

## Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

March 15, 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.

#### **Great Video: Car vs Rockslide (WFIE) VIDEO**

A rock slide on Sunday shut down a part of Highway 129 in east Tennessee -- known as "The Dragon." George Blevins walked outside Sunday morning to get his morning paper. By the time he went inside, he had seen all the news he could handle. "It was a bad bad slide...And it come all the way, you could hear it come across the road and hit the guard rail and everything." Driver Andy Edmonds says he was watching law enforcement and a news crew on the side of highway 129 when the dragon took a bite out of his car. <http://www.wfie.com/Global/story.asp?S=12143958>

#### **TDOT: Rockslide Closes Both Lanes Of 'Dragon' (Associated Press)**

State crews are advising motorists to find an alternate route after closing both the lanes along the section of U.S. Highway 129 known as "The Dragon" following a rockslide Sunday morning, according to the Tennessee Department of Transportation. Several large boulders fell from the mountainside approximately two miles south of Chilhowee Dam in Blount County about 9:30 a.m., said TDOT spokeswoman Yvette Martinez. The rockslide initially blocked both the north- and southbound lanes. The southbound lane was reopened Sunday afternoon, Martinez said. A little more than two hours later, the road was again closed to traffic in both directions. TDOT crews will be on scene to detour traffic and monitor the slide. Signs were being posted to alert motorists to find an alternate route.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/mar/15/state-briefs-march-15/>

#### **R.J. Corman To Use Funds For Rail Work (Leaf Chronicle)**

These funds will enable the rehabilitation of hundreds of miles on five unconnected shortline railroads in Tennessee, Kentucky and West Virginia. Specific investments will include rail, ballast, crossties, grade crossing improvements and bridge work. "Our company will soon conduct a job fair to begin hiring nearly 100 unemployed workers for this project, which we intend to start work on by April," said Noel Rush, vice president of Strategic Planning & Development, in a news release. The improvements will include...

<http://www.theleafchronicle.com/article/20100315/NEWS01/100315007>

#### **Railroad's Suit Claims TN Fuel Tax Exemption Gives Trucks An Unfair Edge (TN/Carey)**

A railroad company has challenged a state tax that it claims gives trucking companies an unfair advantage in the freight hauling business in Tennessee. Trains pay a 7 percent tax on diesel fuel, a charge trucks are exempt from paying under state law. In a federal lawsuit filed last month, Illinois Central Railroad Co. claims the train tax amounts to discrimination against its industry. At stake are millions of dollars the state collects annually from the train tax, which brought in \$11.4 million last year. And the suit's outcome could also impact the economics of the state's freight hauling business, which is dominated by trucks. The Nashville area is a hub for freight traffic, with nearly 300 million tons of building materials, clothes, food and other products passing through every year — mostly on the backs of 18-wheelers, the freight railroad industry's biggest competitor.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100315/BUSINESS01/3150325/Railroad+s+suit+claims+TN+fuel+tax+exemption+gives+trucks+an+unfair+edge>

### **[Plan For Giant Railroad Yard Stirs Opposition \(Associated Press/Smith\)](#)**

The development of Norfolk Southern Corp.'s \$112 million intermodal yard on a former cattle ranch in Fayette County has polarized the community for more than a year. Proponents are excited about the project's economic opportunities, while opponents fear it will ruin their rural community forever. But both sides of the divide have one thing in common: Their objectives rely on time and money, both of which are at a premium. The Norfolk, Va.-based railroad is striving to manage a complex schedule that calls for the 570-acre Memphis Regional Intermodal Terminal to open in early 2012 on the Twin Hills Ranch recently annexed by Rossville. That means fulfilling the requisite environmental permits, preparing the site for construction and completing the immense infrastructure where cargo containers will be transferred between trains and trucks. But the railroad also has funding concerns.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=33020879.story>

### **[Several Invasive Species Finding Way To Southeast \(Times Free-Press/Sohn\)](#)**

Everyone knows about kudzu, the plant that ate the South, but as invasive species go, kudzu may soon be taking a back seat to some other unwelcome and foreign upstarts. Chinese privet, introduced to the United States more than a century ago as a hedge, has long since escaped to strangle vistas in local parks, forests and woodland edges. Run-amok English ivy chokes oaks and poplars as surely as kudzu in some neighborhoods, while scratchy multiflora "pasture" rose from Asia -- once employed by settlers to make living cattle fences -- now creates impenetrably thorny thickets throughout the Cumberland Plateau and North Georgia regions. And a major emerging worry in both Tennessee and Georgia is the much-feared, knife-edged and highly flammable cogongrass. "It's a species that actually has the attention of a lot of different agencies and private landowners," said Terri Hogan, a Stones River National Battlefield ecologist and president of the Tennessee Exotic Pest Plant Council.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2010/mar/13/several-invasive-species-finding-way-to-southeast/>

### **[Service Grows At McGhee Tyson \(Knoxville News Sentinel\)](#)**

Two air carriers announced expanded service from Knoxville's McGhee Tyson Airport. Allegiant Air will begin nonstop service from Knoxville to Myrtle Beach, S.C., on April 22 - its first destination from Knoxville outside Florida. Flights are scheduled for Thursdays and Sundays. AirTran Airways will begin daily service from McGhee Tyson Airport to Orlando International Airport beginning May 4. Meanwhile, the Knoxville Airport Authority has received a \$500,000 federal grant to identify destination cities that would benefit the Knoxville economy. The airport is particularly interested in securing low-fare service to Washington, D.C., officials said.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/mar/15/new-and-expanded/>

### **[Major Runway Construction Coming To Chattanooga's Airport \(Chattanooga.com\)](#)**

Mr. Naylor announced that a \$3.275 million contract agreement had been reached with Talley Construction for the construction of the addition and that a contract had also been agreed to with Allen and Hoshall for \$530,730.00 for design and construction management. Now the airport must wait until Congress signs the Federal Aviation Administration Re-authorization Act for funding to begin construction. Funding for the construction will be as follows: 95 percent federal monies; 2.5 percent from the state of Tennessee; and, 2.5 percent from local coffers. The construction will require the main runway to be shut down for eight consecutive days. All of the regional carriers flying into Chattanooga will be able to use the alternate runway with the exception of Allegiant. However, airport staff have worked with Allegiant to amend its schedule so that there will be no Allegiant flights during that period. During the closure, airport maintenance will re-seal the runway with Gilsonite to strengthen the pavement and then re-mark the runway directional guides. According to Mr. Landguth, this is somewhat akin to resealing a 10-year-old driveway.

[http://www.chattanooga.com/articles/article\\_171118.asp](http://www.chattanooga.com/articles/article_171118.asp)

**-Opinion-**

**[City's Green Initiatives Might Help Part Storm Clouds Over Water Fees \(Times Free Press\)](#)**

But when it rains in the Tennessee Valley's heartland city, it pours -- literally and figuratively. A prime example is the controversy over the city's increase in water quality, or stormwater, fees. In the face of public anger, and with different panels examining the fees, Chattanooga has become stuck in a quagmire. That's why I've started to wonder if the city doesn't need a fresh start on the issue. Chattanooga Mayor Ron Littlefield is onto something when he talks about green solutions. Green infrastructure that keeps some collected rainwater within the city makes more sense than cleaning and redirecting all of it to the Tennessee River.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2010/mar/11/citys-green-initiatives-might-help-part-storm/>

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