

May 24, 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.

**[I-24 Reopens After Sinkhole Repaired \(Associated Press\)](#)**

A stretch of eastbound Interstate 24 between Nashville and Chattanooga has reopened after a massive sinkhole was repaired. Two lanes of the interstate collapsed into the 25-foot-deep sinkhole on Tuesday near the Coffee-Grundy county line. Crews with the Tennessee Department of Transportation had to excavate 35 feet to reach the bottom of the sinkhole and remove unstable material. The area was filled in with more than 5,400 tons of graded solid rock and the interstate was repaved.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100523/NEWS01/5230375/1001/NEWS/I-24+reopens+after+sinkhole+repaired>

**[Rival Cities Snatch Conventioneers \(Tennessean/Sanchez\)](#)**

With Opryland out of commission, tourism business is up for grabs. When convention planner John Sild came to Nashville a few days after the floods to look things over, there was no hot water at his downtown hotel and the worst of the floodwaters had still not receded. Sild was alarmed, but that didn't stop him from rebooking his 1,200-person convention from the flooded Gaylord Opryland Resort to the Nashville Convention Center. "We want to stand with Nashville," said Sild, conference director for CS Week, a conference and trade show on tap this week for those in the water, wastewater and utility industries. "You guys are going through a hard time, and we know that conventions bring money to the town." Nashville convention officials are actively working to keep 200 meetings in town that had been scheduled over the next five months at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, said Butch Spyridon, president and CEO of the Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100523/BUSINESS01/5230341/2221/business/Rival+cities+snatch+conventioneers>

**[State Pauses Sewer Growth \(Columbia Daily Herald\)](#)**

The state has ordered Columbia to cease connecting some homes to the sewer system because of the condition of one of its pumping stations. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation issued the order Friday for the Greenlick Creek pump station. According to a letter sent to the city, the station has been categorized a "chronic overflow" — meaning wastewater has been allowed to flow untreated into the environment. The order means the city cannot connect any homes or businesses to the system until the Greenlick pump station has been repaired. The Greenlick station has overflowed more than five times from September-March, according to the letter. City Manager Paul Boyer Jr. said the city has been self-reporting the overflows as required by the state.

[http://www.columbiadailyherald.com/articles/2010/05/23/top\\_stories/greenlick%20problems.txt](http://www.columbiadailyherald.com/articles/2010/05/23/top_stories/greenlick%20problems.txt)

**[Nashville Won't Pick Up Debris From Recovery Work \(Tennessean/Upchurch\)](#)**

Flood debris and trash are likely to remain on Nashville's streets and in temporary holding spots through mid-June at least. And Metro warns that recovery debris, such as scraps from putting up new drywall or installing floors, cannot be put out for pickup. Monitors with the Federal Emergency Management Agency are riding on trucks and documenting debris with photographs, Frazier said. "FEMA will only reimburse for collection and disposal of flood debris," said Veronica Frazier, head of Metro Beautification of the Public Works Department. "If we go outside those parameters, it will be Metro's expense." Metro has signed contracts with two companies for debris removal that will be about \$9 million. So far, more than 100 trucks from Metro's Public Works department and private contractors it has hired have removed 31,000 tons of flood debris.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100524/NEWS01/5240329/1001/NEWS>

### **[Nashville Flood Crime Not Like New Orleans \(City Paper/Nix\)](#)**

With the battering of floodwaters earlier this month came a vulnerability for those occupied with clean-up efforts, those who were often without a secure roof and walls protecting their possessions. The door was wide open for thieves. Even before the sunshine returned on Monday, May 3, looting was a concern. But while Metro police arrested at least nine on theft charges related to the flood, the worst never materialized. Early reports of looting at the Farmers' Market turned out to be vendors rushing to salvage their stock. Across Rosa Parks Boulevard from the Farmers' Market, it wasn't so much that merchandise was lifted from the store but that it had floated out. As it turns out, unlike the major problem with looting and crime that followed Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Nashville citizens have appeared to weather our storm much like Midwesterners did as floodwaters pushed through Iowa and surrounding states in June 2008. Following that flood, police reported little in the way of flood-related crime.

