

## FLOOD EDITION

May 3, 2010

**A daily roundup of recent news stories and opinion pieces about Tennessee transportation, water and flood control infrastructure**

For the full story, click the headline or use the link.

### [Tenn. Officials Brace For More Flooding, Deaths \(Associated Press\)](#)

Opryland's 1,500 guests were spending the night in a high school to escape rising floodwaters that threatened other areas of downtown hit by devastating thunderstorms that slammed Tennessee and northern Mississippi, killing at least 15 people. Authorities in Tennessee were preparing for more deaths and for the Cumberland River, which winds through the Music City, to crest at 10 feet above flood stage before sunrise, putting portions of downtown in danger of the kind of damage experienced by thousands of residents whose homes were swamped by flash floods... Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen called it an "unprecedented rain event," but that failed to capture the magnitude. More than 13 inches of rain fell in Nashville over two days, nearly doubling the previous record of 6.68 inches that fell in the wake of Hurricane Fredrick in 1979. "That is an astonishing amount of rain in a 24- or 36-hour period," Bredesen said Sunday. At least 11 were dead in Tennessee and four in northern Mississippi. Tennessee Emergency Management Agency officials say there is likely a 12th victim, but a body had not been recovered.

<http://www.timesnews.net/article.php?id=9022701>

### [Death Toll Climbs To 15 \(Associated Press/Talbott, Burke\)](#)

Devastating thunderstorms slammed Tennessee and northern Mississippi over the weekend, killing at least 15 people, five in Nashville, closing scores of highways, and leaving weeks of cleanup for thousands of residents whose homes were damaged.... Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen called it an "unprecedented rain event," but that failed to capture the magnitude. More than 13 inches of rain fell in Nashville over two days, nearly doubling the previous record of 6.68 inches that fell in the wake of Hurricane Fredrick in 1979. "That is an astonishing amount of rain in a 24- or 36-hour period," Bredesen said Sunday. At least 11 were dead in Tennessee and four in northern Mississippi. Tennessee Emergency Management Agency officials say there is likely a 12th victim, but a body has not been recovered. The death toll from storms in Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee since April 24 has risen to at least 26 with several people missing. Three people in Mississippi were killed when tornadoes hit their homes and a fourth died after he drove into flood waters.

<http://www.dnj.com/article/20100503/NEWS01/100502058>

### [Flash Floods Hit Tennessee And Mississippi \(BBC News\)](#)

Severe flash floods and storms have killed at least 15 people in the US states of Tennessee and Mississippi. In Nashville, the city mayor Karl Dean declared a state of emergency, and said the amount of rain that had fallen was the highest ever recorded. Many stranded residents were rescued in boats as roads were submerged and impassable.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8657858.stm>

### [Governor Bredesen Urges People To Stay Home \(WTVF-TV Nashville\)](#)

Governor Phil Bredesen held a press conference Sunday afternoon. He confirmed there have been eight deaths in Tennessee this weekend that are weather related. One death was attributed to the tornado, while the others are flooding deaths. Two tornado touchdowns have been confirmed. There is a great deal of property damage and infrastructure damage. The amount of damage will be assessed after the water recedes "The roads are in terrible shape," said Bredesen. Bredesen said TEMA and the National Guard are working to keep people safe. Blackhawk helicopters are also on standby. Bredesen urged people to stay off the roads if it is not an emergency.

<http://www.newschannel5.com/Global/story.asp?S=12412668>

**[Record-Breaking Flood Displaces Thousands In Middle Tenn \(Tenn/Schrade, Hass\)](#)**

Mayor declares state of emergency; levee begins leaking As darkness set in across the soaked and battered Middle Tennessee region Sunday evening, Nashville began evacuating homes and businesses along the rising Cumberland River. The storms that started Saturday have left 11 dead across the state, including five in Davidson County and one in Williamson County. Thousands of cars, homes and basements are filled with water. Entire neighborhoods are submerged, and hundreds of people are in shelters. Authorities were just beginning to comprehend the damage. Late Sunday, Nashville announced that it was shutting down a water treatment plant and that a levee in MetroCenter along the Cumberland River had begun to leak...Gov. Phil Bredesen said the damage stretched from Memphis to Middle Tennessee with a cruel randomness that flooded some areas and spared nearby communities. He planned to ask for federal disaster status early this week, which would secure federal funds to help with the recovery. "There is obviously a great deal of property damage," Bredesen said. "No one is able to assess that at this point. We're going to have to wait for the waters to go down a bit so we can find out what's happening."

