

# Overwhelming response from public slows announcement of I-69 route around city

## TDOT: DECISION COULD BE MADE IN 'LATE SPRING'

321  
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An overwhelming response from communities impacted by the I-69 corridor has delayed the final decision on which of the two proposed routes around Dyersburg will be chosen by the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

"It is not a decision we want to rush just to meet a date," said Pamela Marshall, community-relations officer in charge of the I-69 project through Tennessee. While she was hopeful the final decision would still be made in March she admitted the possibility that it could be delayed until later in the spring.

Dyersburg Mayor Bill Revell, who chairs the Tennessee committee for I-69 said he had expected to receive final word on the route around the city today, but he was told Monday that was not realistic given the volume of comments from government officials, citizens and businesses along the two possible routes

TDOT has under review.

One possible path follows Highway 412 south toward Jackson and then cuts in a south-westerly direction to Memphis. The second would follow I-155 to the western side of the city and drop south at Walker Lane, not far from the existing Interstate welcome center.

Marshall said I-69 is a project that has been in the making for 15 years. She said that she believed anyone who understood the scope of the project would also understand why TDOT needed to take the greatest care in selecting a final route.

Public hearings have already been held regarding the route from Dyersburg to Millington. Studies have shown that while more private landowners would be affected if the western route south were selected, more wetlands would be impacted to the east.

"It is a big project and I understand TDOT's concerns," Revell

■ Please see I-69, 4

■ I-69

Continued from Page 1

said. "They have to be certain that they make the right decision."

In 1991, the U.S. Congress designated a number of possible highway corridors to be of national significance. I-69 was one of them. The U.S. corridor will extend from Port Huron, Mich. at the Canadian border to the lower Rio Grande Valley, crossing at several locations along the Mexican border.

Completion of the corridor in Tennessee could cost in excess of \$800 million.

## **CAPPE elects new officers, directors**

New and returning directors of CAPPE (Citizens Against the Pellissippi Parkway Extension Inc.) were elected at the group's annual membership meeting on Monday.

The directors are William H. Busser (president), Mike Cook (vice president), Geoffrey Riffin (secretary), Marian Fitzgerald (treasurer), Gordon L. Collins, Nina Gregg, David M. Griffin, Susan Keller and Rebecca M. Klenk (directors at large).

CAPPE meets at 7 p.m. the fourth Monday of every month. The next meeting is March 27 at 324 Ellis Ave., Maryville.

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# County planners 321 resolve state sewer question

By GLENN TANNER  
P-I Staff Writer

The Henry County Planning Commission authorized the approval of some minor subdivisions without a state sewer inspection during its regular meeting Monday.

The commission voted in its January meeting not to accept any minor subdivisions until its February meeting after hearing a presentation from a regional manager of the state's Division of Groundwater Protection.

During that meeting, Conner Franklin told the commission his division won't sign off on a minor subdivision plat unless his department performs a ground percolation test, or goes back and recertifies an existing sewer system within the subdivision.

The cost of the state inspection could be as high as \$250 for the property owner.

After hearing from County Mayor Brent Greer, the commission decided to allow secretary Charles Perry and assistant secretary and vice chairman Bill Barnes to use their discretion on approving minor subdivisions without a state inspection.

The motion by planner Don Hutson also allowed an affidavit to be attached to the plat, if needed, stating a working and approved septic system existed.

Greer said he had talked with planners in Tipton County, who told him they did not require a state inspection for minor subdivisions.

Instead, copies of existing soil tests and an owner's affidavit that a working sewer system exists on property are attached to the plat.

While tests would still be necessary in many cases, Greer said some changes to minor subdivisions did not require a state inspection.

Greer gave the example of a church adding a small amount of ground to increase the size of its parking lot.

"Things like that don't need to have someone pay two hundred and fifty dollars," he said.

In a related item, the commission authorized the addition of 0.06 acre to a minor subdivision in the Cypress Creek area for the completion of a new garage.

The board approved the plat submitted by Dorsey Ivey of Clarksville and Henry County.

Ivey, who appeared at the meeting, told the commission his home at the intersection of

Cypress and Barbara roads in the Cypress Creek area had been damaged during the November 2005 tornado, and he had purchased the additional ground to make repairs to his garage.

The commission authorized Perry to sign the plat at his discretion.

The discussion of the plat preceded the commission's action on sewer inspections.

# Hwy. 66 <sup>3A1</sup> widening is top priority

From Staff Reports

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City and county officials are urging the Tennessee Department of Transportation to move up the Highway 66 widening project as much as possible.

"I met with TDOT yesterday...to review and get the status of projects in Sevier and Blount," said Sevier County Mayor Larry Waters.

As it stands, the project to widen Highway 66 between Sevierville and Boyds Creek Highway is slated to begin in the winter of 2007. "I told them that this project is so critical to what we're doing that even a move up to October would help," said Waters.

"They said that they'd look at Highway 66 and push as much as possible," Waters added.