<http://nashvillecitypaper.com/content/city-news/nashville-flood-crime-not-new-orleans>

### **[FEMA Inspects County Flood Damage; Explains How To Get Help \(M. County Tribune\)](#)**

Two employees of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Marshall County EMA director set out to inspect flood-damaged properties here on Saturday, the county EMA director said that morning. "They're going around to see what they can do to help people," EMA Director Bob Hopkins said from his College Street office. "We've got nine places scattered throughout the county, some in the north end, some at Belfast and other places." In response to a request from Gov. Phil Bredesen for federal assistance to Tennessee because of the deluge three weeks ago, Marshall County was on Wednesday added to a list of 45 counties declared disaster areas. While no decision had been made by 10 a.m. Saturday on whether FEMA would establish a temporary office in Marshall County to help owners of flood ravaged properties, FEMA spokesman Cleo Howell was in Lewisburg Friday afternoon to report the agency is taking steps to help county residents.

<http://www.marshalltribune.com/story/1636973.html>

### **[Massive Flood Buyout In Works \(Tennessean/Cass, Schrade\)](#)**

Homeowners in line for buyouts of their flood-ravaged houses will have to wait at least 10 months before they see a check from the government to purchase their properties. State and local officials are working on a program to clear more than 500 homes and businesses in Davidson County's floodway, the areas along a waterway most prone to damage. Mayor Karl Dean said the city also plans to buy about 2,500 properties in the city's 100-year flood plain — and possibly even some of the 650 in the 500-year flood plain — to the extent it can afford to. The total assessed value of the 478 residential properties in the floodway alone is \$93 million. Based on those numbers, the cost to buy damaged properties in the 100-year flood plain could exceed \$500 million, which would cost Metro at least \$25 million. But whatever shape the buyout program ultimately takes, it will have a lasting impact on development throughout the city and the character of neighborhoods, particularly those along the Cumberland River and its tributaries. Jeremy Heidt, spokesman for the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, said the process will take at least 10 months before property owners see relief — if everything goes smoothly.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100523/NEWS01/5230359>

### **[Flooded Homeowners Face Painful Choice: Rebuild Or Retreat \(Tennessean/Snyder\)](#)**

Homeowners wait to see if they're eligible for buyout Middle Tennessee had to battle floodwaters three weeks ago. Now, thousands of homeowners forced out of their homes are left trying to figure out whether to rebuild or walk away. Some want to sell their homes to the city. Others want to fight to keep their property and are digging into savings to pay for repairs and other expenses that insurance won't cover. Those in flood zones aren't sure if their city will let them rebuild. "We're in limbo," said Diane Sesler, whose Pennington Bend home flooded. "It's very difficult. We don't know anything." She and her husband, David, a computer programmer, worry they can't afford both a monthly mortgage on their damaged home and the hotel bill in an extended-stay hotel, which costs them \$1,700 per month. The Federal Emergency Management Agency capped their housing grant at \$700 a month. The financial mess has left the Seslers — and other homeowners — facing tough choices that threaten to leave them thousands of dollars in the hole as pressure builds to make a decision.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100523/BUSINESS01/5230360/2221/business/Flooded+homeowners+face+painful+choice++rebuild+or+retreat>

### **[TN Flood Responders Learned From Lessons Katrina Taught \(Tennessean/Cousins\)](#)**

General praises flood response Most of the lessons learned through Hurricane Katrina were applied this month during the Middle Tennessee floods, said the military official who was given high praise for coordinating relief efforts on the Gulf Coast. Retired Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré commended the response of Tennessee's National Guard, federal, state and local officials and volunteers who reacted to the record-setting rains and rising waters. He spoke to reporters before Meharry Medical College awarded him an honorary doctor of humane letters at the school's commencement ceremony Saturday. "The city and state, I thought, did a great job in doing the best it could to save lives because that is the first concern," said Honoré, who served as the 33rd commanding general of the U.S. First Army at Fort Gillem, Ga. "I think another lesson people have taken since Katrina is nongovernmental organizations are quicker to respond, particularly faith-based organizations and the Red Cross, United Way and Salvation Army. <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100523/NEWS01/5230377/1001/NEWS/TN+flood+responders+learned+from+lessons+Katrina+taught>

