

June 2, 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.

[Disaster Unemployment to Double Initial Predictions \(WPLN-Radio Nashville\)](#)

The number of people who are getting unemployment checks because of the recent flooding is now expected to double original projections. Disaster unemployment extends the \$275-a-week checks to people who typically aren't eligible. Labor Department spokesman Jeff Hentschel says more than 340 are already receiving checks and as many as 400 are now expected to qualify – twice the initial projections. "They're not employees of a company, so they tend to be people like farmers, sole proprietors, business partners. These are people who are generally not covered by unemployment insurance." People who've been around the state's Labor Department for decades say they've never handled a disaster like the recent flooding. Hentschel says predicting how many might need unemployment checks was impossible. "We really have been surprised because historically we've dealt with very isolated incidents, when you're talking about some of the tornadoes we've had in past years have hit very isolated areas. And we're looking at the impact of half the state."

<http://wpln.org/?p=17993>

[TDOT Flood Repairs Ongoing \(WKRN-TV Nashville\)](#)

The state has already spent millions to repair roads and bridges damaged by last month's flood and there is still a long way to go, according to the Tennessee Department of Transportation. In Hickman County, several roads remain closed and bridges still in need major repairs. Due to the extreme amount of rain that fell on May 1 and May 2, half of State Route 50, which connects Interstate 40 to Interstate 65, collapsed down the hill. TDOT spokesperson BJ Doughty said the project is one of about 20 projects still left to be completed across the region. "You got a county that was hit hard, a lot of personal loss in that county and they're also dealing with transportation issues," Doughty said of the county about 60 miles west of Nashville. Jim Thomas knows exactly what kind of a hardship it has been. His driveway is just a few feet from the impassable road.

<http://www.wkrn.com/global/story.asp?s=12576842>

[Nashville Water Plant Repaired After Flooding \(Associated Press\)](#)

One of the Nashville water treatment plants that flooded during record rains a month ago has been repaired and is operating again. The city announced Tuesday that the K. R. Harrington plant suffered substantial damage during the flooding and the total cost of repairs is estimated at \$42 million. The water destroyed the electrical systems and computer monitoring system, flooded pumps and motors and contaminated basins and storage wells. After the flooding shut down the plant, officials asked residents to cut their water consumption in half because the city had only one other water treatment plant. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation gave authorization to operate the plant after extensive sampling.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=33680973.story>

[Nashville's Flood-Damaged Water Treatment Plant Is Operating Again \(TN/Rau\)](#)

Calling it a sign that things are returning to normal for flood-ravaged Nashville, Mayor Karl Dean announced Tuesday that the K.R. Harrington Water Treatment Plant is operating again after being submerged under floodwaters a month ago. As a result, Davidson County residents can end their monthlong conservation efforts, and businesses such as car washes can return to normal operation. At one point in the days after the May 1-2 flooding, the city's water reserves dipped to about one-third of normal levels, and the possibility of having to switch to bottled water hung in the air. "This is a big step forward in our recovery efforts," Dean said at a news conference held at the facility. "It's a sign that we are returning to normal as a city." The K.R. Harrington plant is surrounded by the Cumberland and Stones rivers. It was submerged under water a month ago and suffered \$42 million worth of damages as a result. The city's Water Services said previously that it could see total damage costs to all of its operation of approximately \$200 million.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100602/NEWS0202/6020362/Nashville+s+flood-damaged+water+treatment+plant+is+operating+again>

[Water Conservation Mandate Lifted, K.R. Harrington Plant Running Again \(WPLN\)](#)

An order to conserve drinking water in Davidson County has been lifted as of Monday. Metro Water Services has repaired the flooded K.R. Harrington treatment plant, which is now operating at half capacity. Last month's flooding submerged one of Nashville's two water treatment plants and resulted in an order for residents to curb usage by half. Water department employees have worked round the clock for four weeks, with at least one manager putting in a 48-hour shift. Metro Water Services director Scott Potter says completion of repairs shouldn't be a license to go wild. "I don't want people to go out and water their yards like mad, wash their cars like mad. Give us some time to get things settled out." Potter says he hopes the conservation period will result in some long term changes in behavior, like reclaiming more non-potable water for irrigation. The K.R. Harrington plant should be running at full capacity in the next few weeks.

