

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

February 18, 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.

[Riders Actively Work For Music City Star \(Tennessean\)](#)

A grassroots riders' organization along with the Regional Transportation Authority are working to get more people to take the [Music City Star](#) from Wilson County into Nashville and to find a constant funding source for the area's only commuter train. It's something I believe in," said Sheila Varga, president of the Regional Commuters Association, the riders' organization founded in 2008. Varga lives in Mt. Juliet and takes the Music City Star into downtown Nashville everyday. She estimates that the Star saves her \$200 per month since she no longer has to feed her gas tank as frequently.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100217/WILSON/2170302/2046/Riders+actively+work+for+Music+City+Star>

[Loans Available Resulting From SE Tenn Rock Slide \(Associated Press\)](#)

Gov. Phil Bredesen says federal disaster loans are available as a result of a rock slide that closed U.S. Highway 63 in Tennessee. The loans are good for Polk, Bradley, McMinn and Monroe counties in Tennessee, Fannin and Murray counties in Georgia and Cherokee County in North Carolina. The low-interest loans are available to small businesses, small agriculture cooperatives and most private nonprofit organizations that have been affected by the rock slide last November. The loans are offered through the Small Business Administration.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=32829013.story>

[Loans Available For Business Affected By Rock Slide \(WRCB-TV Chattanooga\)](#)

Governor Phil Bredesen today announced the Small Business Administration is making Economic Injury Disaster Loans available in Polk County and three adjacent Tennessee counties - Bradley, McMinn and Monroe - as well as for two counties in Georgia (Fannin and Murray) and one in North Carolina (Cherokee). The assistance comes in response to Bredesen's request for federal aid following a rock slide that closed U.S. Highway 64 on November 10, 2009. The low-interest disaster loans are available to small businesses, small agriculture cooperatives and most private non-profit organizations that have been affected by the rock slide. "The SBA's actions will provide businesses in those counties much needed assistance as they deal with the impact of a rock slide," said Bredesen. "The state is working to reopen the highway as quickly as possible, and we are glad this assistance is available to help those who have been affected."

<http://www.wrcbtv.com/Global/story.asp?S=12002274>

[Businesses Impacted by the Rock Slide Can Apply for SBA Loans \(Biz Wire\)](#)

Low-interest disaster loans are available in Tennessee to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives and most private non-profit organizations, both large and small, that were affected by the rock slide on U.S. Highway 64, on Nov. 10, 2009. SBA Administrator Karen Mills made the loans available following a request from Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen on Feb. 1 for a disaster declaration by the SBA. The declaration covers Polk County and the adjacent counties of Bradley, McMinn and Monroe in Tennessee; Fannin and Murray in Georgia and Cherokee in North Carolina. "The Small Business Administration is strongly committed to providing the most effective and customer- focused response possible to help small businesses and non-profits in Tennessee with their federal disaster loans," said Mills. "Getting our businesses and communities up and running after a disaster is our highest priority at SBA." Eligible entities may qualify for loans up to \$2 million. The SBA offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs) to help meet working capital needs caused by the disaster. The rates on these loans are 4 percent for businesses and 3 percent for non-profit organizations with terms up to 30 years.

http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/home/permalink/?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20100217006915&newsLang=en

[TDOT Obligates 100% Of Recovery Act Highway Funds \(Chattanooga\)](#)

The Tennessee Department of Transportation has obligated 100% of the \$572 million in Highway Infrastructure Investment funds made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, two weeks ahead of the March 1 deadline required under the Act. TDOT received approval of its last project on Tuesday on the eve of the one-year anniversary of the Recovery Act. Tennessee is one of the first states to obligate 100% of Recovery Act funds for highway infrastructure. "I appreciate the work of the Department of Transportation and its local and regional partners in reaching this important milestone for the Recovery Act in Tennessee," said Governor Phil Bredesen. "This accomplishment ensures that all of our Recovery Act dollars for highway infrastructure will stay in Tennessee for needed improvements that will continue to boost local economies." According to the Recovery Act, all transportation funds must be obligated by midnight on March 1. States that fail to meet this deadline will lose any unobligated Recovery Act funds. By obligating all funds ahead of schedule, TDOT is now positioned to secure additional funds not utilized by other states should they become available.

http://www.chattanooga.com/articles/article_169175.asp

[Center Line Rumble Strips Are Making A Difference On State Route 126 \(WJHL-TV\)](#)