### **[Gaylord May Get Tax Break To Rebuild \(Tennessean/Sanchez\)](#)**

Big corporations, including Gaylord Opryland's parent, could benefit from a state tax break that lawmakers are considering to aid in flood repairs. The measure allows any major facility that was damaged in a federally declared disaster, including the Nashville floods earlier this month, to get a tax break on building materials, equipment, fixtures and the like needed for repairs and restoration. The exemption would only apply, though, if a business makes an investment of at least \$50 million. Gaylord Hotels officials have made early estimates that damage to the grand hotel could run from \$50 million to \$100 million. The building had \$50 million in flood insurance. Only a handful of properties probably would qualify for the exemption, state officials said. "After the floods, I immediately called Gaylord and asked what help they needed," said State Rep. Mike Turner, D-Old Hickory, who represents the part of Nashville where the hotel is located. "They are a great big employer," Turner said. "Anything we can do to get them up and running will be good for everybody." <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100523/BUSINESS01/5230344/2221/business/Gaylord+may+get+tax+break+to+rebuild>

### **[Grant Will Allow Tower At Airport To Be Lowered \(Cleveland Daily Banner\)](#)**

An aeronautics grant was approved Wednesday for Cleveland Municipal Airport to lower a TVA Communications tower and conduct a value appraisal for lowering a cell tower near the runway. Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen announced the \$26,100 federal grant Wednesday in Nashville. "Local airports are vital to the economy and travel system of Tennessee," Bredesen said. "Investing in our airports helps them stay competitive and efficient at meeting the needs of businesses and travelers. I'm pleased to support this investment in the Cleveland Municipal Airport." The grant was made available through the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Division. "This division administers federal and state funding to assist in the location, design, construction and maintenance of Tennessee's diverse public aviation system," reported TDOT Commissioner Gerald Nicely. "We are pleased to continue to support Tennessee's general aviation and commercial airports." [http://www.clevelandbanner.com/view/full\\_story/7549506/article-Grant-will-allow-tower-at-airport-to-be-lowered?instance=homefirstleft](http://www.clevelandbanner.com/view/full_story/7549506/article-Grant-will-allow-tower-at-airport-to-be-lowered?instance=homefirstleft)

### **[State To Inspect Unregulated Dams This Year \(Associated Press\)](#)**

The state will inspect unregulated dams this year, starting with about 70 that could result in deaths if they break, but state conservation officials want legislation giving them authority to inspect and regulate all of the state's 1,200 nonfederal dams. One lawmaker says that legislation is unlikely this year. The Jackson Sun reported Friday that the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation agreed this week to inspect about 500 unregulated dams, starting with about 70 that are considered a high hazard. A high hazard dam rating means people would likely die if the dam fails. The dams are not subject to safety inspections under a farm pond exemption in the 1973 Tennessee Safe Dams Act, meaning they are not open to the public and have fewer than three owners. "Our goal is to assure the public's safety," said Tisha Calabrese-Benton, the department's communications director. "This is a first step. For the department to be able to inspect and regulate all dams would require action by the General Assembly." <http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=33591983.story>

### **[NBC News Profiles Flood Volunteers \(Tennessean/Echegaray\)](#)**

NBC Nightly News correspondent Ron Mott was astounded at the thousands of volunteers who amassed in such a short time to help flood victims in Middle Tennessee. So Mott did a "Making a Difference" segment that features stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Mott's piece airs at 5:30 p.m. Monday on WSMV-Channel 4. "You even had displaced neighbors helping neighbors," said Mott. "Volunteers, not just from Nashville but from way out in the (San Francisco) Bay area coming to help." Mott profiles Middle Tennessee State sophomore Jared McGowan, who was featured in The Tennessean for his volunteer work, Hendersonville students who stepped up to help and Hands on Nashville, which organized volunteer efforts. "They did so much work in so little time," Mott said. <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100522/NEWS01/5220347/1001/news/NBC+News+profiles+flood+volunteers>

### **[Volunteer State Rises To Flood Crisis \(Knoxville News-Sentinel/Poe\)](#)**

Red Cross workers rush local relief efforts to victims In the wake of recent flooding that devastated parts of Tennessee, Volunteer State residents set Red Cross records for community involvement. Of the 3,100 Red Cross volunteers in Tennessee, 71 percent are working in their own communities, said spokeswoman Margaret Sanner. The Red Cross usually expects only 50 percent, she added. The Mid-South Chapter of The American Red Cross has had at least 125 locals volunteer since a severe storm swept through the Mid-South on May 1, causing unprecedented flash flooding and breaking levees in Millington. More than 250 Red Cross volunteers, local and national, are working in the Mid-South now. Jerry Fritts, a 63-year-old retired truck driver from Cordova, began volunteering about two weeks ago. Since then, he has managed the Red Cross shelter at the First Baptist Church in Millington for almost a week. Seeing people who had lost everything "touched me," Fritts said. <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2010/may/22/volunteer-state-rises-to-crisis/>

