Stewart County side of the highway in areas east

of Dover, and over to the Big Rock/North Stewart Elementary School vicinity. Traffic there is already being rerouted onto newly constructed sections of the highway.

Hortons hurting

Linda Horton agreed the new and improved road is necessary, but said she doesn't understand why the section of Dover Road in front of her business couldn't have just been widened, rather than a new road built that di-

➤ See Market, C3

Market

Continued from C1

verts traffic away from the market.

"Now you can't see our business from the new road," she said. "There are no signs up there. We're out in 'Deadsville.'"

Linda Horton said she plans on keeping her store open as long as possible, but fears they may have to close it.

"I hope we can survive," she said. "When I can't, I'll have to shut down."

The Hortons attended public hearings about the proposed project before construction began, but claim they were told the plan was just preliminary and might not include the new section of road that leaves them cut off.

"They told us not to worry about it because it wasn't written in stone and they were trying to find a way that would be more suitable," Linda Horton said.

Kim Keelor, public information officer for TDOT, acknowledged the Hortons' situation is unfortunate, but said planners consider a variety of factors when designing a new road.

"There are safety reasons and a curve is involved somewhere along the project" Keelor said. "We always have to consider traffic flow and what is better for the community as a whole. It is unfortunate when that has a negative impact on one or two people. But we have to look at it from the perspective of what is best for the community."

Linda Horton said she has received no compensation from TDOT for the financial impact the new road has caused to her business.

Keelor said TDOT has tried to be accommodating of the Hortons, but didn't offer to purchase their property because it wasn't needed for the road expansion project.

"The project supervisor tells me this owner has been in contact with many parties involved in this and has known about the situation for quite some time. Several people on our staff and the contractor have tried their best to work with this owner."

Moreover, because motorists can access the store from the old Dover Road, the business is

technically accessible.

"If it were (cut off), we would be required to provide lost access payments," Keelor said. "However, access is maintained from the old Dover Road. There is not access to the new Dover Road from her property."

Possible solution

Linda Horton said she contacted the state about possibly extending an old county road nearby so motorists can use it to access her store from the new Dover Road.

Keelor said TDOT does not have jurisdiction to work on a county road, so extending it to help the Hortons wasn't an option.

"There is an old county road beside her property that she asked the county to pave as an access point to her business during construction. It is not part of the state route. The county said they would not pave it, that maybe TDOT would do it and they would maintain it. We cannot pave a road that is not ours."

Horton said opening the closed section and putting up signs at either end might alleviate some of the strain, but TDOT has told her such action is also illegal.

"If they would open back up at both ends, that would satisfy me," she said. "At least the local people in the community could get here without having to pull off the road."

Keelor said state statute prevents TDOT from putting up any signage on a state right of way that advertises a business.

As a two-lane thoroughfare, Dover Road can accommodate about 12,000 vehicles per day. But once construction is completed, the road will be able to handle about 30,000 vehicles daily, TDOT estimates.

Horton said she doesn't think Oakwood Food Market will benefit from the additional traffic capacity.

"We never dreamed it would affect us this bad," she said. "People are going to shop no matter what, but even the local people aren't going to come by because now it is inconvenient."

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