

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

November 12, 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.

[Videos Show US 64 Rock Slide In East Tennessee \(Associated Press\)](#)

A second rock slide has closed U.S. 64 in East Tennessee in both directions, and a state transportation spokeswoman says it could be three weeks before the scenic highway along the Ocoee River reopens. The first slide happened about 6 a.m. EST Tuesday at mile marker 17 near Ducktown. The second rock slide about seven hours later, caught on videos shot by the Chattanooga Times Free Press and WDEF-TV, has further complicated the cleanup. Tennessee Department of Transportation spokeswoman Julie Oaks said Wednesday that geologists are helping determine how much work must be done to reopen the road. She said the department will use an emergency contract to remove an estimated 1,400 dump-truck loads of rock and dirt. Traffic is being rerouted in the meantime.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=32029113.story>

[Answers Elusive As Slide Cleanup Begins \(Chattanooga Times Free-Press/Sohn\)](#)

When Vanessa Bateman got a call Tuesday to come to the Ocoee Gorge to check the stability of a bluff over U.S. Highway 64, she didn't know she would become a hero. "I was just out there doing my job," said the 38-year-old geotechnical engineer with the Tennessee Department of Transportation. But as highway workers chipped a boulder that had fallen in the night and blocked half the roadway, Ms. Bateman arrived and immediately found cause for concern. "There was some rabble, smaller material, that kept coming down," she said. "And the slope was making sharp popping sounds -- like a car door being slammed." She insisted workers and news crews get themselves and their equipment out of the way.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2009/nov/12/answers-elusive-as-slide-cleanup-begins/>

[UT Geologist Explains The Cause Of Recent Rockslides \(WATE-TV Knoxville\)](#)

What caused two massive rockslides at the North Carolina border and on U.S. Highway 64 just weeks apart from each other? Geologists say it's a combination of factors. The latest slide happened in Polk County Tuesday and was caught on camera. Boulders tumbled onto Highway 64. It was the second slide in the area that day. Clean up crews are still on the scene and Highway 64 likely won't be open for a week or more. Meanwhile, it could take up to four months to re-open Interstate 40 after a rock slide in the mountains between Tennessee and North Carolina in October. Dr. Bob Hatcher is the leading expert at the University of Tennessee on the geology of our region. He says these slides happen in a matter of seconds.

<http://www.wate.com/global/story.asp?s=11487681>

[Bridge Work To Disrupt I-81 Traffic \(Knoxville News-Sentinel/Jacobs\)](#)

Businesses along Interstate 81 already have seen an additional 10,000 vehicles daily because of the rock slide that closed Interstate 40 in North Carolina last month. With the planned closure of two overpasses on I-81 to accommodate emergency repairs during the next two weekends, residents expect the result will be significant traffic snarls...Mark Dykes, regional safety coordinator with the Tennessee Department of Transportation, said an additional 10,000 vehicles a day have been using I-81 since the Oct. 25 rock slide. I-81 normally averages 30,000 vehicles a day. The rock slide closed I-40 about three miles into North Carolina. The closure will last more than three months and cost up to \$10 million, officials said.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2009/nov/11/bridge-work-to-disrupt-i-81-traffic/>

[Bridge Work To Close Part Of I-81 \(Johnson City Press\)](#)

Another major interstate closure is getting ready to impact traffic in our region for the next two weekends. Tennessee Department of Transportation contractors were doing routine bridge maintenance on the northbound and southbound bridges over U.S. Highway 11E at Exit 23 along Interstate 81 when they found cracks in the bridges main support beams which will require maintenance to keep the bridges in optimal working condition. "At 10 p.m. on Saturday, November 14, we'll be closing I-81 Northbound at Exit 23 until 10 a.m. on Sunday, so about 12 hours there," TDOT Chief Engineer Paul Degges said. "Then, the following weekend, on November 21, it will be closed from 10 p.m. until 10 a.m. the next day..

<http://www.johnsoncitypress.com/News/article.php?ID=72256>

[EPA Fines Knoxville Utility For Sewage Overflows \(Associated Press\)](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency has fined Knoxville's utilities division for repeated raw sewage overflows. Bill Elmore, the senior vice president and chief operating officer of the Knoxville Utilities Board, told The Knoxville News Sentinel the utility has made considerable progress in eliminating overflows, but will continue to face sanctions until it completes an effort to fix the problems. The EPA assessed an initial fine of \$68,050 for 159 discharges of untreated sewage over the last four years. Elmore said the utility has reduced sewage overflows by 70 percent between 2004 and 2008. A 10-year, \$530 million project is under way to solve the problems.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=32026721.story>

[Public-Private Partnerships at Center of Freight Conference \(Memphis Daily News\)](#)

That union will be discussed at the third annual Intermodal and Freight Conference Thursday at the University of Memphis' FedEx Institute of Technology. Titled "Public/Private Partnerships," the conference will begin with registration at 8 a.m. and will last until 1 p.m. Memphis' intermodal and freight capabilities are legendary. The city has boasted the world's busiest cargo airport for 17 straight years thanks to hometown shipping giant FedEx Corp.

<http://www.memphisdailynews.com/editorial/Article.aspx?id=45992>

[Detour Plans Outlined For Repairs At Exit 23 \(The Greeneville Sun\)](#)

Beginning this Saturday night at 10 p.m., northbound traffic on Interstate 81 will have to take Exit 23 at Mosheim, cross U.S. Highway 11E, and take the on-ramp to continue northward. Enlarged crews from General Constructors, of Mt. Juliet, Tenn., will be working through the night of Nov. 14-15 to repair two small "metal fatigue cracks" in the beams underneath the interstate bridge, said Paul Degges, chief engineer with the Tennessee Department of Transportation. By 10 a.m. on Sunday, normal northbound traffic is expected to be restored on Interstate 81, Degges said. "We hope to get done faster than this," he said.

<http://www.greenevillesun.com/story/306605>

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