### **[Flood Victims Wait For Rebuilding Decision \(WSMV-TV Nashville\)](#)**

Who Can Rebuild Depends On Flood Maps, Damage Next week will be a critical time for people in Nashville who are waiting to find out if they can rebuild their flood-damaged houses. Metro is working with FEMA and TEMA on a possible buy-out program for badly damaged houses in flood-prone areas. Chris Fraker and his fiancé Jennifer Gaskins hope to be able to rebuild their home in the Sheffield subdivision in Bellevue. "From what I'm being told by the contractors, we should be able to," Fraker said. Jennifer Gaskins took the first important step Friday -- visiting the Metro Codes and storm water offices at the Howard Office Building. She learned that if repairing the damage will cost less than 50 percent of the appraised value of the house, they are likely to get a building permit. "Very good news, yes," Gaskins said. Rebuilding depends on whether you're in a flood plain or a flood way, and how much damage was done.

<http://www.wsmv.com/news/23640776/detail.html>

### **[Senators Meet Flood Victims In Millington \(Weakley County Press\)](#)**

U.S. Sens. Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker were in Shelby County Monday for a firsthand look at recovery efforts following the devastating flooding earlier this month. The senators toured parts of Millington, led by Millington Mayor Richard Hodges and Interim Shelby County Mayor Joe Ford, and then received a briefing from state officials as well as TEMA (Tennessee Emergency Management Agency) and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) representatives, including Tennessee Transportation Commissioner Gerald Nicely, TEMA Director James Bassham and FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Gracia Szczech. "Senator Corker and I, along with Tennessee's House members, have asked the Congress to do what it can to recognize that this has been the largest natural disaster in the U.S. since President Obama took office," Alexander said. "The flooding didn't make as much news as some other recent stories, because Tennesseans were helping each other and cleaning up instead of looting and complaining."

<http://www.nwtntoday.com/news.php?viewStory=41305>

### **[TVA Reopening Emory River, Near Site of Ash Spill \(WPLN-Radio Nashville\)](#)**

Next weekend the Tennessee Valley Authority will reopen several miles of the Emory River that have been closed since 2008. That's when a storage pond burst at the TVA's Kingston Fossil Plant, near Knoxville, spilling millions of tons of coal ash into the river and nearby countryside. After working almost around-the-clock for a year to clean up the Emory, TVA is pulling dredges, barges, and miles of pipe out, and allowing boaters, swimmers and water-skiers back in. Ash from the spill contains dangerous heavy metals like arsenic, but Environmental Protection Agency manager Craig Zeller says the water is safe, because those metals aren't dissolving out. Zeller says scientists have studied the risk of exposure, even for people who visit the river every day for months, or accidentally eat some of the ash. "We've actually done all the calculations with regard to concentrations in the water using very conservative exposure assessments.

<http://wpln.org/?p=17909>

### **[Tennessee Construction Slipped In April \(Nashville Business Journal\)](#)**

The total value of contracts awarded for future construction in Tennessee dipped in April, according to data released today by McGraw-Hill Construction. According to McGraw-Hill, \$510.9 million worth of construction projects were awarded last month, compared to \$664.7 worth of contracts in April 2009, a 23 percent decrease. Nonresidential construction — including commercial, manufacturing, educational projects, etc. — dropped by 55 percent, to \$132.8 million, down from \$297 million in April 2009. Nonbuilding construction — for infrastructure projects like roads, bridges, utilities, etc. — dropped 24 percent, to \$94.7 million, down from \$125 million in April 2009. Residential construction provided a bright spot, however, increasing 17 percent.

<http://nashville.bizjournals.com/nashville/stories/2010/05/17/daily43.html?surround=fn>

### **[National Coal Sells Tennessee Line To R.J. Corman \(ProgressiveRailroading.com\)](#)**

National Coal Corp. subsidiary NC Railroad Inc. recently sold its 42-mile line between Oneida and Devonia, Tenn., to [R.J. Corman Railroad Property L.L.C.](#) for about \$3 million. The rail line previously provided National Coal access to coal reserves on the New River Tract and a preparation plant in Devonia, which recently was sold through a separate transaction. The line sale includes all track, switches, crossings, bridges and trestles, according to National Coal. The company's continuing operations in Tennessee include coal mineral and mining rights to about 57,000 acres, and mining complexes that include one active underground and one active surface mine. National Coal plans to continue to own and operate one preparation plant and one unit train loading facility served by Norfolk Southern Railway.

