

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

March 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.

[Rockslide May Keep Dragon Closed Until July 31 \(News-Sentinel/Letsinger\)](#)

TDOT to let contract Monday for cleanup work on 11-mile stretch The 11-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 129 known as "the Dragon" might not be seeing any thrill-seeking motorcycle riders until July 31, according to the Tennessee Department of Transportation. "The Dragon" is an international favorite with bikers and sport car enthusiasts because of its 318 curves and mountainside route. On Thursday, TDOT announced that it will let an emergency contract on Monday to clean up debris from a March 14 rockslide on the two-lane road. The department has two qualified emergency contractors: Pacific Blasting & Demolition Ltd. and Phillips & Jordan Inc. The cleanup is expected to begin April 5. But it's the July 31 completion date that worries Jody Montgomery, whose wife Sherry owns the Punkin Center Motorcycle Resort. The slide, just south of the highway's junction with the Foothills Parkway, occurred just as business from motorcyclists and thrill-seekers was about to pick up.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/mar/25/rockslide-may-keep-dragon-closed-until-july-31/>

[The Dragon" Closure Worries Businesses \(WATE-TV Knoxville\)](#)

A section of US-129 known as "The Dragon" is closed. TDOT officials say it will be closed until the end of July so crews can clean up a rock slide. Clean up work is expected to begin in early April. Businesses say that will cost Blount and Monroe county millions in lost business this motorcycle season. The Punkin Center Motorcycle Resort makes their money from being located next to the Dragon. "50 feet outside the door here is the main intersection in the United States for motorcycles and sports car drivers," says Jody Montgomery, who helps his wife run the business. He says usually they would be getting ready to sell 5,000 t-shirts a week and welcome guests into their motel. Instead, it's quite the opposite. "We had a group from Sweden flying in their motorcycles and all that. They were going to stay the month of April. Just had to return their stuff because they had to cancel," says Montgomery.

<http://www.wate.com/global/story.asp?s=12207635>

[I-240 Traffic Lanes Reopen; Crew Returns Today For Final Sinkhole Repairs \(CA/Bailey\)](#)

The northbound lanes of Interstate 240 reopened Thursday evening with a rough patch over the sinkhole that stymied traffic for more than a day. By rush hour, crews had filled the 16-foot hole, between Walnut Grove and the exit to go eastbound on Interstate 40, with a layer of asphalt making the lanes passable. They plan to return today between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to put the last smooth surface over the repair, completing the work. Like Thursday's work, however, that could depend on the weather. Despite threats of heavy storms moving into the area Thursday afternoon, enough of the rain stayed away that workers were able to progress on filling the hole. "We got a huge break, a very big break," Nichole Lawrence, spokesperson for the Tennessee Department of Transportation, said of the weather.

http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2010/mar/25/i-240-traffic-lanes-reopen-crew-returns-friday-fin/?partner=yahoo_feeds

[TDOT Road Crews Repair I-240 Sinkhole \(WPTY-TV Memphis\)](#)

Traffic is once again moving smoothly on I-240 westbound in east Memphis. Tennessee Department of Transportation road crews have finished repairing a massive sinkhole between the Walnut Grove exit and the flyover. Traffic backed up throughout the afternoon as road crews filled the sinkhole with asphalt. A crew actually visited the site Wednesday before the sinkhole appeared later that day. "We were called out yesterday to fix what we thought was a pothole, and they did that," explained Bill Hazlerig, an operations specialist supervisor with TDOT. He said a leak in an underground drainage system caused the dirt and pavement to collapse later. People whose cars were damaged by the sinkhole are still looking for answers. "It was scary, it was scary," recalled Joyce Lyles. "We were just talking, my mother and I, and all of a sudden she screamed she said 'there's a pothole.'"

<http://www.myeyewitnessnews.com/news/local/story/TDOT-Road-Crews-Repair-I-240-Sinkhole/ml-pu25NoEiSXx80GslKZQ.csp?rss=59>

[ET Spring Flood Risk May Be Lessened \(Knoxville News-Sentinel/Blackerby\)](#)

Drier-than-usual March will help If weather forecasters at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are on the mark, people in a third of the country might keep a stockpile of sandbags handy in coming months. But Tim Doyle, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Morristown, said a drier-than-usual spell and a fast-diminishing snowpack may go a long way in lessening the potential for any large-scale flooding in East Tennessee this spring. The National Weather Service issued its national spring flood outlook in a briefing earlier this month and placed Knoxville and East Tennessee in the above-average risk category. "We have to go with the official report, but in my opinion, (the spring flood risk) is a little lessened," Doyle said. "I wouldn't say it is any more significant than usual." But two months ago, Doyle said, the prospects of spring flooding in East Tennessee were much likelier.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/mar/25/et-spring-flood-risk-may-be-lessened/>

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