

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

January 26, 2010

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.

[Doubts, Delays Muddle Franklin Plans For I-65 Exit \(Tennessean/Walters\)](#)

It's Franklin's \$4.8 million quandary. Even though city officials now say they believe a single-point urban interchange, such as the one at McEwen Drive and Interstate 65, is not a more efficient way to move traffic, should the city still splurge to one day build another at the Goose Creek/Interstate 65 interchange? Or should the city save its money and allow state road planners to pursue building a more common, cheaper diamond-style design at the site? Doing so, however, might mean more delays in launching the project, though that hinges on federal funding. Backing away from the single-point urban interchange plan, popularly known as an SPUI, now would mean taxpayers would be stuck paying for engineering plans that won't be used. If aldermen make a switch, new plans will take nine months. State and city officials can't say yet how much state Department of Transportation engineers spent on the Goose Creek SPUI plans. By way of comparison, plans for the McEwen Drive SPUI cost \$1.1 million, records show.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100126/WILLIAMSON01/1260303/Doubts++delays+muddle+Franklin+plans+for+I-65+exit>

[Lanes Blocked Heading Into Smoky Mountains \(Associated Press\)](#)

A rockslide has blocked southbound lanes of a main road between Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg leading into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Traffic Monday heading south from Pigeon Forge is being directed to the northbound lanes. According to WATE-TV in Knoxville, officials did not know how long it would take to clear the Gatlinburg-Pigeon Forge spur.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=32626369.story>

[Detour Put In Place Around Rockslide \(Knoxville News-Sentinel\)](#)

Southbound lanes of Gatlinburg-Pigeon Forge Spur blocked A detour has been set up to allow two-way traffic after a large rockslide Monday blocked the southbound lanes of the Gatlinburg-Pigeon Forge Spur, officials said. According to Nancy Gray, spokeswoman for Great Smoky Mountains National Park, traffic heading south on the roadway - officially designated U.S. Highway 441 - from Pigeon Forge is being directed on to the northbound side of the Spur before crossing back over to the southbound side near the King Branch bridge. Northbound traffic is being funneled to one lane in the same area. Gray said temporary message boards are in place and the detour is "working fine with no traffic delays at this time."

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/jan/26/detour-put-in-place-around-rockslide/>

[Newfound Gap Road Closed In Smokies After Snow \(Associated Press\)](#)

U.S. 441 over the Smoky Mountains is closed because of snow in the higher elevations. The road -- also known as Newfound Gap Road -- is between Gatlinburg, Tenn., and Cherokee, N.C. Officials of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park say traffic on the road has been heavier after a massive rock slide closed Interstate 40 near the Tennessee-North Carolina state line Oct. 25 and some drivers began using U.S. 441 as an alternate. Park spokesman Bob Miller said Monday the road was closed after an inch or two of snow covered it.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=32621811.story>

Supreme Court Shuts Off Mississippi's Water Lawsuit Against Memphis (CA/Charlier)

State accused city, MLGW of stealing via excessive pumping A water-rights battle that could have cost Memphis \$1.3 billion and forced it to use the Mississippi River as a drinking source all but evaporated Monday as the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a Mississippi lawsuit against the city. The justices, without comment, denied Mississippi's motion to overturn an appellate court's ruling last year sending the case to the Supreme Court. They also rejected the state's motion to file a new suit before the high court. "This is certainly a great relief," Mayor A C Wharton said in an afternoon press conference. The case stems from a 2005 lawsuit filed by Mississippi Atty. Gen. Jim Hood against Memphis and its municipal utility, the Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division. The suit accused the city of stealing about one-third of its water from Mississippi through excessive pumping from an aquifer underlying the two states. MLGW's wells have created large depressions in the Memphis Sand, causing water that's been beneath Mississippi for thousands of years to flow across the state line into Memphis, according to the suit.

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2010/jan/25/supreme-court-declines-weigh-mississippi-water-la/>

U.S. Supreme Court Rules in Favor of Memphis, Ending Dispute with Miss. (MF)

The five-year legal dispute between Memphis and neighboring Mississippi over the city's use of water from the underground aquifer shared by the two entities is over and done with — in the city's favor. So said the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled Monday in favor of Memphis, MLGW, and the state of Tennessee. The Court denied Mississippi's petition to appeal its lawsuit against the city and MLGW, previously heard by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, and also denied Mississippi's request to file an original lawsuit with the High Court. What the Magnolia State had claimed was that the City of Memphis and MLGW were taking more than their share of water from the underground aquifer. The appeals court had ruled last year that Tennessee had to be named as a party to the suit and that only the Supreme Court could rule on the issue. The High Court's action Monday finally put an end to things. Both Jerry Collins, MLGW president and CEO, and Mayor A C Wharton hailed the decision at a press conference Monday afternoon in the Hall of Mayors.

<http://www.memphisflyer.com/TheDailyBuzz/archives/2010/01/25/us-supreme-court-rules-in-favor-of-memphis-ending-dispute-with-mississippi-over-water-rights>

Corps Of Engineers To Survey Eroding Riverbank In Clarksville (Leaf Chronicle)

Faced with the looming issue of a riverbank experts say is eroding a foot each year, the city of Clarksville is bringing in reinforcements to tackle the threat before it becomes a problem. The Nashville District Army Corps of Engineers will soon begin surveying a section of the Cumberland River along Riverside Drive — the first step in a projected multiyear, multimillion dollar effort to mitigate erosion that could threaten the road itself. "Well, in this particular section of the Cumberland River, there are utility lines involved and there's potential for further erosion to jeopardize the roadway," said Mark Vaughn, a biologist with the Corps of Engineers. "With (Highway) 41A being a major artery through Clarksville, the city wants to address it, obviously, before that happens." Once the land is surveyed, the most likely course of action would be for the city to put in riprap, rock commonly used to protect shorelines from erosion.

<http://www.theleafchronicle.com/article/20100126/NEWS01/1260335/1002/Corps-of-Engineers-to-survey-eroding-riverbank-in-Clarksville>

Nashville's General Aviation Firms See End To Downturn (Tennessean/Williams)

Allen Howell, along with his father, Reece, started a charter-flight business at the Smyrna Airport in 1982, beginning with a single airplane and a single employee. Today, his company, Corporate Flight Management, operates a fleet of 23 aircraft and employs 180 people in a business that includes worldwide charter flights, aircraft maintenance and restoration. The company also runs a flight school. Despite all of the growth, Howell found his company mired in the recession over the past year as he faced the worst downturn in his 28 years in the business. But the company has survived without any layoffs, and there are signs that business may finally be picking up, he said. "The worst is behind us, and I believe that any of us that are still in business now probably will make it." Among factors that pulled his company through was a lucrative business restoring old turboprop planes that had been stored for years in the desert of the Southwest in places such as Kingman, Ariz., and selling them to small commuter airlines outside North America, Howell said. Not all general-aviation industry firms have been as fortunate.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100126/BUSINESS01/1260321/2047/BUSINESS>

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