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100503/NEWS01/5030340>

**[Nashville Area Remains Swamped After Deluge \(Commercial Appeal/Locker\)](#)**

Flooding caused by record rainfalls through the weekend covered vast sections of Nashville and its suburbs Sunday, submerging hundreds and possibly thousands of houses, businesses and vehicles as rescuers in boats worked into the night to remove people stranded in homes and vehicles. The state's capital became the epicenter for a regional natural disaster that, according to the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, led to at least 11 storm-related fatalities in the state as of Sunday night, five of them from flooding in Davidson County...Nashville's NewsChannel5 helicopter showed segments of Interstate 40 and U.S. 70 on the western side underwater and with a line of vehicles still parked in the uncovered sections. Rescue boats were delivering motorists to safety. Dean and Gov. Phil Bredesen declared states of emergency as a news helicopter showed hundreds of houses under water to their roofs. In Antioch in southeast Nashville, cars and SUVs were shown stacked three-high by the swirling floodwaters. Portable classrooms at Lighthouse Christian School floated away.

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2010/may/03/nashville-area-remains-swamped-after-deluge/>

**[Five Dead, Two Missing In Flood-Related Catastrophes \(City Paper/George\)](#)**

Metro officials have confirmed that at least five people have died as a result of the flooding in Davidson County this weekend. There are also two men missing after their makeshift raft broke apart in the overflowed Mill Creek. One body was recovered near Bell Road and Blue Hole, according to the Emergency Operations Center, a joint venture set up by the mayor's office that combines police, fire and EMS services under one roof. Two bodies were discovered in a flooded house on Del Ray Drive, and two more were pulled from a vehicle that was discovered on Sawyer Brown Road — upside down and sitting in standing water. And around 6:30 p.m. Sunday night, three men tied inner tubes together and floated down Mill Creek. As they neared the Mill Creek Bridge, the makeshift raft broke apart. One man swam to shore, while the other two remain missing. Although there are some conflicting reports, it appears at least seven weather-related deaths have been confirmed across Tennessee.

<http://nashvillecitypaper.com/content/city-news/five-dead-two-missing-flood-related-catastrophes>

**[Mid-South Flooding: 'We Got A Mess' \(Commercial Appeal/Callahan\)](#)**

Northeast Shelby County residents begin to assess damage With such a gorgeous spring Sunday, it was almost possible to forget that many parts of Shelby County were still under water while other areas were barely resurfacing after the weekend's massive flooding. From late Friday to early Sunday, as much as 14 inches of rain inundated northeast Shelby County, according to the National Weather Service. That caused the aptly named Big Creek in Millington to overflow its levee, while the Loosahatchie River that winds through the county's northern reaches spilled far beyond its banks. Numerous roads were closed and at least one bridge on Raleigh-Millington was in danger of collapsing as floodwaters continued rising through the night. "This wasn't biblical proportions," U.S. Army Corps of Engineers specialist Steve Sansone said, "but it's something we haven't seen in 20 to 30 years." In Millington, residents hauled waterlogged sofas and carpets to the curb as they tried to assess damage from floodwaters that, in some cases, rose to 4 feet and higher. "Bought that couch two months ago and look at the bottom of it," said Jere Orman, who lives in the 4500 block of Bill Knight.

