

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

July 21, 2008

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

For the full story, click on the link below the excerpt.

Pumped Up - Elizabethton hopes water find solves supply woes (J. City Press)

City officials are taking a cautiously optimistic stance on the discovery of a large source of underground water Thursday at the foot of Lynn Mountain. City Manager Fred Edens said the find is good news, but he is awaiting engineering reports to discover just how big and sustainable the new water source will be. "It looks good right now," Edens said. "They were getting 400 gallons per minute after drilling down only a few feet. By the time they reached 180 feet, the source appeared to be able to produce over a million gallons per day." City Councilman Richard Sammons showed more emotion. "I am elated," Sammons told the Johnson City Press on Thursday. He predicted the source could be bigger than the city's largest water supply, Hampton Springs, and said that could make the city the principal supplier of water for all of Carter County in the future. <http://www.johnsoncitypress.com/Detail.php?Cat=HOMEPAGE&ID=64007>

Lane closure set for Mississippi River I-40 bridge (AP)

Highway workers will close a lane on the Interstate 40 bridge between Arkansas and Tennessee next week to conduct a routine inspection of the structure. The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department says the right lane on the westbound side - the side carrying traffic from Memphis into West Memphis - will be closed next Tuesday through Thursday between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. The work will be done only if the weather is good. Aside from merging, motorists also have the option of using the I-55 bridge just south of the I-40 span. <http://www.waaytv.com/global/story.asp?s=8697910&ClientType=Printable>

Polk County road projects underway (Cleveland Daily Banner)

One Polk County road project is under construction, a second should be let for bid in the spring of 2009 and yet a third that would link Benton to Atlanta is in the pipeline for study. Talley Construction Co. is clearing, removing structures and installing erosion control alongside 2.6 miles of U.S. Highway 64 from U.S. Highway 411 toward the Ocoee River Bridge. Tennessee Department of Transportation Inspector Billy Curtis said work began on the Highway 64 project the latter part of June. It is scheduled for completion in September 2010 when the five-lane rural section should be finished.

<http://www.clevelandbanner.com/index.cfm?event=news.view&id=36DDF61A-19B9-E2E2-67CF302B8EC41EE9>

VW picks Tenn. for its 1st US car plant since '88 (Bloomberg)

[Volkswagen AG](#), Europe's biggest carmaker, plans to build a plant in Chattanooga, Tenn., resuming manufacturing in the United States to help VW end more than five years of losses in the world's largest auto market...The Chattanooga plant will have an initial annual capacity of 150,000 vehicles and will include body production, a paint shop, and assembly operations, Volkswagen said. The site was chosen over Alabama and Michigan because it has a better

infrastructure, a good supplier base, and a qualified workforce, the carmaker said.

http://www.boston.com/business/articles/2008/07/16/vw_picks_tenn_for_its_1st_us_car_plant_since_88/

Chattanooga: Making connections for Volkswagen plant site

Nearly two years after construction was completed on an Interstate 75 interchange near Ooltewah, work will begin this fall on a road to connect the interchange with the site of Volkswagen's new \$1 billion plant, officials said Friday. Chattanooga City Engineer Bill Payne said bids should go out next month for the first of two grading contracts to lay the groundwork for the proposed four-lane, divided road that will run about a mile from the new interchange to Enterprise South Boulevard near the VW plant site. The roadwork is part of at least \$40 million of infrastructure improvements planned by local utilities and governments in and around the Volkswagen site in the next couple of years as the automaker prepares to begin car production by 2011. <http://timesfreepress.com/news/2008/jul/19/chattanooga-making-connections/?print>

Growing airport to be ready for VW (Chattanooga Times Free-Press/Higgins)

A Volkswagen plant at the Enterprise South industrial park underscores the reason Cleveland is building a new airport, members of the Municipal Airport Authority said. For years city officials here said a new general aviation airport is needed to serve industry as well as recreation. The new airport being planned in the Tasso community will have a runway of 5,000 feet or more, compared to 3,300 feet at Hardwick Field. "The Volkswagen announcement adds additional importance to the work we have been doing," member Lou Patten said at the authority's monthly business meeting Friday. Authority Chairwoman Lynn DeVault added, "The new airport will make us more competitive for the Volkswagen suppliers who will be coming to the area as well." The Tasso airport should be finished close to the same time that the VW plant is ready to gear up, authority member Verrill Norwood said. "A lot of the suppliers are foreign companies, too," said consultant Mark Paslick, vice president of PDC Consultants LLC. The firm is working with the authority on the new airport. <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2008/jul/20/cleveland-growing-airport-be-ready-vw/?local>

Public transit system possible, costly (Cookeville Herald Citizen)

What if instead of filling your car up with \$4 per gallon gas, you could just hop a city bus for that trip across this growing town? You would pay a fare, but not as much as it costs to operate your own vehicle. And if many Cookeville residents also rode the bus, a lot of money would be saved and the environment would also benefit. But in Cookeville, there is no public transit system, and starting one up would cost a pretty penny, officials say. Yet it's an idea that's been kicked around here from time to time, and as the population of Cookeville heads toward 30,000 and the cost of transportation keeps rising, it may be discussed again, even though there are obstacles as large as an estimated \$1 million start-up cost and doubts about whether it would catch on and eventually pay for itself. <http://www.herald-citizen.com/index.cfm?event=news.view&id=3D7287AD-19B9-E2E2-67C70261D3B69408>

Plan for gas tax holiday fizzles (Associated Press/Abrams)

Congress kills proposal, fearing loss of jobs if highway fund depleted The political vision of a summer gas tax holiday died a quick death in Congress, losing to a view that federal excise taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel will have to go up if they go anywhere. Despite calls from the presidential campaign trail for a Memorial Day to Labor Day moratorium, lawmakers quickly concluded -- with a prod from the construction industry -- that having \$9 billion less to spend on highways could create a pre-election specter of thousands of jobs losses. Now, lawmakers are talking quietly about raising fuel taxes by a dime from the current 18.4 cents a gallon on gasoline

and 24.3 cents on diesel fuel. With gas prices setting new records on a daily basis, Republican presidential hopeful John McCain and former Democratic candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton called for a 90-day suspension of the federal fuel tax to give drivers a little relief at the pump. The fuel taxes go into the Highway Trust Fund, which is used for road construction and repair and mass transit. <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2008/jul/21/plan-for-gas-tax-holiday-fizzles/>

- Opinion -

No To Toll Roads: It's Just Another Tax - And Response (Chattanooga.com)

Say no to toll roads. Tennessee has one of the best highway systems in the country. We do it without debt. Now, Gov. Bredesen's team wants us to explore toll roads. It's just another tax, and we don't need another tax. If we have been able to build a great highway system using the pay as you go method, why change. Why do we need to create another department of government staff with more employees of government to pay for roads? Remember, create a toll road system and it means hiring toll road staff and people sitting in offices to manage that toll road staff, and then people sitting in higher offices to manage all the toll road people. It just means bigger and more government. http://www.chattanooga.com/articles/article_131724.asp

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