

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

August 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.

Company fined \$4,000 for fatal bridge accident (Times Free-Press/Koch)

A bridge worker asked a fellow employee to disconnect the cable that ultimately killed him because it was in the way and bothering him, according to a report released Wednesday by the Tennessee Occupational Health and Safety Administration. Antonios Diassakos, an employee of Tarpon Springs, Fla.-based Seminole Equipment Inc., was killed May 16 when he was struck in the head by a cable while working on the South Crest Road bridge over Interstate 24. Seminole Equipment was cited for a serious violation and fined \$4,000 after a TOSHA investigation revealed the cable involved in the incident was disconnected prematurely, according to the report. The company's health and safety officer Tim Meris, was working Wednesday at a job site. He referred questions to the Florida office and said he had not seen the report.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2008/aug/21/chattanooga-company-fined-4000-fatal-bridge-accide/?local>

Bridge Solves Problem, Creates Another

The city of Clarksville was hoping that a new pedestrian bridge would make a dangerous intersection safer, but there is a new problem that still concerns the public. Many people have found themselves carefully walking at 101st Parkway and Peacher's Mill Road in an attempt to safely cross the street, which has already been the scene of a fatal crash...However, once pedestrians cross the road, they are still feet away from Peacher's Mill Road and requires the person to cross seven lanes of traffic. There is no crosswalk available to make it safely to the road. Ward said she has already contacted the city's street department, making sure crosswalks at that dangerous intersection is a high priority.

<http://www.wsmv.com/news/17245751/detail.html>

Corps Permit Opens Way for Spillway Construction to Begin (Lake County Banner)

The new Spillway structure and bridge at Reelfoot Lake took a step closer, perhaps a key step, to beginning construction with the granting of the final permit from the Corps of Engineers to the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT). The aging structure, built in the 1930s, has been declared "functionally obsolete" and has leaked badly in recent years. An emergency repair project last summer stopped most leaks. The structure has been a source of controversy at Reelfoot Lake for years as it is the key to water level management of the state's largest natural lake. It is also the main artery for both commerce and tourism between Lake and Obion Counties and the east and west sides of Reelfoot Lake. In a press release last Friday, the Corps announced its decision to grant the permit.

<http://www.lakecountybanner.com/news.php?viewStory=1488>

Memphis, Germantown get landscaping grants (Memphis Business Journal)

Memphis and Germantown will receive more than \$145,000 in grants to assist with improvements to gateways. Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen announced \$76,396 in grants for Memphis and

another \$70,422 for Germantown to aid in the development of landscaping programs. The Memphis funds will help the Whitehaven neighborhood plant native trees lining the road and build a small stone wall to replicate an existing one in front of the visitor center in the area. The grant for Germantown will go toward landscaping a gateway median along State Route 177 between Nashoba Road and Brierbrook Road. Plants and a copy of the city seal in stone will make up the improvements. Both grants will fund 80 percent of each project with the remaining 20 percent to be paid by the local governments. The grants are part of the Tennessee Roadscapes initiative, which was developed in 2006 as a partnership between community organizations and the Tennessee Department of Transportation to create inviting spaces through an integrated approach to roadside landscaping.

<http://memphis.bizjournals.com/memphis/stories/2008/08/18/daily21.html?surround=lfm>

City Gets State Grant to Beautify Graceland Area (Memphis Flyer)

Governor Phil Bredesen announced today that the state will provide a Tennessee Roadscapes Grant in the amount of \$76,396 to the city of Memphis to assist with improvements to an important gateway in the city. "The development of well-planned landscaping programs create inviting surroundings that boost local economies and improve the quality of life for citizens," said Bredesen. "It's important to create welcoming places for people to live and work and to build a sense of pride in one's community." The city of Memphis Roadscapes project includes establishing an entryway to the Whitehaven neighborhood, to be located at the intersection of Elvis Presley Boulevard and Brooks Road. The area is a gateway to Graceland and the new Memphis Visitor Center. Landscaping will include native trees lining the road and a small stone wall to replicate an existing one in front of the Visitor Center.

<http://www.memphisflyer.com/memphis/Content?oid=oid%3A47497>

Germantown receives grant to beautify roadways (Commercial Appeal/Woo)

The Tennessee Department of Transportation Environmental Division on Wednesday awarded Germantown a \$70,422 Roadscape Grant. Germantown is one of 15 cities in Tennessee to receive a grant. During Wednesday's grant ceremony in Nashville, Gov. Phil Bredesen awarded the cities \$490,000, which will go toward improving landscapes and roadways. Germantown will use the money to decorate the soon-to-be-built 300-foot-long median along Germantown Road between Neshoba and Brierbrook roads. The median will also feature a copy of the city seal set in stone. Asst. City Admin. Andy Pouncey said the median will be landscaped with ground cover, trees and shrubs that are "low maintenance and require a low need for water." Construction on the median may begin next spring, Pouncey added.

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2008/aug/21/gtown-receives-grant-to-beautify/>

Grant Will Help Green-Up Intersection Near BMS (Herald Courier)

Asphalt paths to the Bristol Motor Speedway will get a green shot in the arm in the form of \$65,325 worth of trees and flowering shrubs. A Tennessee Roadscapes grant will help landscape the intersection of U.S. Highway 11E and state Route 394 with low-growing evergreens and plants, Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen announced Wednesday. "The development of well-planned landscaping programs create inviting surroundings that boost local economies and improve the quality of life for citizens," Bredesen said in a news release. "It's important to create welcoming places for people to live and work and to build a sense of pride in one's community." Bristol Transportation Manager Rex Montgomery said the city originally sought \$108,000. "The city's been trying to do some beautification-type of projects. This will help supplement that," he said. Bristol is among 15 cities to split a statewide grant worth \$490,178.

http://www.tricity.com/tri/news/local/article/grant_will_help_green_up_intersection_near_bms/12957/

Two West Tenn. towns get grants (Jackson Sun)

Brownsville and Savannah are among 15 counties in Tennessee that have been awarded grants to assist their communities with landscaping improvements to area roadways. Gov. Phil Bredesen announced Wednesday that \$490,178 in Roadscapes Grants were awarded. The Brownsville Roadscapes project will receive \$36,259 for the gateway planting of several varieties of flowering trees and shrubs on Interstate 40 at the Exit 56 East and West ramps, along the entry way signs, according to a press release. The project also includes directional signs to the National Hatchie River Refuge. "This grant will allow the creation of a beautifully landscaped gateway for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors who enter the city," said Speaker of the House Jimmy Naifeh. The Savannah Roadscapes project will receive \$25,714.

<http://www.jacksonsun.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080821/NEWS01/808210304/1002>

- Opinion -

Alabama: Transportation infrastructure in Alabama is at a crossroads (The Leeds News)

Recent reports by the Federal Highway Administration indicate that 12 percent of our nation's bridges are so blatantly deteriorated that they must be rigorously inspected and quickly repaired. While this statistic is certainly alarming, it pales when compared to the deterioration of Alabama's own aging infrastructure. According to the Reason Foundation, our state currently ranks 29th in terms of road conditions and cost effectiveness, 39th in rural interstate conditions and urban interstate conditions, 40th in road fatality rates, and 28th in bridge deficiencies, for a ranking of 43rd overall. Repairing these deficient and aging structures has become an immense and overwhelming task for state and local transportation departments to handle. Soaring construction costs, revenue shortages, and diminished budgets only serve to make the problems worse.

http://www.theleedsnews.net/opinion/local_story_233165110.html

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