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2010/may/03/mid-south-flooding-we-got-a-mess/>

**[Flood Forces Dam Break, Evacuations, Road Closures \(WTVF-TV Nashville\)](#)**

Nashville is not the only city seeing major flooding. Downtown Lebanon was totally under water, Clarksville was evacuating homes, and a dam has broken in Gallatin. In Clarksville, Tiny Town Road is completely flooded. Evacuations of homes are taking place. School buses were being brought in to evacuate the subdivisions along Tiny Town road. Those families are being taken to Hazelwood Elementary School. Clarksville has not announced where the second shelter will be opened. In Gallatin, Tenn., Mayor JoAnn Graves says the Long Hollow Pike Dam has broken. There is extensive flooding, and all emergency crews are working around the clock. Mayor Graves is asking all people to stay at home. Angie Mayes with the LaVergne Police Department, says there is extensive damage in Lavergne. Rutherford County Emergency management is going door to door evacuating those who need to leave their homes. Concerning the water system, Eric Stuckey with the city of Franklin said, "We are pushed to the limit as far as treatment." Stuckey was encouraging Franklin residents to limit water usage.

<http://www.newschannel5.com/Global/story.asp?S=12412562>

**[11 People Killed In TN From Flood Waters \(WKRN-TV Nashville\)](#)**

Eleven people have been killed in Tennessee by flash floods across the state. The death toll has risen to five in Nashville as of Sunday night. At least 11 people have been killed in Tennessee and four in Mississippi after severe thunderstorms battered Tennessee throughout the weekend. The Cumberland River sits 10 feet above flood stage, with a crest of about 50 feet. Nashville's tourism and business district have been threatened by the rising waters.

<http://www.wkrn.com/global/story.asp?s=12413892>

**[Flood Waters Rage In Montgomery County \(Leaf Chronicle\)](#)**

Record rainfall caused widespread flooding in Montgomery County Sunday, and area rivers are expected to remain at flood levels for the rest of the week. The Montgomery County Emergency Management Agency said that as of 6 p.m., 18 homes had been damaged and 108 roads had been submerged by water. As of 6 p.m. Sunday, Outlaw Field had received 7.55 inches of rain on the weekend, the most ever in a two-day period in Clarksville, according to the National Weather Service. The previous record was 6.30 inches, set in June 1934. Two homes on Possum Hollow Road in southeast Montgomery County suffered severe damage, as waters decimated the inside of a double-wide trailer and displaced another house from its foundation, a neighbor said. Misty McCarty said her nephew's family was inside the trailer just after 12 a.m. Sunday and noticed the rising tide just minutes before waters overtook his home.

<http://www.theleafchronicle.com/article/20100503/NEWS01/5020336/Flood-waters-rage-in-Montgomery-County>

**[Roads Closed, People Evacuated Countywide \(Daily News Journal\)](#)**

Sunday afternoon rainfall doubled weekend storm totals, closing Rutherford County and Murfreesboro City schools today and forcing sections of Interstate 24 and roads across the county to be shut down. Murfreesboro totaled 8 to 10 inches for the weekend while Smyrna and La Vergne got anywhere from 10 to 12 inches. Spokeswoman Cheryl Harris announced Sunday night that City Schools would be closed due to flooding after County Schools called off classes earlier in the day. "Extended School Program will be on a 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. schedule," Harris said. MTSU offices will be open, but the university postponed today's exams until Friday. Emergency rescue crews were called out across the county Sunday. Rescuers were going to the aid of a vehicle in high water near Yeargen Road and Armstrong Valley Road at 6 p.m. Sunday. Rescue crews were also on the scene of an active water rescue at Quail Ridge Road in Smyrna Sunday afternoon.

