

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

October 20, 2008

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

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

Memphis area airports receive aeronautics grants (Memphis Business Journal)

\$1.9 million in aeronautics grants have been approved for 17 Tennessee airports, including several in the Memphis area, the Tennessee Department of Transportation said Friday. Airports receiving grants include: • McKellar-Sipes Regional Airport in Jackson, \$57,200; • Millington Regional Jetport, \$50,000; • Covington Municipal Airport in Tipton County, \$50,000; • Charles W. Baker Field in Shelby County, \$45,000; • Dyersburg Regional Airport, \$18,000; • and \$3,000 has been approved for the Fayette County Airport. "As our communities grow and thrive, it becomes increasingly important that our airports stay competitive and efficient at meeting the needs of travelers," said Gov. Phil Bredesen in a statement. "These airports are vital to area economies and travel systems, and I'm pleased to support their continued growth."

<http://memphis.bizjournals.com/memphis/stories/2008/10/13/daily35.html?surround=lf&brthrs=1>

Gas tax shortchanges roads (Tennessean/Sanchez)

Lawmakers to consider new funding, including borrowing, tolls Marvin Burkhardt's travels on highway systems across the county have made him believe that Tennessee's roads and bridges outshine others. They are well-designed, well-maintained and, he noted, built without putting the state into debt. But in the current economic climate, the Hendersonville resident wonders if the state can continue to rely on gas taxes alone for its share of the cost to preserve and improve the transportation network. "The streets and highways in Tennessee are superior to any state I've traveled," Burkhardt said. "Obviously, they could be improved up; I don't know any that could be, but I know that takes money." State officials, who are watching gasoline sales drop as people drive less, are wondering along with him.

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081020/NEWS0201/810200326>

Development would put Franklin road 'in peril' (Tennessean/Kline)

Two developments on crowded Columbia Avenue could put more pressure on Franklin leaders and state transportation officials to widen the road. Plans were recently approved for a 196-home subdivision and attached commercial center and a 23-lot commercial area that would add more than 14,735 daily trips to Columbia Avenue, according to Carl Baughman, traffic engineer for the city of Franklin. Baughman said the road is already "near capacity" and when these projects are completed Columbia Avenue would be "in peril" if it's not widened. It's estimated that more than 20,000 cars travel the two-lane road on an average weekday, according to the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081020/COUNTY09/810200331/1352/COUNTY>

I-24 bridge repair bidders sought (Chattanooga Times Free-Press/Benton)

The state is seeking bids to repair the collision-damaged Interstate 24 bridge in Marion County, but the town's mayor hopes a spring project will solve problems for good. Tennessee Department of Transportation spokeswoman Jennifer Flynn said contractors have until 10 a.m. CDT Oct. 31 to get bids to Nashville for emergency repairs to the bridge at the Kimball-South Pittsburg exit. Repairs must be finished by Jan. 31, 2009, Ms. Flynn said. Kimball Mayor David Jackson wants the state to move forward with a project to raise the I-24 bridge about three or four feet. "We had a log truck hit the bridge yesterday morning that knocked a log off, and the truck behind the log truck hit the log," Mr. Jackson said Friday. "The truck left the scene, and we don't know who the company was." <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2008/oct/20/i-24-bridge-repair-bidders-sought/?local>

Mr. Greenjeans leaving TDOT (City Paper/Noseworthy)

Tennessee Department of Transportation Chief of Environment and Planning Ed Cole is set to retire, Rex has learned. Cole has had a long, successful career in public service and did his part to get the backlog of TDOT's mandated environmental impact studies in check. When he was hired on in 2003, Cole was lauded as the sheriff who was supposed to break the back of the old-boy network. He wasn't given the opportunity to fully flex his muscle, but Cole has obviously had a long career he can be proud of. <http://nashvillecitypaper.com/news.php?viewStory=63549>

California: Calif. mulls ads on road alert signs (USA Today)

Highway alert signs that warn motorists nationwide of delays and hazards could start to display a new, potentially distracting feature — advertising. The California Department of Transportation may become the first state to put ads on its alert signs along state and federal highways. Caltrans would get millions a year in ad revenue and hundreds of new high-resolution signs that show traffic alerts and rotating ads when there is no alert, agency director Will Kempton said. California's effort comes as many states look to make money from roads, selling or leasing highways and rest stops or charging to drive in congested areas. If the practice is approved, other states are likely to follow, said Ken Kobetsky, chief engineer of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-10-16-highway-ads_N.htm?loc=interstitialskip

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