

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

October 31, 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.

Nashville airport delays \$70M rental car complex (Tennessean)

A new \$70 million rental car complex at Nashville International Airport has been put on hold because of the unstable economy. Rental companies, which are now in the short-term parking garage in front of the terminal, would have moved to the new facility to free up more parking spaces and give the agencies more room to operate. The project had been slated to begin this fall, said Emily Richard, airport spokeswoman. "We're delaying that project indefinitely because of the bond market, general economic conditions and the cost of construction labor and materials," Richard said. Richard said the existing rental car setup limits future growth, and its replacement would "result in a central, larger, more convenient location for rental car operators and their customers."

<http://tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081031/NEWS01/810310499>

- Opinion -

Editorial: Even in down economy, roadways must be safe (Tennessean)

Tennesseans may be breathing a little easier (not too deeply, though — fumes) at the gas pump these days, with prices just a little more than half of what they were over the summer. But as with so many parts of our economy, there are some catches. The continued need to conserve for environmental reasons is one. That, and the likelihood that gas prices will jump again at the next Gulf storm, or simply when the economy starts to improve, makes it more likely that we will drive less, thereby shrinking gas-tax revenues that are needed to build and maintain roads and other infrastructure. All road projects in Tennessee are pay-as-you-go, and funded by the 21.4-cent per gallon tax; most of that is distributed from a federal highway fund. But Tennessee alone has received \$237 million less than expected since 2005 from that fund, which nearly ran dry last month.

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081031/OPINION01/810310533/1007/OPINION>

Guest columnist: We are not alone in facing this issue (Tennessean)

There is general agreement that our nation's infrastructure is in dire need of repair. There is agreement that infrastructure spending — which generates \$2 in economic activity for every \$1 spent — could help jumpstart a sluggish economy. But there is little agreement about how we fund these projects. For several years, state and local officials have been warning about a growing "gap" between identified needs and the money to pay for them. Just three years ago, the Tennessee Department of Transportation estimated the gap at \$2 billion over a 10-year period.

Today that gap is \$8 billion and growing. Untended projects include 300 Tennessee bridges that have been deemed "structurally deficient," some 40 county seats that do not have four-lane highway access to the nearest interstate, and city and county roads that desperately need repair.

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081031/OPINION01/810310535/1007/OPINION>

Guest columnist: State must keep up with road demands (Tennessean)

The maintenance needs on aging infrastructure all across our country have never been greater. The American Society of Civil Engineering (ASCE) 2005 Infrastructure Report Card showed that as of 2003, 27.1 percent of the nation's bridges rated structurally deficient or functionally obsolete and that traffic congestion costs our economy \$67.5 billion annually in lost productivity and wasted fuel. In Tennessee, our scorecard rates 21 percent of bridges as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete and 32 percent of our major urban roads as congested. Nashville commuters now lose an average of 40 hours a year in traffic delays, twice as much as in 1982. With a population rate that continues to outpace the national average and annual vehicle miles traveled growing even more rapidly, our roads are experiencing increased demand that is becoming a threat to quality of life, economic competitiveness, mobility and safety.

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081031/OPINION01/810310531/1007/OPINION>

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