
Airport Authority On Monday To Discuss Cemetery That Could Affect Planned Airport Expansion

32 The Greeneville-Greene County Airport Authority will hear a report on the small cemetery that could affect the proposed expansion of the Greeneville Municipal Airport when it meets Monday, March 6.

The meeting will be held at 10 a.m. in the boardroom at Town Hall.

Also on the agenda are reports on:

- the fencing project at the airport;
- the Forward Air lease; and
- the proposed airport expansion and related approval by the Greeneville Regional Planning Commission.

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State Senator Roy Herron, (front, from left), County Mayor Dennis Ray McDaniel, Southwest Tennessee Development District Executive Director Evelyn Robertson Jr., (back, from left), State Representative Steve McDaniel and SWTDD Community Development Director Sylvia Mathis Palmer, announce a \$125,000 Delta Regional Authority grant that will help in renovating sewer systems at five county schools.

Peachers Mill needs upgrade

■ New schools complex will add to the road congestion.

Peachers Mill Road must be widened.

No one who drives on that increasingly congested, two-lane roadway today can argue with that. And no one who has looked at traffic count estimates for the coming years should want to delay the project, either.

In 20 years, the daily count for the road is estimated to be at 45,000 vehicles. Right now, it carries 6,400 cars per day. In 2001, it was just half that number.

Much of the traffic increase in the next few years will come from the new West Fork Creek schools complex. When the middle school opens in the 2007-08 school year, transporting 1,200 students, plus incoming and outgoing commercial trucks serving the school, each day will highly impact Peachers Mill Road.

By the 2009-10 school year, the high school will open, and another surge in motorists is expected. The elementary school is not yet in the works.

In addition to widening the 2.78-mile road section, plans call for it to have curbs, gutters and sidewalks and right-of-way acquisition with seven lanes in front of the schools complex.

Mayor Don Trotter said that by issuing bonds, the city could fund all or most of the \$10 million project. The matter will be addressed in the next budget cycle.

Engineers said that construction will be less complicated if the road is widened to five lanes before the schools complex is built.

That is so true. One of the lessons Clarksville must take to heart is the idea of being proactive rather than reactive. The city knows that the growth is coming. It's far better to start getting the infrastructure in place now for this, as well as other projects, than to wait until growth has put a severe strain on this very infrastructure and the population it is supposed to serve.

New spillway planned for Reelfoot Lake

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Highway bridge project would include funding to better control water levels

By **TOM CHARLIER**

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State officials this week will outline plans for a highway project that includes the construction of a new spillway to regulate water levels on Tennessee's largest natural lake.

The project at Reelfoot Lake, about 100 miles north of Memphis, will replace a 70-plus-year spillway that's been declared "functionally obsolete" because it no longer adequately controls the amount of water released at the lake's southern end.

"The old one has been dysfunctional for years," said Jerry Strom, assistant regional manager for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. "Essentially all it is now is a dam. You can't adjust it."

The Tennessee Department of Transportation will host a public meeting on the project at 6 p.m. today in Ellington Hall in the Reelfoot Lake State Park Visitors Center on Tenn. 21 near Tiptonville.

The spillway is beneath Tenn. 21/22 between

Tiptonville and Samburg.

When the lake reaches a certain elevation, it pours over the spillway and into Running Reelfoot Bayou. But the current spillway doesn't allow wildlife officials to make the modest water-level fluctuations that would benefit fisheries in the lake.

The new facility, to be built 1,100 feet west of the existing one, "will give us the spillway we need to manage the lake," said Gary T. Myers, executive director of TWRA.

However, there will be no major changes in water management policies, officials say. Reelfoot, created by the 1811-12 New Madrid earthquakes, long has been the scene of disputes over how water levels should be managed.

Chuck Rychen, regional director for TDOT, said the state probably will accept bids on the project by either spring or summer of next year.

Federal funds will pay for the bridge over the spillway, and Gov. Phil Bredesen helped persuade lawmakers to provide state money for the spillway. No cost estimates were available Tuesday.

Roger Allan, a biologist for the Corps of Engineers, said the work will require a federal Clean Water Act permit because some 15 acres of wetlands will be lost.

— Tom Charlier: 529-2572



Frank Bertelt/The Commercial Appeal

colleagues shelved that mat- pose to the commission's Rules staff contact commissioners to at 865-342-6310.

North Knox bridge to close as part of SmartFIX40 project

Glenwood Avenue
work to take 9 months

BY DON JACOBS
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A bridge that carried about 1,700 vehicles a day in a North Knoxville neighborhood will be closed Tuesday for the next nine months.

At 9 a.m., road crews will erect barricades closing the Glenwood Avenue bridge. The road will be

closed between Broadway and North Sixth Avenue to through traffic, according to the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

TDOT suggested that drivers use Grainger Avenue to Sixth Avenue during the closure.

