

May 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.

[Bredesen Requests Farm Assistance For 13 Counties \(WRCB-TV Chattanooga\)](#)

Governor Phil Bredesen has requested a Secretarial designation of natural disaster for agriculture for 13 counties across middle and west Tennessee as a result of the historic rainfall and devastating floods that began April 30. Bredesen made the request this week in a letter to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. The 13 counties include: Benton, Chester, Dickson, Fayette, Hardeman, Hickman, Humphreys, Lauderdale, Lewis, Maury, McNairy, Perry and Stewart. "A Secretarial disaster designation will help bring more federal assistance to farmers who experienced significant crop and livestock losses and damage to farm infrastructure as a result of the storms and flooding," said Bredesen. "I'm glad to make this request and hope it will help lessen the impact to our farmers and rural communities hit hard by this catastrophe." A Secretarial disaster designation would make farmers in designated and adjoining counties eligible to apply for supplemental farm payments through their local USDA Farm Service Agency.

<http://www.wrcbtv.com/Global/story.asp?S=12538647>

[Thirteen Counties Could Get Federal Farm Assistance \(WPLN-Radio Nashville\)](#)

Members of the state's congressional delegation are calling for several counties in Middle and West Tennessee to receive federal farm aid in the wake of this month's flooding. Senator Lamar Alexander says farmers in 13 counties could get relief. "This is in addition to the request that the governor has made for disaster declaration from the president for 52 counties. This helps farmers who have suffered crop losses and damage to farm equipment and their buildings." Alexander says the flood was particularly severe for farmers who had just finished planting for spring. Farmers have reported damage to some 40 percent of the state's corn crop and 20 percent of winter wheat. The counties include Benton, Chester, Dickson, Fayette, Hardeman, Hickman, Humphreys, Lauderdale, Lewis, Maury, McNairy, Perry and Stewart.

<http://wpln.org/?p=17995>

[Henry, Campbell Counties Approved For Disaster Relief \(WTVF-TV Nashville\)](#)

Campbell and Henry counties have been added to the list of Tennessee counties that qualify for federal help, bringing the total number of counties to 48. The designation means local governments in both counties can get federal help with everything from debris removal to restoring damaged public facilities. Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen originally asked President Barack Obama to declare 52 counties federal disaster areas following the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding that struck the state May 1-2. Tennessee suffered 23 confirmed fatalities as a result of the extreme weather and flooding. Federal Emergency Management Agency officials set up several local disaster recovery centers in the area to help with relief efforts. The president's disaster declaration makes federal funding available to affected individuals in the authorized counties including both individual and public assistance.

<http://www.newschannel5.com/Global/story.asp?S=12538681>

[FEMA Help Is Available To Giles County \(WKSR-Radio Pulaski\)](#)

In response to a request from Gov. Phil Bredesen for federal assistance to Tennessee because of the heavy rains three weeks ago, Giles County was added to a list of 45 counties declared disaster areas. FEMA spokesman Cleo Howell was in Pulaski Friday afternoon to report the agency is taking steps to help county residents. "We really encourage people to apply," Howell said Friday afternoon during an interview with WKSR. "Anybody who suffered damage from the storm should apply," Howell said. He directed readers to FEMA's web site: fema.gov with links to disaster declarations and the agency's toll-free phone number: 1-800-621-3362. According to numbers supplied by the Giles County Highway Department, rains did an estimated \$100-\$150,000 in damage to Giles County roadways.

<http://www.wksr.com/wksr.php?rfc=src/article.html&id=24249>

[Last State Building Opens After Flooding \(WKRN\) Video](http://www.wkcr.com/global/Category.asp?c=175880&clipId=4816044&topVideoCatNo=126088&autoStart=true)

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[State Workers Renter Offices After Flood \(WSMV\) Video](http://www.wsmv.com/video/23675901/index.html)

<http://www.wsmv.com/video/23675901/index.html>

[CSX Reopens Flood Damaged Memphis-Nashville Line \(WPLN-Radio Nashville\)](http://wpln.org/?p=17992)

CSX Transportation is re-opening its rail line from Memphis to Nashville ahead of schedule after closing down because of flood damage. Some rails washed out. Rushing water twisted two bridges spanning the Harpeth River. CSX thought it would be mid-June before service could resume on the 200-mile line connecting Tennessee's two largest cities. Company officials say employees worked long hours to get back on track as shipments had to be rerouted or delayed. The state's agriculture sector – which uses CSX to transport grain and supplies – has been particularly hard hit. The company has also announced an effort to aid in the financial pinch many counties now face. Spokesman Gary Sease says the company will pre-pay property taxes that aren't due until next year.

