

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

September 15, 2009

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

For the full story, click the headline or use the link.

[Tennesseans In Rural Pockets Suffer For Lack Of Safe Water \(Tennessean/Carey\)](#)

Affluent counties are lacking in grants When Susan Small-Hammer wants a shower, she usually drives down the road to her church. For seven years, she has bought drinking water at the store; if she takes a sip from her kitchen faucet, it may make her ill. If she lets her water supply build, she can do her laundry at home once or twice a month. The rest of the time, she's knocking on a friend's door with a basket of dirty clothes under her arm. Small-Hammer is one of hundreds of Sumner County residents who don't get treated water in their homes. "I don't like dishes stacked up. I don't like laundry piled high," she said. "It hurts me personally. It's hurting the majority of the people out here." Locals have plenty of awful stories about bad water in northern Sumner County: kids whose teeth decay because of polluted groundwater, residents showering with water from creeks filled with dead animals, homes that have access to broadband Internet but not treated drinking water.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20090915/NEWS01/909150342/Tennesseans+in+rural+pockets+suffe+r+for+lack+of+safe+water>

[Contractors Urge Increase In Fuel Taxes \(Knoxville News-Sentinel/Jacobs\)](#)

Higher fuel taxes, anyone? The refrain from the road construction industry in Tennessee is that federal and state funding of the transportation infrastructure is erratic, inadequate and dwindling. The state hasn't increased gasoline taxes since 1989, and the last time the federal government increased the gas tax was during Bill Clinton's first term in office. Toss in the decrease in miles driven because of high gas costs and better fuel economy in newer vehicles, and the funding formula is out of kilter, said Kent Starwalt, executive vice president of the Tennessee Road Builders Association. "The backlog of identifiable projects is tremendous," Starwalt said. "We as Americans have not done a good job of maintaining our assets." Paul Degges, chief engineer for the Tennessee Department of Transportation, said he has "about \$6 billion worth of work in the hopper right now." The \$736 million that TDOT spent last year for road and bridge construction didn't make a dent in the to-do list.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2009/sep/15/contractors-urge-raise-in-fuel-taxes/>

[TDOT Road Alerts Hit Twitter \(Knoxville News-Sentinel\)](#)

For the first time in Tennessee, a road project is being Tweeted. The Tennessee Department of Transportation is using the widening of state Highway 66 in Sevierville as a pilot program to use Twitter as a way of alerting the public to ongoing road work. "That way if they need to close a road for a water line, they can send it out quickly," said TDOT regional spokesman Travis Brickey. "It provides another way to get information out to the people who care about it." Those who sign up for the service will get regular messages about lane closures, work progress and even crashes in the four-mile long construction zone, which is receiving about \$39 million in federal stimulus money. Officials usually have several days' warning of the work ahead, but rainstorms and construction delays often alter those plans.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2009/sep/15/tdot-road-alerts-hit-twitter/>

[TDOT Public Meetings This Week About I-75 \(Associated Press\)](#)

The Tennessee Department of Transportation has three public meetings this week on possible improvements to the Interstate 75 corridor. The work would be between Chattanooga and the Georgia state line and between Jellico and the Kentucky state line. The first meeting is scheduled for Monday at Farragut High School in Knoxville. There are also meetings scheduled for Tuesday at the Museum Center at Five Points in Cleveland and Thursday at the Hamilton Branch YMCA in Chattanooga. All meetings begin at 6 p.m. EDT.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=31597499.story>

[Governor Appoints Gallatin Resident To RTA Board \(News-Examiner\)](#)

Gov. Phil Bredesen has appointed Gallatin resident Betsy Hawkins to serve on the board of directors for the Regional Transportation Authority. RTA provides and manages regional commuter bus service, vanpools and carpools, and Tennessee's first commuter rail service, the RTA Music City Star. Hawkins will serve a five-year term on the RTA Board, which is comprised of city and county mayors and community leaders in a nine-county area in the greater Nashville region. She is one of 31 people to serve on the board, whose members provide oversight and leadership to the RTA. Gallatin Mayor Jo Ann Graves, vice chairman of RTA Board, said: "I know Betsy and her family and have seen their commitment to our community put into action in a variety of ways.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20090915/MICRO060101/90914079/1122/COUNTY/Governor+appoints+Gallatin+resident+to+RTA+Board>

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