<http://www.dnj.com/article/20100503/NEWS01/100502053>

### [Rain, Rescues Resume In North Part Of County \(Daily News Journal\)](#)

Floodwater from Saturday's storms receded some in Smyrna and La Vergne, but by noon Sunday, rescue workers and city officials were back to closing roads and rescuing people trapped in their homes. In La Vergne Sunday, police officers were going door to door making damage assessments to pass along to the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency. Resident Robin Jones said she and her boyfriend had attempted to leave the house once, but said officers had closed the roads and wouldn't let them pass. "We rode it out last night. No water's gotten in the house, but they're not expecting the rain to let up until 10 p.m. One of our neighbors is going to stick it out again," said Jones, while trying to get one of her three dogs into her car. "We're trying to get to (a relative's) house in Smyrna." A couple of blocks away, a group of teen boys took advantage of almost 3 feet of water in their yard by doing flips off a trampoline. "We were bored and this seemed like a fun thing to do," said Alex Smith, 14. "(Saturday) the water was so fast we were whitewater rafting in the back yard."

<http://www.dnj.com/article/20100503/NEWS01/5030318>

### [Cleanup Continues; Flooding Make Travel Difficult \(Jackson Sun\)](#)

As the rain continued in West Tennessee on Sunday, people from across the region faced a new challenge: finding a safe way home. Keith Reynolds and his family went to Three Way on Saturday to see his daughter's new home and ended up staying the night because flooding on every major roadway prevented travel, he said. "We tried alternate routes, but the State Police kept turning us around," he said Sunday. "This morning we tried to get home and were stopped by the National Guard. I asked how to get to Jackson, and the guy laughed and said, 'There's no way you're getting into Jackson today.'" Reynolds prepared to wade across the water and hike home, but the water eventually receded enough for his family to drive home. Several highways, including U.S. 45, Tenn. 54 and U.S. 70 had patches of road underwater or washed away. U.S. 412 became the only way for people from neighboring communities and counties to reach each other, according to local Emergency Management Agency officials.

<http://www.jacksonsun.com/article/20100503/NEWS01/5030306/1002/Cleanup-continues--flooding-make-travel-difficult>

### [Flood May Worsen As Rivers Keep Rising \(Tennessean/Cousins\)](#)

'There is no comparison to anything we have ever done' Although the rain may stop, some parts of already swollen rivers and creeks in the Nashville area could crest today before starting to subside, causing a safety hazard with flooding, debris and sewage. The Harpeth River, Mill Creek and Richland Creek are moving record amounts of water into the Cumberland River. By 7:30 p.m. Sunday, the Cumberland had already risen to 47.55 feet in downtown Nashville, with water lapping more than 20 feet over Riverfront Park Deck and submerging parts of the Ghost Ballet sculpture near LP Field. Tourists were evacuated from First Avenue downtown Sunday night. Flooding along the Cumberland is expected to worsen today in Clarksville, where the river had topped flood stage Sunday night by more than eight feet. The Army Corps of Engineers is releasing some of its largest volumes ever of water from Old Hickory Lake into the Cumberland — 150,000 cubic feet per second, exceeding the March 1975 record.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100503/NEWS01/5030329/Flood+may+worsen+as+rivers+keep+rising>

### [Blair Lake Levee Holds Firm Against Flood Waters \(Jackson Sun\)](#)

Russell Rogers climbed a hill in the rain Sunday morning to get a first-hand look at the Blair Lake levee. He saw the dam working properly, with flood waters racing through the spillway to the left, about eight feet below the top of the levee, which was holding firm. That was good news because it reduced the severity of flooding below the levee near the Spring Creek community. But floating against the levee were remnants of the recreational area at Springbrook Lake Estates in east Madison County, a sprawling subdivision of 251 homes. "There's a picnic table, the dock we jumped off of, lots of things," Rogers said. "It all washed away." Rogers has been president of the Springbrook Lake Estates Property Owners' Association for three years. He and other board members face the unprecedented challenge of restoring Springbrook's lakes after two levees failed Saturday.