<http://wpln.org/?p=17992>

[CSX To Re-Open Nashville-To-Memphis Line \(Nashville Business Journal\)](http://nashville.bizjournals.com/nashville/stories/2010/05/24/daily12.html?surround=fn)

CSX's rail line between Nashville and Memphis is re-opening today, the company announced. Much of the 200-mile line, which eventually connects to Chicago, runs along or near the Harpeth River, which washed out much of the line when it rose above its banks earlier this month. CSX has originally said it would take up to six weeks — into mid-June — to restore the line. Instead, the line will resume operations today at 5 p.m. "This is a terrific accomplishment by the CSX team," vice president and chief operating officer David Brown said in a news release. "Despite the fact that many of our employees were directly affected by this tragic flooding, they brought an extraordinary focus to re-opening the line and resuming service to our customers and the communities in that stricken area."

<http://nashville.bizjournals.com/nashville/stories/2010/05/24/daily12.html?surround=fn>

[Flood Cost Continue To Add Up In Clarksville \(Leaf Chronicle\)](http://www.theleafchronicle.com/article/20100526/NEWS01/5260326/1002/Flood-cost-continue-to-add-up-in-Clarksville)

Street Department spent more than \$125,000 on materials so far. The big-ticket items so far for the city's Street Department regarding flood recovery is \$55,666 for traffic light controllers at four Riverside Drive intersections. The controllers were listed among more than \$125,000 for materials to clean up after massive flooding earlier this month. Street Department Director David Shepherd presented the running list and total to the City Council's Street Committee during its Tuesday meeting. "I don't think it's that bad, considering," said Councilman Bill Summers, a committee member. Shepherd noted that the figure does not include labor and equipment costs, as well as overtime, which has accrued to more than \$29,000. Another major expense for the department is more than \$28,000 in landfill fees for dumping flood debris. Shepherd told committee members the money would be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

<http://www.theleafchronicle.com/article/20100526/NEWS01/5260326/1002/Flood-cost-continue-to-add-up-in-Clarksville>

[Middle Tennessee Transit Plan Envisions Light Rail, Bus Lines \(Tennessean/Cass\)](http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100526/NEWS0202/5260378/1001/news/Middle+Tennessee+transit+plan+envi+sions+light+rail++bus+lines)

Light rail or bus rapid transit lines should connect Nashville to Franklin, Gallatin and Murfreesboro in 25 years, according to a new vision of mass transit's role in Middle Tennessee. The vision, developed by the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, looks at what the 10-county region would need to do to move around an additional 900,000 people or more by 2035. MPO will formally unveil it — along with a draft of a plan to achieve it — at a meeting of 500 public and private sector leaders today. "If you can get 10 percent of the people who normally drive by themselves to use transit 50 percent of the time — or whatever combination of percentages you want — you're effectively reducing the burden on the roadway system," the organization's executive director, Michael Skipper, told The Tennessean's editorial board Tuesday. "We're not talking about getting everybody out of their cars. We're talking about getting a percentage of the population that would be willing to if there was an attractive product out there for them."

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100526/NEWS0202/5260378/1001/news/Middle+Tennessee+transit+plan+envi+sions+light+rail++bus+lines>

[HOV Lane Restrictions To Be Reinstated \(Examiner.Com\)](http://www.examiner.com/x-49922-Nashville-Traffic-News-Examiner~y2010m5d25-HOV-lane-restrictions-to-be-reinstated)

The Tennessee Department of Transportation will be reinstating High Occupancy Vehicle (H.O.V.) lane restrictions on Tuesday, June 1, 2010. Limited public transportation as well as road closures after the flood led to higher traffic volume on the interstates; therefore, TDOT lifted restrictions on all H.O.V. lanes in and around the Nashville area.

<http://www.examiner.com/x-49922-Nashville-Traffic-News-Examiner~y2010m5d25-HOV-lane-restrictions-to-be-reinstated>

[House Calls For Investigation Into Water Releases \(The Tennessean\)](#)

The state House of Representatives voted unanimously Monday to approve a resolution that calls for a congressional investigation into water releases by the ...

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100525/NEWS0201/5250355/-1/nsitemapXML/House-calls-for-investigation-into-water-releases>

Opinion

[Transportation System's Future Needs To Be Developed Today \(TN\)](#)

If there is a lesson to be learned from the devastating floods, it's that our region is at its best when we pull together as a community. And just as we have pulled together as a community to address the natural disaster, we must do the same if we're going to solve our region's transportation issues. In the coming weeks, there will be a number of public hearings for community input on the Nashville Area MPO 2035 Regional Transportation Plan that will be unveiled at the upcoming "Convening the Region Summit." The plan will help us establish regional goals, policies and objectives for our multi-modal transportation system over the next 25 years. It will help us support the economic growth and prosperity goals of communities while tackling future congestion, safety and security travel concerns and working to reduce urban sprawl. All of us involved with Cumberland Region Tomorrow will be asking you to take part in developing a regional vision for the future of our transportation system.

<http://blogs.tennessean.com/opinion/2010/05/26/transportation-system%E2%80%99s-future-needs-to-be-developed-today/>

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