<http://wpln.org/?p=18153>

[Water Plant Back In Service; Restrictions Lifted \(Nashville Business Journal\)](#)

A month after being submerged in the waters of the Cumberland River, the K.R. Harrington water treatment plant is back in service, Mayor Karl Dean announced today. K.R. Harrington is operating at half its normal 90 million gallon capacity while further repairs are made, but residents can return to their normal water usage, officials said. Car washes in Davidson County will re-open tomorrow. "K.R. Harrington was one of the most significant public infrastructure losses our city suffered during the flood, and the need to conserve water has had a real impact on our citizens and businesses," Dean said. "Getting the water plant back online is a sign of our steady progress in getting the city back to normal. I applaud Metro Water Services staff for their tireless effort over the last month." The rest of the repairs are expected to be complete by the end of summer. Total costs are expected to be about \$42 million. In addition to contaminating the plant, floodwaters destroyed its electrical and computerized monitoring systems.

<http://nashville.bizjournals.com/nashville/stories/2010/05/31/daily6.html?surround=lfm>

[Future Montgomery County Flood Relief Forming \(Leaf Chronicle\)](#)

Committee to help beyond federal aid A group is coming together to ensure that flood victims will have somewhere to turn for help after federal and state disaster relief efforts end. A Tuesday meeting of local agencies and church groups took a first step to establishing a long-term recovery effort for Montgomery, Stewart and Houston counties. A steering committee of seven people was chosen and will meet next Tuesday to begin making decisions of how to set up the effort. Carmen Hess, volunteer agency liaison for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, helped define the purpose of the committee and made suggestions of how the members might want to organize it. "We're only here to support your long-term relief efforts," she told the group of nearly 30 people gathered at the public library. "It's your decisions." She explained that the maximum a household can receive from FEMA is \$29,900 but those who qualify can get up to a \$200,000 low-interest loan from the Small Business Administration.

<http://www.theleafchronicle.com/article/20100602/NEWS01/6020326/1002/Future-Montgomery-County-flood-relief-forming>

[Flood Insurance Stalls In Congress \(Tennessean/Snyder\)](#)

Policy sales on hold till program funded For the third time this year Congress has failed to reauthorize the national flood insurance program, leading to a temporary suspension of policy sales just as interest in flood protection in the Nashville area had peaked as a result of the devastating May floods. The suspension, which took effect on Tuesday morning, means renewals and the sale of new flood insurance policies won't happen until Congress votes to officially fund the program again. The delay doesn't impact existing policies. The National Association of Realtors said thousands of commercial and residential sales are likely on hold across the United States as a result of Congress' inaction since most lenders require borrowers to buy flood insurance if a home or building sits in a high-risk flood zone. "In the big picture, you're talking about a week or two of disruption (of a real estate deal), which can mess up other things. If you have the (interest) rate locked in, if you go past that, you might lose your rate," said Chad Harris, the president of the Tennessee Mortgage Bankers Association.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100602/NEWS01/6020353/Flood+insurance+stalls+in+Congress>

[Roane County Hoping Reopening Of Emory River Will Boost Economy \(NS/Hunt\)](#)

The December 2008 TVA coal ash spill and the sluggish national economy came at Roane County like a one-two punch. But with the recent reopening of the Emory River and the beginning of the summer tourist season, local business leaders say things may be looking up. "We knew (the ash spill) was going to be devastating to a lot of the business community," said Leslie Henderson, president and CEO of the Roane Alliance, the county's economic development organization. "But we'd never had anything like that happen before. It was at the same time when we were heading into the worst recession that this country has ever experienced, so it was hard to say where one thing began and the other thing left off." Chad Jala, the operations manager for the Comfort Inn in Kingston, said he thinks business at the hotel is down 7 to 10 percent, but he could not tell if it was from the ash spill or from the slow economy. Tourism is vital to Roane County's economy. The \$54 million spent last year puts Roane in the Top 20 Tennessee counties for tourism revenue, according to Henderson.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/jun/02/roane-county-hoping-reopening-emory-river-boost-ec/>

Across the State Line

[States Find Road And Bridge Money Hard To Come By \(Stateline\)](#)

South Dakota Transportation Secretary Darin Bergquist delivered grim news to lawmakers last summer: Money to fix and build roads was dwindling, and the situation was getting worse. The state's main sources of money for road projects — taxes on gasoline and car sales — were both slipping. Meanwhile, the cost of actually building and maintaining the roads was going up, because prices were increasing on raw materials, from de-icing liquid to asphalt and concrete. What's worse, delaying fixes only made the repairs more expensive. Letting a road deteriorate from excellent condition to fair condition makes it three times as costly to fix. Faced with those sobering facts, legislators studying the issue recommended raising \$250 million for transportation over five years by increasing the state's gas tax, hiking vehicle registration fees and increasing the tax on vehicle sales. Republican state Representative Shantel Krebs, who headed the study committee, saw the proposal as a good investment. "I can't see, as a legislative leader, making my taxpayers pay more because we didn't have the political will to take care of it in the short term," she says.

<http://www.stateline.org/live/details/story?contentId=488639>

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