<http://www.jacksonsun.com/article/20100503/NEWS01/5030310/1002/Blair-Lake-levee-holds-firm-against-flood-waters>

### [Officials Telling Nashvillians To Conserve Water \(City Paper/George\)](#)

Officials with the Mayor's Emergency Operations Center are advising residents to conserve water after the city was forced to close the K.R. Harrington Water Treatment Plant due to flooding. An announcement Sunday evening said the water from your tap remains safe to drink; however, officials are concerned that it might be in dwindling supply as floodwaters begin to subside in the coming days. Mayor Karl Dean took an air tour of the county earlier this evening. He said the four areas hit hardest by flooding are Bellevue, parts of north Nashville, Lebanon Road east from downtown, and the Antioch neighborhood. "This situation is going to require a very large a recovery process," Dean said. "After getting an aerial of the county, the magnitude of the damage to our community was much more than what I expected from watching the media coverage.

<http://nashvillecitypaper.com/content/city-news/officials-telling-nashvillians-conserve-water>

### [City and County Leaders Discuss Damage \(WREG-TV Memphis\)](#)

The Shelby County Office of Preparedness dealing with the flood after the storm. "Things are very critical. The infrastructure up there is suffering and people are displaced," said Director of the Shelby County Office of Preparedness, Bob Nations. Nearly a third of Millington's population was affected by flooding after a levee broke and the Loosahatchie River overflowed its banks. "All the infrastructure underground is utilities and those are threatened when we have these flood waters." Hundreds of people have been evacuated from their homes. Voluntary evacuations are still going on and Nations says the water in some places is rising a foot an hour, "This is an eventuality. If water has come up this close to your neighbor's home and it is rising then it is reasonable to anticipate it's going to come over."

<http://www.wreg.com/news/wreg-emergency-preparedness-meeting,0,4209731.story?track=rss>

### [More Millington Area Homes Flood as Others Clean-Up \(WPTY-TV Memphis\)](#)

People in parts of Millington are cleaning up from Saturday's floods, but others are watching the water slowly make its way into their homes. Rescue crews are standing by with boats and buses if the water gets even higher. All eyes are on the rising flood waters. "This is one of the most horrible situations anybody could ever go through," said flood victim Bobby Fullerton. Fullerton watched Sunday as his grandbaby's bassinet was carried out after it was destroyed by several feet of flood water that filled his home Saturday. "It's just that type of thing that breaks your heart. It's horrible," Fullerton said. He and his neighbors in the Indian Meadows subdivision and beyond lost everything.

[http://www.myeyewitnessnews.com/news/local/story/More-Millington-Area-Homes-Flood-as-Others-Clean/\\_Rqc8FXF\\_0mYo1fbGBFTbQ.csp?rss=59](http://www.myeyewitnessnews.com/news/local/story/More-Millington-Area-Homes-Flood-as-Others-Clean/_Rqc8FXF_0mYo1fbGBFTbQ.csp?rss=59)

### [Watch Out For Flooding \(Chattanooga Times Free-Press/Carroll\)](#)

As thunderstorms began rocking the Tennessee Valley about 6 p.m. Sunday, a meteorologist saw a jagged red splotch dominating the Chattanooga radar. "The main story's the rain," said David Gaffin, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Morristown, Tenn. "It's going to stay over us for a long time and accumulate enough to cause some flooding problems." Forecasts indicate that storms will linger into the morning before gradually leaving the area by this afternoon. NewsChannel 9 meteorologist Allison Chinchar said she expects 2 to 3 inches of rain into this morning, but some areas could see 6. It wasn't clear which areas would be wettest. "A lot of stuff is firing up in Mississippi and Alabama, but a lot of it hasn't formed yet," she said.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2010/may/03/watch-out-for-flooding/>

### [Local Swiftwater Rescue Team Heads To Nashville \(Johnson City Press\)](#)

After severe storms brought heavy flooding throughout much of Nashville and other parts of the state — killing at least seven people — a team of five Swiftwater Rescue technicians from Washington County Rescue Services was called to Nashville to assist with flood rescue operations. "As of 1 p.m., the water was still rising down there and still getting rain, so they're still in a rescue mode," WCRS Capt. Dan Wheeley said. Around 5 a.m. Sunday, Wheeley said he received a call from the Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads requesting Swiftwater Rescue teams with boats across the state be on standby for flood relief. At 1 p.m., the Washington County team was assembled and equipment was loaded into trailers. The team began traveling to Nashville just before 4 Sunday afternoon. Wheeley said given the nature of the initial floodwater reports in Nashville Saturday, he wasn't surprised when the call came in Sunday morning.

