

May 25, 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.

**[Checks For Flooded Tenn. Homes To Take 10 Months \(Associated Press\)](#)**

State and local officials are working to clear homes and businesses in Nashville's floodway, but homeowners will have to wait at least 10 months before getting a check. The Tennessean reported that more than 500 properties are located in the city's floodway, the area along a waterway most prone to damage. Mayor Karl Dean has said the city also plans to buy about 2,500 properties that are inside the city's 100-year flood plain. There are about 650 homes in the 500-year flood plain that could also be purchased if the city can afford it. Jeremy Heidt, spokesman for the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, said the process takes at least 10 months if everything goes smoothly. The properties are purchased with a combination of federal, state and local money. The typical formula involves 75 percent federal money, 12.5 percent state and 12.5 percent local, so local governments have to decide whether they can afford to match.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=33611759.story>

**[Storm Causes Damage In Weakley Co. \(Jackson Sun\)](#)**

Stormy weather in Martin knocked out power and caused some businesses to be flooded briefly Monday. Wind and possible lightning that struck a vacant building around 11:30 a.m. Monday caused a wall to fall onto a light pole, creating a domino effect that ended up breaking five other utility poles, according to Charles Freeman, a battalion chief for the Martin Fire Department. The light pole was attached to two transformers that burned out during the crash, leaving some residents without power, he said. Also, water backed up inside about a half-dozen Martin businesses after the quick rain storm prevented the storm drains from carrying it off, Freeman said. Court dates were reset for several defendants held on murder charges after they appeared before a judge via video conference on Monday. Keith Lamar Rose, 20, is scheduled to appear in court on June 21 but does not have a trial date set.

<http://www.jacksonsun.com/article/20100525/NEWS01/5250312/1002/Storm-causes-damage-in-Weakley-Co.>

**[TN Flood Victims Will Get Property Tax Break \(Tennessean/Sisk\)](#)**

Flood victims in Davidson County could get as much as \$22.5 million in breaks on property taxes, and residents of other counties may qualify for millions of dollars more, under a bill approved Monday. State lawmakers have voted to let county property assessors revalue properties damaged by this month's flood, regardless of when owners decide to rebuild — a break that in Davidson County alone could affect 10,500 properties. The measure is one of several that lawmakers have weighed or are weighing to give flood victims a tax break and possibly also a state grant to help them rebuild. "If you've got a home that was originally appraised for \$120,000 and now the property is only worth \$40,000, it doesn't make sense to pay property taxes on \$120,000," said Rep. Mike Turner, D-Old Hickory. "A couple of thousand dollars may not put you back whole, but it'll help you a little bit." House lawmakers passed the property tax break unanimously Monday, and the Senate approved the measure last week. A local city or county council also would have to approve the break by a two-thirds majority for it to go into effect.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100525/NEWS0201/5250354/1001/news/TN+flood+victims+will+get+property+tax+break>

**[House Calls For Investigation Into Water Releases \(Tennessean/Sisk\)](#)**

The state House of Representatives voted unanimously Monday to approve a resolution that calls for a congressional investigation into water releases by the Army Corps of Engineers before and during this month's flood. Rep. Mike Turner, D-Old Hickory, said the resolution urges Tennessee's congressional delegation to support an investigation that would shed light on whether water releases exacerbated flooding in some parts of Middle Tennessee. U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper, D-Nashville, and Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., have already called for an investigation.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100525/NEWS0201/5250355/1009/news>

### **[FEMA Inspectors Assess Storm Damage In Home \(Jackson Sun\)](#)**

Vertical bands of black mold striped the walls of the den from the middle to the top of the cathedral ceiling. The ceiling in the den and two bedrooms are sagged and cracked where rainwater gushed through the roof of Doris Howard's home on Preston Street on May 1. Federal Emergency Management Agency inspectors estimated last week that rains that caused flooding throughout West Tennessee ruined about 300 square feet of Howard's home. "The water came in through the roof, which caused problems with the ceiling," said Ken Walsh, a FEMA field representative. "Then that water caused problems with the carpet and walls." Walsh, William Ghiz and Marvin Davis were at Howard's home doing a second FEMA inspection last week. The team wanted to make sure the original inspectors did not miss any damage or cited damage not caused by the May 1 rain. They gave Howard a chance to make additional claims found after the original inspection.

<http://www.jacksonsun.com/article/20100525/NEWS01/5250309/1002/FEMA-inspectors-assess-storm-damage-in-home>

### **[Home Buyouts Split Flood Victims – Some Welcome Offer, Others Reject It \(WPLN\)](#)**

Nashville officials have pushed pause on the rebuilding effort in some areas that were heavily damaged in this month's flooding. Of the 11,000 parcels affected, 3,000 are in the floodplain. More than 500 homes and businesses are in what's called a floodway – places that don't just flood. They flow. Metro Water director Scott Potter wants those buildings demolished. As WPLN's Blake Farmer reports, the potential of a buyout from the city is welcome news for some, and for others – a reason to fight.

<http://wpln.org/?p=17936>

### **[Mounting Flood Debris Piles Up \(WPLN-Radio Nashville\)](#)**

Metro officials say the piles of flood debris that are scattered throughout the city should be permanently gone by mid-June. Until then, the insulation, drywall and ruined furniture are being picked up from neighborhoods and dumped at one of three temporary staging sites – Edwin Warner park, Rhodes soccer complex in MetroCenter, or near the airport off Pulley Road. Once it's dumped, giant excavators claw through the debris to find tires and appliances because those items can't go to the county's regular landfills. In MetroCenter, South Carolina-based Cherokee Contracting is handling the sorting process. As a crane drops a new load of debris that includes a large, mud-caked sofa, supervisor Mike Greene says his crew of five has a hard time sorting through some of the material. "You know that that's someone's couch or that's someone's sheetrock. But it's different when you're on top of the pile and you see pictures of families. You see their memories."

<http://wpln.org/?p=17930>

### **[Flood Causes Record Unemployment Spike \(WSMV-TV Nashville\)](#)**

4,000 Across Tennessee Apply For Unemployment The flood is now the worst disaster in Tennessee history and has put a record number of people out of work. According to the Tennessee Department of Labor, 1,426 people in Davidson County have filed for Disaster Unemployment Assistance since May 10. When Opry Mills was flooded out, Mari Bennett was one of 3,000 mall employees suddenly without a job; however, when she went searching for help, she was shocked at what she was told. "They say we are not part of this disaster," Bennett said. "You just get so frustrated, and you go, 'are you kidding me?'" Though Bennett didn't lose her home, she said she's fearful she could because of the critical cut in income. Bennett said, "I'm good this month, but I don't know about next month. I basically went from averaging \$700-800 a week to \$800 a month."

<http://www.wsmv.com/money/23661917/detail.html>

### **[Edgemoor Road Bridge Repairs Will Lead To Lane Closure \(The Oak Ridger\)](#)**

In October 2009, the Department of Transportation awarded a \$1.6 million contract to Mid-State Construction to rehabilitate the existing bridge over the Clinch River and CSX Railroad along SR-170, which is adjacent to TVA's Bull Run Steam Plant. Since January, crews have been painting the bridge using barges below the structure to avoid any interference with traffic. The repair work to the bridge deck, which required TDOT to reduce the bridge to one lane, is estimated to be completed by July 2. Crews will then repaint the bridge, which should be completed by the fall.

<http://www.oakridger.com/news/x1560875333/Edgemoor-Road-bridge-repairs-will-lead-to-lane-closure>

###