Crews are closing the bridge because of construction of the Hall of Fame Drive extension that will be running under it. The bridge will have to be widened to accommodate the additional

lanes under it.

The bridge reconstruction is part of the \$85 million SmartFIX40 contract that was launched last spring. The current contract involves extending Hall of Fame Drive to Broadway, reconfiguring the James White Parkway and building new bridges at Glenwood Avenue and at Summit Hill Drive and Church Street over the parkway.

The TDOT contract calls for

the work in the first contract to be completed in September 2007. If the contractor, Ray Bell Construction Company Inc., finishes the work within the specified time frame, the company will collect a \$6 million incentive.

If the work is not completed on time, Ray Bell Construction not only loses the entire \$6 million incentive, but it also faces penalties of \$25,000 for each day it exceeds the schedule.

Also, Ray Bell Construction faces penalties of \$2,500 for each day the Glenwood Avenue bridge remains closed beyond the slated nine-month closure. The same penalty will apply for each day the contractor keeps the Summit Hill Drive bridge closed beyond its scheduled eight-month closure, which began Feb. 21.

Don Jacobs may be reached at 865-342-6345.

Agreement provides 581 long-term water for upper Ocoee River

Water will flow in the upper Ocoee for at least 34 days a year for whitewater rafting for the next 13 years. Congressman Zach Wamp announced last week that funds have been secured and an agreement has been reached with TVA to guarantee the water releases. For the past eight years, short-term agreements were cobbled together a year at a time, leaving rafting outfitters wondering whether they will have the upper Ocoee business the next year.

"The river is central to the region's economy," Wamp said at the annual stakeholders meeting of agencies, businesses, and officials. He said finally having "a real, live agreement" will make long-term planning and investment possible. "This allows us to focus on the future," said Lance Luke, President of the Ocoee River Outfitters Association, and Larry Mashburn, who also worked on the negotiations with TVA. Both said

they were thankful that the annual battle is over for a while. In 13 years, negotiations will be needed for both the upper and middle Ocoee, who has operated under a long-term agreement since around 1984.

The economic development funding amounts to \$2.1 million over the next 13 years, with \$1.1 million of that to be borrowed from banks in the area and paid back by the fee charged to rafting customers. Wamp said there was a federal appropriation of \$500,000 in the current budget and Matt Kisber, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development, sent a letter announcing there would be \$500,000 from the state as well.

"This isn't just about water," Wamp said, explaining the federal appropriation cannot be used for the water. Joe Guthrie with the Southeast

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Agreement --

(Continued from page 1)

Local Development Corporation, who was instrumental in putting the package together, said he will have to study the language of the federal appropriation to determine how it can be used. While the first priority was water, he said, he also anticipates several hundred thousand dollars will be available for other economic development projects. He said guidelines would be developed on how that money can be used.

Guthrie said the agreement allows for a \$1.6 million prepayment for the water in two installments or \$228,000 a year for 13 years. He said he anticipates using the prepayment option.

Wamp and Guthrie both spoke of the tremendous spirit of partnership that brought the agreement to reality. "It's a different world we live in," Guthrie said, noting that TVA is now operating like a business and has to be compensated for water releases that temporarily halt power generation. Wamp praised TVA for working with them to find a solution that met a business model rather than political pressure. Guthrie said, "There has been unbelievable teamwork" and thanked the outfitters, TVA, and others who ended up compromising to make the agreement happen. Wamp said there is a lot of flexibility in the agreement, including TVA buying the water back if necessary. He said Guthrie made it happen as he worked with the outfitters, TVA, and local banks.

In other announcements:

- Guthrie reported that a consultant has been selected for the economic impact study of Corridor K (Hwy. 64). He said they will also be seeking a consultant to work on

proposals to fund the local share in both Tennessee and North Carolina. A lot of partners are lining up, he said, to find a cost-effective way to build the bypass and mitigate the environmental impact. He said he felt there would be a miracle that will eventually bring a highway from Asheville to Chattanooga and open up opportunities throughout the region.

- Tom Speaks, Supervisor of the Cherokee National Forest, said there have been good things happening in the past year: the opening of the new Spring Creek Shooting Range, the Rhododendron Trail, and a Memorandum of Understanding with outfitters, State Parks and TVA to make it easier for customers. He said there is a trails initiative to identify needs and progress toward a 10-year Ocoee/Hiwassee Corridor Plan. Speaks said the conservation education program at the Ocoee Whitewater Center is going strong, the camping loops at Chilhowee Campground are done and work is underway on day use areas.

- Ocoee District Ranger Monte Williams said the Ocoee/Hiwassee plan is being developed with help from agencies and members of the community with a goal of developing a sense of place through signage and interpretation. Mashburn praised the Cherokee's outreach effort to seek community input. He said the goal of the corridor plan is to market the region. Linda Caldwell, Executive Director of the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association, spoke of the importance of providing information to visitors.

- Williams said they are working hard to reinvent the Whitewater Center as a destination.