<http://www.progressiverailroading.com/news/article.asp?id=23369>

## **Across the State Line**

### **[Georgia Lawmakers Break Transportation Gridlock \(Stateline\)](#)**

For a state whose capital city of Atlanta suffers from some of the nation's worst traffic congestion, Georgia has had a difficult time raising funds for highways and transit. Regional rivalries, a pervading anti-tax atmosphere and even personality conflicts among lawmakers all have conspired to keep any kind of ambitious transportation initiative tied up in gridlock. This year, however, Georgia legislators finally struck a deal, one that Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed has said will result in "the biggest capital investment in the last 50 years in the state of Georgia." The plan has a few more hurdles to clear, however. Governor Sonny Perdue still has to sign the bill into law. If he does, it will be at least three more years before new tax dollars begin funding projects aimed at unclogging highways, building up rail and bus capacity or modernizing airports.

<http://www.stateline.org/live/details/story?contentId=486650>

## **Opinion**

### **[Floods And Conventions \(Chattanooga Times Free-Press\)](#)**

Nashville suffered more than \$1.9 billion in damage to more than 11,000 privately owned structures in the wake of flooding earlier this month. Among the most well-known of those damaged structures is the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, which is unlikely to reopen before mid-fall. The temporary closure of Tennessee's largest hotel and one its most popular convention sites is a heavy blow to the city's tourism industry and to its economy.

Nashville's loss, however, could prove to be beneficial to Chattanooga, Memphis and Knoxville. Convention officials in each of those cities are working quietly to bring meetings, conferences and trade shows displaced by the flooding and its aftermath to their communities. The efforts are properly low-key, more an offer to help a sister city in distress than to work aggressively against it. "We're offering assistance as much as we can. We'd like to keep groups in Tennessee," said Steve Genovesi, sales and marketing director of the Chattanooga Convention and Visitors Bureau.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2010/may/24/5-24-t1-floods-and-conventions/?opiniontimes>

### **[Fact-Finding Should Not Become Blame Game \(Tennessean\)](#)**

It's been three weeks now since flash flooding hit the Nashville area and, unfortunately, the Army Corps of Engineers still finds itself having to defend the way it handled water management and public-notice decisions. Corps officials acknowledged during a press conference Thursday that water appeared to have knocked out communications that supplied Internet and e-mail service to the Corps' office at Old Hickory Dam for more than 10 hours on May 2. But they said their decisions about when and how to manage the Cumberland River saved Nashville from a more damaging flood. Immediately after the flooding occurred, U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander called for hearings on whether the Corps could have prevented some of the destruction through better communication about release of water from Old Hickory and Percy Priest dams. Not long afterward, U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper said the flood might have been a "manmade disaster" as well as a natural one. "Was the Corps at fault, or was anyone at fault?" he asked May 18 at a Rotary Club of Nashville meeting.

<http://blogs.tennessean.com/opinion/2010/05/23/corps-on-heels-after-flood-fact-finding-should-not-become-blame-game/>

### **[Dams Have Greatly Reduced Floods \(Tennessean\)](#)**

There seems to be a need for someone to blame for the suffering of Middle Tennesseans from unprecedented flooding May 1–2. The temptation to point the finger at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should be resisted. As single daily events, rainfall on May 1 and 2 were extraordinary but not unprecedented for this region. What is unprecedented is that Nashville received this sort of rainfall in two consecutive days: 6.32 inches on May 1 and 7.25 inches on May 2. The National Weather Service now estimates that this was a "1,000-year" event for 48-hour rainfall. Since 1871, there have been only 20 days in which rainfall exceeded 4 inches. This meant that the ground was saturated with water and had no capacity to absorb the rain that fell, especially on the second day. The Corps manages dams on the Cumberland River and tributaries that support a variety of uses that are sometimes at cross-purposes. These include recreation, navigation, hydroelectric power generation and flood control. The Corps uses the best available weather forecasts and operates in anticipation of events facing our region, with safety and potential property damage as a primary concern. Flood control takes high priority.