The widening project is on the top of a short list of prioritized road projects that the transportation board submitted to TDOT last month. The project is in TDOT's 3-year plan.

Waters said that he also discussed several other priority projects with TDOT including the Seymour Turn Lane Project and a proposed single-point interchange where Middle Creek Road dead ends onto Dolly Parton Parkway.

Long-term plans call for Middle Creek Road to be extended north and east to hook up with Highway 66

Please See *Priority* pg A8

## Hwy. 66 widening is top priority

Priority Continued from pg. A1

at Old Knoxville Highway. The interchange would allow for smoother traffic flow between the two roads and provide an alternate route between the I-40, Sevierville, and on into Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg.

The transportation board is requesting funding assistance from TDOT for the interchange construction.

On the shorter term, a reconfiguration of the traffic flow through downtown Sevierville is on schedule to be in effect by Memorial

Day, according an engineering consultant to the Sevier County Transportation Board, Bob Bowers.

The so-called "Ultra-flow" plan will re-route the main flow of traffic to and from Pigeon Forge. Currently, traffic flows along the west side of the downtown area, along the Forks of the River Parkway. The new plan would direct traffic to the east side of First Baptist Church, heading straight through the middle of downtown.

A state project is cur-

rently underway to construct a connecting route between Dolly Parton Parkway and Highway 66, called the Love Addition Road (SR 448). Once finished, the new traffic route would head straight across Dolly Parton Parkway, across a new bridge and hook up with Highway 66 further north of the city.

This five-lane connector is intended to help alleviate traffic congestion at the busiest intersection in Sevier County.

# 321 Malfunction Junction sees another snag

## Chapman down to 3 lanes in Sevierville

By Casey McMahan  
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The Tennessee Department of Transportation has confirmed that Chapman Highway/Main Street coming in to downtown Sevierville will soon be down to three lanes, according to Sevierville City Administrator Doug Bishop.

Bishop said that the start date on the bridge work has not been set in stone just yet, but "TDOT is waiting on a permit from TDEC (Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation) to start fixing the Chapman Bridge." He said that the work could begin in a week to a week and a half and that the work could be completed by Memorial Day, this year.

When the closures take place, there will be two lanes going into town on Chapman, and one lane going out of town, towards Seymour.

On the bright side, Bishop

Please See *Junction* pg A8

## Malfunction Junction sees another snag

Junction Continued from pg. A1

said that Sevierville would get an extra lane out of the deal, allowing for two continuous lanes through the Chapman/Highway 66 intersection, along with the right and left turn lanes.

TDOT had planned some preventative repair work to the bridge which currently runs over dry land, originally scheduled to begin over the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday last month.

TDOT Spokesperson Travis Brickey said last week

that they were considering just filling in the area and doing away with the bridge altogether. This saves the headache of having to do inspections and repairs of the bridge in the future.

The dry land bridge spans an area alongside the Walgreens, under which the Little Pigeon River formerly flowed.

Bishop confirmed these plans at a meeting of the Sevier County Transportation Board on Wednesday.

Contractors have already begun work on two other Chapman Highway bridges between Sevierville and Seymour, taking the highway down to two lanes for a brief stretch between the two bridges. Repair work on the Knob Creek and Bridge Creek bridges began shortly after the dry land bridge repairs were postponed.

According to Brickey, work on these two bridges could wrap up sometime in May.

# Controversial North Shore Rd. discussed

321

**From Staff Reports**  
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The last of a series of public hearings regarding a study on the North Shore Road Project in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park will be held next week at the Sugarlands Visitor's Center.

The meeting, originally scheduled for Monday, Feb. 13 at Gatlinburg-Pittman High School, was postponed due to inclement weather and rescheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 21 at 4:30 p.m.

By an agreement dating back to 1943 between the Department of Interior and Swain County, N.C., the DOI is committed to build a new road to replace NC Highway 288 which was flooded by the construction of Fontana Dam.

"Up until the early 1990s, the position of the park was against the construction of the road because of the environmental impact," said park superintendent Dale Ditmanson at a park commission meeting in November.

Earlier this month the

Please See *Discussed* pg A8

## Controversial North Shore Rd. discussed

Discussed Continued from pg. A1

National Park Service released an Environmental Impact Study including information about the natural and cultural impacts of each option for action on DOI's obligation.

"The EIS will determine the agency's position," said Ditmanson in November.

Registration at the meeting will begin at 4:30 p.m. with the official proceedings beginning at 5 p.m. Brief introductory remarks will be made and an open house will run simultaneously with the public hearings from 4:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

The upcoming pub-

lic hearings will give participants an opportunity to provide comments on the DEIS. Meeting attendees that would like to speak publicly during the hearing should sign up during registration before 8 p.m. Each speaker will have a 3-minute time limit.

