

Tennessee Infrastructure In The News

March 31, 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.

[\\$2 Million Contract Let To Clear Dragon Rock Slide \(Associated Press\)](#)

It will cost Tennessee about \$2 million to remove a rock slide from U.S. 129 and stabilize the mountainside. The Tennessee Department of Transportation let an emergency contract for \$1.99 million to Pacific Blasting Demolition Ltd. on Monday, but the contract has incentives for completing the work earlier than the July 31 deadline. The highway -- known to motorcyclists as the Dragon -- is closed from near Chilowee Lake in the Tennessee Smoky Mountains foothills to the North Carolina state line. Travel between Tennessee and North Carolina has become complicated with slides also closing Interstate 40 near the state line and U.S. 64 in the Ocoee River Gorge. Travel is also hampered by a smaller rock slide on Monday on U.S. 441 in the Smokies. <http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cid=tennessean&sParam=33154285.story>

[State Awards Contract To Clear 'Dragon' \(Knoxville News-Sentinel\)](#)

State officials have let a nearly \$2 million contract to clear the rockslide on U.S. Highway 129 that has closed a section of road popular with motorcyclists called "The Dragon." Pacific Blasting Demolition Ltd. won the contract with a \$1.99 million bid. The other qualified bidder was Phillips and Jordan Inc., which submitted a \$2.65 million bid, according to a release from the Tennessee Department of Transportation. The road was closed March 14 to all traffic because of a rockslide near Chilhowee Dam in Blount County. TDOT estimated the road would be closed until July 31, but is offering incentives to get the route opened sooner. If workers can get the road open by July 1, Pacific Blasting Demolition can collect a total of \$195,000 in incentives based on paying \$6,500 for each day prior to July 31 the work is completed early. Conversely, the company faces daily penalties of \$6,500 for each day beyond July 31 the work is not finished, according to TDOT. <http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/mar/31/state-awards-contract-to-clear-dragon/>

[TDOT Monitors Interstates With Cameras, Radars \(WTVF-TV Nashville\)](#)

There are little boxes lining the interstate that are designed to make drivers' commute as quick as possible. At 70 miles per hour, the strange ornaments on interstate light poles, still manage to stick out. The cameras and radars feed into the Tennessee Department of Transportation's system. They are watching for congestion problems that need solving, and detecting where speeds are slowing to help employees identify problem areas. "We're not concerned with how fast you're going out there. We don't do any legal monitoring whatsoever here. We don't care as long as you're moving, and you get from point A to point B safely. That's all we're concerned with," said TDOT official Ray Hallavant. <http://www.newschannel5.com/global/story.asp?s=12229111>

[Newfound Gap Road Reopens After Rockslide \(Knoxville News-Sentinel\)](#)

Newfound Gap Road between Gatlinburg and Cherokee, N.C., reopened Tuesday morning after being closed overnight because of a rockslide. The slide occurred about 11 a.m. Monday about a mile south of the state line in North Carolina. The road, also designated U.S. Highway 441, reopened at 7 a.m. and a detour is in place to allow two-way traffic through a parking area adjacent to the slide site. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park will keep the detour in place for a couple of weeks while monitoring the stability of the slope above the road, the park service said today. A 15 mph speed limit is in place and motorists are advised to drive cautiously through the area. This is the third recent rockslide inside the park. A rockslide Jan. 25 partially shut down another section of U.S. 441 between Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg for several weeks while an emergency contractor constructed a new retaining wall. <http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/mar/31/newfound-gap-road-reopens-after-rockslide/>

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