<http://blogs.tennessean.com/opinion/2010/05/23/dams-have-greatly-reduced-floods/>

### **[Info On Releases Would Be Confusing \(Tennessean\)](#)**

The record rainfall and devastating flooding of May 1–3 claimed lives and destroyed homes and businesses throughout Middle Tennessee and southern Kentucky. I empathize with all the victims of this natural disaster. The fact is that our region saw more rainfall the weekend of May 1-2 than ever before. Records were set and shattered. With the amount of rain that fell over uncontrolled parts of the Cumberland River Basin, flooding was inevitable. This was a natural disaster of record proportions, but our dams did their job. They held back as much water as possible and controlled releases of water that actually lessened the crest of the river through Nashville. I believe that our water managers did an excellent job in an extremely tough situation. They were truly in a flood fight, operating the dams, exchanging data with the National Weather Service, doing media interviews and answering public inquiries. This was a very chaotic situation, but I am proud of the dedication they exhibited and the expertise they brought to the table during this historic event. This event was unlike anything any of us has ever seen, but I am confident that we did the best we could given the circumstances.

<http://blogs.tennessean.com/opinion/2010/05/23/info-on-releases-would-be-confusing/>

### **[Weather Service Provided Continual Communication \(Tennessean\)](#)**

The flood of 2010 is now behind us, but the recovery and rebuilding probably will go on for some months as Middle Tennesseans clean up from what is being called a 500– to 1,000-year flood. Indeed, the water has mostly receded, but some feel that there was no warning and no communication between government agencies. As a National Weather Service meteorologist who worked that event, let me put some of these questions to rest. On April 27, the NWS mentioned in its Hazardous Weather Outlook that "An active weather period is possible Saturday through Monday with strong thunderstorms and heavy rainfall." Early on April 29, we issued a Flood Potential Outlook, highlighting that "the primary threat will be flash flooding, including rapid flooding of small creeks and streams. Flooding of larger rivers will be possible, especially if multiple rounds of heavy rain occur over a single river basin." At 3:26 p.m. on April 30, the NWS issued a flash flood watch for 30 counties, including Davidson County, to cover Saturday morning through Monday morning. This was done 15 hours in advance of any flooding. A subsequent flash flood watch issued at 8:09 a.m. May 1 warned our users to "expect 2 to 4 inches of rainfall with local amounts to 8 inches."

<http://blogs.tennessean.com/opinion/2010/05/23/weather-service-provided-continual-communication/>

### **[Review Accuracy Of Data Provided \(Tennessean\)](#)**

It is natural after a flooding disaster to question why it happened and look for people to blame. We're hearing discussions about lawsuits, investigations into actions by the Corps of Engineers, and proposals for flood-lain legislation. However, as our city and its residents recover, we need to understand what happened and determine if it could happen again. We also need to know how we can be better prepared. When the Corps of Engineers determines the flood elevation of rivers and streams, it uses historical data that indicates a depth of rainfall over a given period of time. For our area, a 100-year storm event is based upon 7.5 inches of rainfall occurring within 24 hours. On May 1–2, we had the equivalent of two consecutive 100-year storms. Rainfall totals in the area ranged from 14 inches to over 20 inches in 48 hours. Rainfall of this magnitude created flooding that greatly exceeded 100-year flood levels predicted by the Corps of Engineers. The flooding we experienced was most likely a 500-year-event storm. The Cumberland River exceeded the predicted 100-year flood level by 3–4 feet and the Harpeth River exceeded it by over 8 feet.

<http://blogs.tennessean.com/opinion/2010/05/23/review-accuracy-of-data-provided/>

### **[Dam Rules Must Be Updated, Stronger \(Jackson Sun\)](#)**

We are encouraged to see the state of Tennessee taking action to inspect a number of unregulated dams that could endanger the public if they fail. Thanks must go to state Sen. Roy Herron for quickly making the issue a top priority and being at the table for discussions on how to get the dams inspected. Efforts of the state and Herron will help protect an unwary public from flooding. An investigative report by The Jackson Sun revealed a little known anomaly involving nonfederel dams in Tennessee. It was discovered that the law allows dams to be reclassified as farm ponds after their normal design life. These ponds are no longer inspected by the state, which would normally advise dam owners or dam authorities of deficiencies and require them to be brought up to a safe standard. But some of the dams in question are holding back lakes that are part of the Tennessee watershed system. A dam failure in many of these instances could endanger public safety and cause severe damage to property.

<http://www.jacksonsun.com/article/20100523/OPINION01/5230317/1014/OPINION/Dam-rules-must-be-updated--stronger>

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