

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

December 3, 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.

[Loose Rock To Be Blasted Down On US 64 \(Associated Press\)](#)

A contractor is using a drill on a crane-hoisted platform to prepare for blasting loose stone as a rock slide on U.S. 64 in southeast Tennessee is cleared. The Tennessee Department of Transportation said Tuesday that debris removal and road repairs will probably take eight weeks. Rock and debris from Little Frog Mountain slid onto the highway on Nov. 10, closing it near Ducktown and causing transportation officials to set up a detour using Interstate 75 and state Route 68 through Sweetwater. About 90 miles northeast, North Carolina transportation officials are clearing a massive slide that closed Interstate 40 near the Tennessee-North Carolina border on Oct. 25. Work on that project is expected to last through the winter.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=32195669.story>

[Five Blount County Road Projects On The High Priority List Of 17 \(The Daily Times\)](#)

...approved Tuesday by the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Executive Committee. The local roads are Alcoa Highway, Pellissippi Parkway and portions of Montvale, Morganton and Sevierville roads. The work window for completion on the projects range from 2009-2014 to 2015-2024. Cost estimates range from \$6 to \$350 million, depending on the size of the project.

<http://www.thedailytimes.com/article/20091203/NEWS/312039980>

-Opinion-

[Antiquated Air-Traffic Control System Will Put Safety At Stake \(Tennessean\)](#)

Not again. Just two weeks ago, a computer "glitch" at one of the nation's two flight-plan centers triggered delays and cancellations for thousands of air passengers. Hundreds of flights were canceled Nov. 19 across the country in a vast domino effect. A similar system malfunction, at the Atlanta FAA center in August 2008, also caused hundreds of flight delays. Another failure in June 2007 caused more than 2,500 delays and cancellations. What is truly surprising is that there has not been a loud call for a remedy. Perhaps that is because the system failures have not so far resulted in safety issues. That is the one bright spot, but it is not convincing enough to reassure travelers that they will be safe in the future. And one thing they can be assured of is that unless the Federal Aviation Administration's air-traffic system is completely overhauled soon, they should get used to these massive periodic outages.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20091203/OPINION01/912030344/1007/OPINION>

[System Overhaul Will Aid Efficiency \(Tennessean\)](#)

Twice in recent months — and as recently as the week before Thanksgiving — travelers across the country met with serious delays when they traveled through our nation's airports. These delays were caused by the FAA's decades-old data processing system. In the most recent failure of the system, the initial malfunctions began around 4 a.m. Nashville time on Nov. 18 and continued for about four hours. As a result of the system failure, airlines had to fax their flight plans to FAA air-traffic controllers, who then had to manually enter the information into their tracking systems. These issues caused some airports to have efficiency rates cut in half. Unfortunately, we will probably see repeated failures in the future if this antiquated system is not replaced. Currently, the FAA and airports across the country are working on a new program, NextGen, which will implement a comprehensive overhaul of air travel, making it more convenient and dependable while ensuring that your flight continues to be safe and secure.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20091203/OPINION01/912030345/1007>

[Investment Would Save Lives \(Tennessean\)](#)

As our politicians in Washington bicker over health-care reform, the war in Afghanistan and soaring domestic unemployment, identifying national priorities on which we all agree is paramount. A prime example is investing in America: targeted investments that will create jobs, increase efficiency and ensure our safety. One such opportunity that has been long overlooked is our nation's air-traffic control system, a critical part of America's infrastructure. Though we heard a lot about roads and rails in the rollout of the \$787 billion stimulus package earlier this year, not a single penny was allocated to revitalizing our aviation infrastructure. Perhaps because they are invisible, our skyways were ignored and a golden opportunity to improve air travel was missed. This was not only a lost opportunity to create jobs and increase efficiency, it also further delayed an improvement to air safety that is long overdue. The recent glitch at a Federal Aviation Administration control center in Salt Lake City is but the latest symptom of an ailing system that is in desperate need of an upgrade.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20091203/OPINION01/912030343/1007>

###