The DEIS is available online at: [www.northshoreroad.info.documents.htm](http://www.northshoreroad.info.documents.htm). There are several locations where the DEIS is available for viewing in hard copy and electronic formats: In North Carolina: Pack Memorial Library, Asheville; Marianna Black Library, Bryson City; Charlotte &

Mecklenburg County Main Library, Charlotte; Qualla Boundary Public Library, Cherokee; Cameron Village Regional Library, Raleigh; and Graham County Public Library, Robbinsville. In Tennessee: Anna Porter Public Library, Gatlinburg; Great Smoky Mountains National Park Headquarters, Gatlinburg; and Lawson-McGee Library, Knoxville.

Comments are due by March 20, 2006, and may be submitted either electronically through the website or by mail to: North Shore Road Project, P.O. Box 30185, Raleigh, N.C. 27622.

# Grant may fund extension of South Utility water line

**BY GARY NELSON**

Chronicle staffwriter

A South Cumberland Utility District water line extension project may be funded by a Community Development Block Grant.

Cumberland County commissioners approved a resolution allowing County Mayor

Brock Hill the authority to apply for a Community Development Block Grant on behalf of South Cumberland Utility District.

The resolution was approved during the February Cumberland County Commission meeting last Tuesday night.

According to Hill, the grant will allow for the extension of water lines to the Breckenridge area, which currently has no potable water supply.

Estimates for the total project cost are \$300,000. Funding for the project would come from \$258,000 from the grant, if approved and South Cumberland Utility District would be responsible for matching funds in the amount \$42,000.

The resolution was passed unanimously by commissioners.

County commissioners not attending February's county commission meeting were Jim Inman, 1st District; Jeff Brown, 8th District; Carmin Lynch and Clyde Cramer, 9th District.

## Summit Hill Bridge and entrance ramp to close <sup>321</sup>

The Summit Hill Bridge and entrance ramp from James White Parkway will close Feb. 21. The bridge will be closed for eight months with the ramp remaining closed until approximately September of 2007.

A new exit will be constructed at Hall of Fame Drive as a part of the SmartFIX40 project.

"The closure will allow the contractor to expedite the construction of the new bridge which must be completed by November," said TDOT Chief Engineer Paul Degges.

The demolition and reconstruction of the bridge will provide the additional space necessary to widen James White Parkway, which is underneath the structure. The bridge will also be widened from three to six lanes.

The Summit Hill Bridge carries an average 15,000 vehicles per day with the entrance ramp from James White Parkway averaging 6,300 vehicles per day. I-40 through downtown Knoxville carries an average of 103,000 vehicles a day.

During the SmartFIX40 project, James White Parkway will be closed for nine months in 2007, and I-40 through traffic will be rerouted onto I-640 for 14 months starting in the spring of 2008. A map of the traffic detours can be viewed online at the following address: <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/news/2006/pdfmaps/summithilldetours.pdf>

only certain behaviors can be caught and demonstrated."

**FIRE** continued on page 2A

## Water tower idea scuttled; pumps are now in plans

By Don Moore 321

City officials have scrapped the idea of placing a 180-foot water tower in Johnson Road Park on the east side of Germantown. The decision came Friday, February 26 at a work session attended by city staff and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

The current plan is to expand water storage below ground at the Johnson Road treatment plant.

Residents of the east side had taken to calling the proposed water tower the Tower of Terror.

The next step for the city is to

design the new approach. Germantown Director of Public Services Bo Mills anticipates that construction will begin in January and that the underground storage will take about two years to complete.

The water tower idea was initially announced in 2005, but opposition did not surface until a public meeting held January 30 at Germantown Baptist Church. At that meeting, residents objected that the proposed tower was a threat to property values and was esthetically displeasing (read ugly). The water tower idea was

initially proposed because the tower would use gravity to keep pressure up. There are already two towers located just north and west of Germantown High School

The underground system and expansion work at Johnson Road plant are expected to cost between \$250,000 and \$500,000 less than the tower. Moreover, the underground tanks will hold 2 million gallons of water, while the tower would hold just 1.5 million gallons. On the other hand, depending on pumps makes the system vulnerable to power outages.

# Crystal Ridge water extensions are funded

321

The Lincoln County Commission has approved a \$100,000 loan to the Lincoln County Board of Public Utilities to fund a pump station that will provide water in the Crystal Ridge area.

The station is needed to serve residents along 15 miles of roadway, including residents on Crystal Ridge Road, Buntley Hill Road, Massey Hollow Road and Tuckers Creek Road and Taylor Road.

In other business, the commission approved a \$50,000 allocation for road line painting to the county's highway department.

They also approved a \$12,635 back-pay correc-

tion recommended by the county's personnel department. The correction covers a seven-year span of time.

Additionally, they approved a \$23,738 salary for an additional clerk to assist with backlogged cases and voted to increase their share employee health insurance to a rate of 5.47 percent. That's an increase of 1.82 percent, according to discussion.

A resolution honoring John Bradford, the county's former director of finance, received unanimous approval as well. The resolution honors Bradford's years of service to the county.