

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

October 22, 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.

Grant approved for Everett-Stewart Regional Airport (Weakley County Press)

Everett-Stewart Regional Airport in Obion County has been approved for a \$50,000 aeronautics grant, Gov. Phil Bredesen announced Friday. "As our communities grow and thrive, it is increasingly important that our airports stay competitive and efficient at meeting the needs of travelers," he said. "Everett-Stewart Regional Airport is vital to this region's economy and travel system. I'm pleased to support its continued growth." Funds from this aeronautics grant will be used to install new security fencing, lighting and cameras. State Sen. Roy Herron of Dresden and House Transportation Committee chairman Phillip Pinion of Union City helped secure these funds for the airport. Aeronautics grants totaling \$1,941,727 have been approved for 17 Tennessee airports through the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Division.

<http://www.nwtntoday.com/news.php?viewStory=18201>

Lawmakers consider tolls, bonds, tax hikes (Chattanooga Times Free-Press/Sher)

With federal support for roads falling, construction costs soaring and the state's gasoline tax revenue declining, Tennessee's \$1.94 billion transportation program is racing toward a huge financial pothole, officials warned Tuesday. State Transportation Commissioner Gerald Nicely told a special joint study committee on transportation funding that revenues are not keeping up with costs. In the last three years alone, he said, construction costs grew 15.9 percent annually while the bulk of state revenue increased by a scant 0.5 percent a year and federal revenue by just 1.4 percent. The commissioner outlined several possible solutions, including a hike in the state's 21.4 cents-per-gallon gas and 17 cents-per-gallon diesel taxes, indexing fuel taxes to inflation, building toll roads and bridges or using bonds on a large scale to borrow money and fund needs. <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2008/oct/22/chattanooga-lawmakers-consider-tolls-bonds-tax-hik/?local>

Legislative panel studies road funding (Commercial Appeal/Locker)

A new legislative committee began examining ways to increase funding for Tennessee highway construction and maintenance and other transportation improvements Tuesday, including a possible fuel tax hike and toll roads. The state legislature in May created the Transportation Funding Special Study Committee as revenue from Tennessee's motor-fuel taxes and highway funding from the federal government declined even as construction and maintenance costs increased. The 20-member task force of legislators, local government officials and transportation industry representatives met for the first time Tuesday to begin its work. Its report and recommendations for how to deal with the growing gap between transportation revenue and expenses must be delivered to the General Assembly in February.

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2008/oct/22/panel-studies-road-funding/>

Costs Escalating Faster Than Revenues, TDOT Says (WSMV-TV Nashville)

Funding Hits Speed Bumps The Tennessee Department of Transportation said it is time to look at ways to find billions of dollars to build new roads and maintain existing highways. The nationwide traditional ways of funding road construction and maintenance aren't cutting it anymore, leaving TDOT and lawmakers looking for new options. Tennessee's roads consistently rank as some of the tops in nation, but TDOT said funding has hit some speed bumps. "We've had costs escalating faster than revenues," said Gerald Nicely, commissioner of transportation. Road construction costs have nearly doubled in the past five years, combined with a decrease in gas tax collections and some uncertainty in federal funding. "We're gonna wind up having potholes and think we're driving through somewhere like Arkansas or Illinois if we don't do something," Rep. Phillip Pinion said. <http://www.wsmv.com/travelgetaways/17773820/detail.html#->

Sharon, Gleason receive grants (NW Tennessee Today)

Con. John Tanner announced economic infrastructure development grants for the cities of Gleason and Sharon. The funding is awarded through the Delta Regional Authority. "These are important investments in our public infrastructure and public safety," Tanner said. "They will help as we continue working to build new jobs and improve rural West Tennessee for our families." The city of Gleason will receive \$173,000 to help replace its out-of-date wastewater pumping stations. The city of Sharon will receive \$199,522 to help replace its old water mains. Tanner represents Tennessee's 8th Congressional District in West and Middle Tennessee. <http://www.nwntoday.com/news.php?viewStory=18162>

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