

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

November 17, 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.

State aeronautics board approves grant for new city airport terminal (Tullahoma News)

The construction of a new terminal building at Tullahoma Regional Airport is a major step closer to becoming reality following the recommendation of the Tennessee Aeronautics Commission for approval of a \$350,000 state grant to fund half the cost of the project. Local representatives, including members of the Tullahoma Airport Authority, airport executive director Jon Glass and Mayor Troy Bisby, attended an Aeronautics Commission meeting Thursday morning in Nashville to make a pitch for state funds to build a new terminal building to replace the existing 30-year-old facility at the airport. The total estimated cost for the project which would more than double the size of the current building is \$700,000. http://www.tullahomanews.com/news/view_article.asp?idcategory=9&idarticle=7207

Airport improvements stem from grant funds (Times-Gazette)

Aeronautics grant funds totaling \$99,000 have been approved for the Shelbyville Municipal Airport, it was announced this week. The grant funds, part of nearly \$4 million given to 15 Tennessee airports, will be used for an airport layout plan and to install security cameras. The grants are made available through the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Division. "As our communities grow and thrive, it is increasingly important that our airports stay competitive and efficient at meeting the needs of travelers," Gov. Phil Bredesen said. "Shelbyville Municipal Airport is vital to this region's economy and travel system. I'm pleased to support its continued growth." "This division administers federal and state funding to assist in the location, design, construction and maintenance of Tennessee's diverse public aviation system," TDOT Commissioner Gerald Nicely said. <http://www.t-g.com/story/1478468.html>

Money woes delay Tenn. 385 loop (Commercial Appeal/Charlier)

Drivers forced to wait for congestion-clearing project A veteran of daily traffic jams on Interstate 240, Dan Storms spends a lot of time waiting -- not only for congestion to clear, but for the completion of a highway project that should make his commute a lot easier. For Storms and thousands of other Memphis-area motorists, the Tenn. 385 project holds the promise of quicker travel. Connecting Millington with Collierville and Southeast Memphis, the outer-loop highway will enable many commuters and travelers to avoid the heavily used I-240. "Maybe I'm biased, but I think it would alleviate a lot of the congestion around the interstate as a whole," said Storms, 30, who lives near Millington and works in Collierville. But according to the Tennessee Department of Transportation, Storms can expect to keep on waiting. <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2008/nov/16/money-woes-delay-tenn-385-02/>

Planners plot future of Middle Tenn. mass transit (Daily News Journal)

Jack Simpson doesn't have a car and relies solely on Nashville's bus system for transportation. When gas prices shot up, Simpson started to see standing room only on certain routes. Even with gas hovering around \$2 a gallon, the buses remain crowded. "There are no more buses (than there were before gas and ridership went up), no elongated buses on busy routes, and we're having to stand more and more," Simpson said. Transit officials believe the \$4 a gallon gas prices helped people to see the benefits of using public transportation. But they also learned a lesson: that Middle Tennessee's transportation systems — in Nashville and across the region — have to be prepared for future increases in ridership. That's why many agencies and communities are planning for well into the future. <http://www.dnj.com/article/20081116/NEWS01/811160320/1002>

- Opinion -

Why Spending Stimulus Plans Fail (Wall Street Journal)

Congressional Democrats are now demanding another economic stimulus package to "inject" as much as \$300 billion into the economy. The package will fail -- just like last year's \$333 billion in emergency spending and \$150 billion in tax rebates failed. There's a simple reason why...And, especially in this era, when "our crumbling infrastructure" seems to have become the new mantra, legislators and lobbyists tout a 2002 Department of Transportation (DOT) study that they believe proves that every \$1 billion spent on highways adds 47,576 new jobs to the economy. The problem is that the study doesn't actually make that claim. It stated that spending \$1 billion on highways would *require* 47,576 workers (or more precisely, would require 26,524 workers, who then spend their income elsewhere, supporting an additional 21,052 workers). But before the government can spend \$1 billion hiring road builders and purchasing asphalt, it must first tax or borrow \$1 billion from other sectors of the economy, which then lose a similar number of jobs. In other words, highway spending merely transfers jobs and income from one part of the economy to another. As economist Ronald Utt has explained, "The only way that \$1 billion of new highway spending can create 47,576 new jobs is if the \$1 billion appears out of nowhere as if it were manna from heaven." <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122663413095027641.html>

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