<http://www.johnsoncitypress.com/News/article.php?ID=76144>

**Duck River Rising Again (Times-Gazette)**

The Duck River at Shelbyville has begun rising again after dropping for most of the day Sunday. The river reached a stage of 19.36 feet at 3 a.m. Sunday but had dropped to as low as 11.39 feet as of 6:30 p.m. Sunday. It has been rising again since that time and was at 15.03 feet at 10:30 p.m. The newly-issued forecast calls for it to crest at 29.5 feet at 7 a.m. Monday. Flood stage is 25 feet. At 27.5 feet, according to the National Weather Service, flood waters would reach several businesses and Mt. Zion Baptist Church. At 29 feet, the flood waters would reach several garages on U.S. 231, and at 32 feet, which is more than predicted, they would reach West Lane Baptist Church. Bedford County Highway Superintendent Stanley Smotherman said at about 4:40 on Sunday afternoon that rural roads were primarily in good shape and he knew of none that were still blocked by flood water. "The good Lord just spared us, that's all you can say about that," said Smotherman.

<http://www.t-g.com/story/1631306.html>

**Families Cope With Flood Damage (Jackson Sun)**

A line of mud, grass and leaves 4 feet up the back wall marks the height of Saturday's flood at Jeff and Laurie Clark's home on Lambuth Boulevard. Everything in their home below that line was lost. Furniture, autographed first-edition books, baseball memorabilia, photo albums, linens and more in the Clarks' 12-room home were destroyed by water that rose to the steering wheels of three automobiles parked outside. One was a Pathfinder, another a Jeep and another a Ford Edge. "I never thought this would happen," Jeff Clark said Sunday. "You get a little flash flood once in a while, but never 7 inches (of rain) in an hour or 14 inches in a day." On Sunday, about 25 relatives, church members and friends poured in and out of the Clarks' home, helping the family salvage, clean or throw out their belongings. Deciding what to save was easier than deciding how to rebuild.

<http://www.jacksonsun.com/article/20100503/NEWS01/5030307/1002/Families-cope-with-flood-damage>

**Oakdale Residents Prepare For Potential Floods (WBIR-TV Knoxville)**

The National Weather Service has issued flood warnings for parts of Morgan County and Roane County through Monday night. At particular risk are areas along the Emory River near the community of Oakdale. The weather service forecast calls for the river to crest at 27.5 feet sometime late Monday afternoon. If the river reaches 28 feet, the NWS warning said residents along the river could their homes to be flooded with water up to five feet deep. Sunday night, residents along Riverview Street in Oakdale prepared for the potential flood. Kim DeFrank lives in Oakdale on Riverview Street. Her property borders the Emory River. DeFrank said she has never had to evacuate her home due to flooding. "I have lived her for five years and the most we have had is the river come up to the pool in our back yard," said Kim DeFrank, an Oakdale resident who lives on Riverview Street next to the Emory River. "I sure hope I don't have to leave home is all I'm thinking. If it happens, I'll just have to load my two girls up and our animals and go to a motel room."

<http://www.wbir.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=120542&provider=rss>

**Other Infrastructure News****Northwest Tenn. Airport Getting Runway Extension (Associated Press)**

Federal, state and county officials have broken ground on a runway extension at Everett-Stewart Regional Airport. Ford Construction Co. will lengthen the 5,000-foot runway by 1,500 feet at a cost of \$4.9 million. Tennessee Transportation Commissioner Gerald Nicely said the project will make the airport one of the major general aviation facilities in the state. According to the Union City Daily Messenger, the target date for completion is Oct. 31. The airport is managed by a board comprised of Obion and Weakley County officials.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=33436387.story>

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