

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

August 26, 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.

Leasing of Landmark Turnpike Puts State at Policy Crossroads (Wall Street Journal)

Hobbled by the credit crisis, Wall Street firms and many state governments are hoping that a pockmarked strip of Pennsylvania highway could provide a road out. Next month, the Pennsylvania legislature is expected to vote on a \$12.8 billion deal struck between the governor and a group of private investors to lease America's oldest major toll road, the 537-mile Pennsylvania Turnpike. If it passes, the deal would be by far the largest ever of its kind in the U.S. Under these arrangements, known as public-private partnerships, investors lease or buy roads, bridges or other infrastructure, operate them independently and collect tolls. A green light in Pennsylvania could bolster the political will of officials in other states trying to hash out similar deals. That in turn could jump-start projects in waiting, from Florida's Alligator Alley to Chicago's Midway Airport. Last month, New York Gov. David Paterson urged legislators to consider leasing some of his state's roads, bridges and tunnels to help shrink a budget deficit projected at \$26.2 billion by 2011.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121971201641371425.html?mod=todays_us_page_one
(SUBSCRIPTION)

River's rebirth: Despite delays, city on track to build greenway (Columbia Daily Herald)

Construction could begin later this year on the final portion of the Duck Riverwalk — nearly two decades after the project's inception. Over the next two years, the downtown portion of the Duck River will be transformed by a greenway built along the waterway. But one look at the riverfront today wouldn't give that impression. That's because most of the recent work on the more than \$6-million greenway project has been done behind the scenes, gearing up for a large-scale renovation of the area, City Engineer Jim Fuller said....The county secured about \$500,000 in grants in 2000 to create a walking path to the river behind the future site of Riverwalk Park, said former city engineer Chet Rhodes. The project took on a grand scale in 2005, when Congressman Lincoln Davis, D-Tenn., secured \$6.4 million in federal funding for the project in a highway bill....Fuller, the city's third engineer to oversee the project since its inception, said the delays stem from the legal hoops the city must jump through to get access to the federal funds paying for it. The \$6.4 million granted by the federal government is held by the Tennessee Department of Transportation, which only releases portions of the funds to the city in phases. The city is required to match 20 percent of the total costs for each stage of development before it is repaid by the federal funds. The city must also request authorization from the state to continue to each successive stage in the process....In June, TDOT authorized the city to proceed with acquiring land easements along the river to build the greenway, Boyer said.

http://columbiadailyherald.com/articles/2008/08/24/top_stories/01river.prt

Dam bridge closing scheduled for sooner rather than later (Crossville Chronicle)

The closing of the bridge across the Holiday Hills Dam will come much sooner than originally expected and Holiday Hills residents will need to start using the alternate route in about two weeks. City manager Ted Meadows has been informed the contractor is some three months ahead of schedule and expects to close the bridge on Holiday Drive on Sept. 8. The bridge will

remain closed to traffic for approximately nine months. Originally the bridge was not expected to close until December. The alternate route completed by the city connects Bobwhite Drive to Deerfield Road and then to the west side of Tenth Street at the Tennessee Technology Center at a new traffic signal on the Miller Bypass. City officials say that detour signs will be put up to direct drivers while the dam is closed. The Holiday Hills Dam project includes upgrades to the dam so it meets requirements of the Safe Dams Act, widening the spillway/weir and extending the length of the bridge that crosses the spillway. http://www.crossville-chronicle.com/local/local_story_238164750.html

Tennessee plan for new spillway upheld by EPA (NWTN Today)

A state Department of Transportation plan for a new spillway and bridge complex at Reelfoot Lake poses no threat to the environment in that area, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Thomas Welborn of EPA's Region 4 office in Atlanta states TDOT "has met the (guideline) requirements" regarding the \$14.2 million project. Welborn is chief of the Wetlands, Coastal and Nonpoint Branch. Welborn put his comments in writing in an Aug. 14 letter to Al Hamilton of Samburg. Hamilton is director of a nonprofit grassroots organization, Reelfoot Lake Watch Group. Their correspondence apparently began with a June 12 letter in which Hamilton expressed interest in TDOT's proposed projects at Reelfoot Lake — "a spillway, dam and bridge and the State Route 21 widening." Hamilton, contacted earlier today by The Messenger, would not say why he sought EPA input. He said he'd known Welborn "about 25 years" and that "there are things he was in error in, in that letter."
<http://www.nwntoday.com/news.php?viewStory=15633>

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