Two years ago T-DOT used grant money to make safety improvements along State Route 126 in Sullivan County and the rumble strips they installed seem to be making a difference. 126 was the first road in the state of Tennessee to receive rumble strips in the center lane. The strips alert drivers when they drift to far over the lane divider. Kingsport Transportation Planning Manager Bill Albright said it takes time to tell if the strips are improving the safety on 126 but preliminary reports indicate crashes are down along that state route. Kingsport is looking at other roadways in the city to receive the rumble strips that are primarily used on curvy back-roads to enhance safety.

http://www2.tricitie.com/tri/news/local/article/center_line_rumble_strips_are_making_a_difference_on_state_route_126_in_sull/41692/

[Norfolk Southern Gets \\$105M TIGER Grant For Crescent Corridor \(M. Biz Journal\)](#)

The U.S. Department of Transportation awarded a \$105 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant to Norfolk Southern Corp.'s Crescent Corridor Intermodal Freight Program, which includes the planned Fayette County operation. Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the grant gives money to the railroad to improve its rail lines and facilities between the Gulf Coast and the Northeast. The grant enables Norfolk Southern (NYSE: NSC) to begin construction of several previously announced Crescent Corridor projects, while delaying other elements for later public-private partnerships. The Crescent Corridor is an existing 2,500-mile rail network through 13 states from Louisiana to New Jersey that touches 26 percent of the nation's population and 30 percent of the nation's manufacturing output. Norfolk Southern is building a \$129 million intermodal terminal on a 570-acre site in Rossville, Tenn., just east of Memphis. It's expected to open by January 2012. That facility will be able to handle 327,000 containers and trailers annually.

<http://memphis.bizjournals.com/memphis/stories/2010/02/15/daily18.html?surround=lfm>

[\\$105M Grant Includes Memphis Area Rail Hub \(Commercial Appeal\)](#)

A Norfolk Southern intermodal hub in Fayette County and the railroad's Crescent Corridor project are among beneficiaries of \$1.5 billion in federal transportation grants announced Wednesday. The U.S. Department of Transportation said a \$105 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act would support construction of intermodal hubs in the Memphis area and McCalla, Ala., outside Birmingham.

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2010/feb/17/memphis-rail-hub-wins-105-million-federal-grant/>

[Norfolk Southern's Crescent Corridor is Awarded \\$105 Million TIGER Grant From U.S. Department of Transportation \(PR Newswire\)](#)

The Crescent Corridor is an existing 2,500-mile rail network through 13 states from Louisiana to New Jersey that touches 26 percent of the nation's population and 30 percent of the nation's manufacturing output.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/norfolk-southern-s-crescent-corridor-is-awarded-105-million-tiger-grant-from-us-department-of-transportation-84629207.html>

[Lawmakers, TDOT Look At Adding Toll Lanes \(WSMV\)](#)

Lawmakers are looking at an option to save time on morning and evening commutes, but it comes at a price. There's talk of adding toll lanes to some roads. HOT lanes, or high-occupancy toll lanes, mean drivers could essentially pay to bypass congestion on their way to work or home each day. That fee ranges in price depending on the time of day and the amount of congestion. According to TDOT, the average HOT lane toll during peak rush time in other cities is \$1.70. The HOT lanes would be free to busses and those carpooling. <http://www.wsmv.com/money/22583502/detail.html>

[Lack Of Funds Could Delay, Kill Bristol's Downtown Flood Abatement Program \(Tri Cities.Com\)](#)

Mayors of both Bristols said Tuesday this might be the wrong time for the cities to commit substantial spending on a four-part, \$6.4 million plan developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Their comments came at the conclusion of a 90-minute joint work session between the two councils, where no votes were taken. During that meeting, Bristol Tennessee City Manager Jeff Broughton described details of a 2004 federal study that recommends four major steps to reduce the potential impact of flooding on the Twin City's downtown area. But the project's price tag – up from \$4 million five years ago – proved problematic. http://www2.tricities.com/tri/news/local/article/lack_of_funds_could_delay_kill_bristols_downtown_flood_abatement_program/41617/

-Opinion-

[Making Tracks In Nashville \(Commercial Appeal\)](#)

Between Tennessee's two largest cities, however, there is no question that Nashville has taken a lead in one livability marker, the development of modern, efficient mass transit. Metro Nashville already has one commuter train line, running between the city and Wilson County. Mayor Karl Dean's multiyear, multibillion-dollar effort to renovate mass transportation across Nashville's metro area, the Tennessean newspaper reported this week, is winning hearts among business and government leaders. The Transit Alliance, a collection of business interests throughout the area, is meeting regularly to advance the mass transit agenda.

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2010/feb/17/editorial-making-tracks-in-nashville/>

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