

June 3, 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.

[State Cracks Down on Flood Fraud \(WTVF-TV Nashville\)](#)

They claimed their homes were damaged in the flood, but state investigators say they were trying to game the system. The Department of Human Services Office of Inspector General swore out four warrants against people in Davidson County claiming they defrauded taxpayers. Metro Police arrested three of the people Wednesday. "I would characterize these cases as out and out fraud and we're prosecuting them as such," said DHS Inspector General Alan Hall. Police arrested Enaruna Igharo after DHS said she received Disaster Relief Food Stamps in the amount of \$200.00 and emergency cash totaling \$250.00. She told DHS that her apartment near Mill Creek flooded. But neighbor Jim Snyder says the water did not come close to their front door. "No water, no flood" said Snyder.

<http://www.newschannel5.com/global/story.asp?s=12585412>

[17% Of New TN Jobless Blame Flood \(Nashville Business Journal\)](#)

More than 17 percent of Tennessee's newly unemployed since May 10 have told the state that it was the flood that cost them their jobs. And that's a number that will soon spike after Gaylord Entertainment Co. announced plans today to lay off more than 1,700 employees on June 12. Martha Deacon, a spokeswoman for the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, said about 23,000 new unemployment claims have been made since May 10, and about 4,000 of them have been directly related to the disaster. Many of those 4,000 qualified for the state's regular unemployment program, but about 10 percent are receiving help through a disaster assistance program set up to help people who normally wouldn't qualify. Chief among them: Self-employed business owners and contractors. But time is running out to apply for the special help.

<http://nashville.bizjournals.com/nashville/stories/2010/05/31/daily14.html?surround=lfm>

[TN Homebuilders To Answer Flood Victims' Questions \(Tennessean/Young\)](#)

About 50 homebuilders and tradesmen will be available to help flood victims with any questions they might have about rebuilding during an open forum from 3-5 p.m. Thursday at the Homebuilders Association of Middle Tennessee office, 9007 Overbrook Blvd. in Brentwood. FEMA representatives will also be on hand, said Jim Argo, director of communications for the homebuilders association. Flood victims can join the session at any time. "It's not going to be a two-hour meeting," Argo said. "People can come in, find the answers they need and get out pretty quickly if they need to." Sessions are scheduled from 3-5 p.m. each Thursday in June. The last session, scheduled for June 24, will be at The Factory at Franklin, 230 Franklin Road.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100603/NEWS01/6030317/1001/NEWS/TN+homebuilders+to+answer+flood+victim+questions>

[Officials: Long Road Ahead For Flood Recovery \(Jackson Sun\)](#)

A month after major flooding ravaged much of West Tennessee, county officials said the recovery process is going well but it'll be a long time before repairs are completed. Last month's intense rainfall flooded hundreds of homes and businesses and caused millions of dollars of damage to roadways. As road construction and cleanup ensues, county emergency officials said Wednesday that progress is being made. Some officials also reported Wednesday that they have already met with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to get help completing their applications for local government funding. Other officials said they plan to meet with FEMA soon. FEMA and the Small Business Administration have thus far allocated \$160 million in disaster grants and low-interest loans to Tennessee storm victims, according to a news release from the agency. In Madison County, the majority of roads are open while work crews continue repairing parts of streets such as Wallace Road. The estimated cost of damages is still around \$10 million for the city of Jackson.

<http://www.jacksonsun.com/article/20100603/NEWS01/6030313/1002/Officials--Long-road-ahead-for-flood-recovery>

[Search Called Off For Final Flood Victim \(Tennessean/Brooks\)](#)

They called off the search, but they'll never stop looking. Family and friends of Danny Tomlinson will gather Sunday for a memorial service and a celebration of the life of Nashville's final flood victim. Swept out of his car and lost in the flood on the first day of May, Tomlinson was the focus of a massive search effort. His family, friends and local volunteers joined rescue workers and out-of-town search teams who have been out every day for the past month. He was his mother's only son; a shy, handsome man with a soft spot for stray animals and a tattoo of Jesus on his back. Not knowing where he was, not being able to put him to rest, was agony. But this week, his family made the decision to scale back the daily searches to a weekend effort. It was time to get back to something resembling a normal life; time to go back to work; a time to mourn. "He was my cherished blessing," said mother Sherry Wilson, who still will be out there searching for him, every weekend, with anyone who wants to help.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100603/NEWS01/6030341/1001/NEWS/Search+called+off+for+final+flood+victim>

[Local Flood Recovery Center To Close Thursday \(Columbia Daily Herald\)](#)

Federal officials will close Maury County's disaster recovery center Thursday, as the community continues to sift through the damage caused by record flooding in May. Cleo Howell, public information officer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said the number of people seeking help at the county's center had dwindled in recent days. "We feel we've reached out to as many people as we can," he said. The county's disaster center, at 1018 Maury County Park Drive, will remain open from 8 a.m.-7 p.m. daily through Thursday. FEMA officials have not released the number of Maury County residents who applied for assistance, though more than 58,000 residents statewide have registered and about \$151 million in disaster grants had been approved as of May 29. Mark Blackwood, director of the county office of emergency management, said residents will still be able to register claims online or visit other centers open in the area.

http://www.columbiadailyherald.com/articles/2010/06/02/top_stories/03femaclose.txt

[Gaylord: Damages Exceed \\$200 Million; 1,743 To Lose Jobs \(Nashville Biz Journal\)](#)

The cost to clean up and repair Opryland and other Gaylord Entertainment Co. properties in Nashville will be \$215 million to \$225 million, the company announced today. The company also plans to lay off more than 1,700 employees June 12. The Opryland Resort & Convention Center will be closed until Nov. 15, the company estimates. The 2,881-room hotel is the largest in the Nashville area and accounts for a third of the market's luxury and upscale rooms. Metro government is missing out on 20 percent to 25 percent of its hotel tax collections, and the local economy is losing about \$50 million a month while Opryland is closed. About 19 percent of the 329,900 room nights booked at Opryland over the next six months have been rebooked at other Nashville area hotels. Other Gaylord properties will open sooner than the hotel, starting with the Wildhorse Saloon and General Jackson Showboat on Saturday and the Grand Ole Opry House on Oct. 1.

<http://nashville.bizjournals.com/nashville/stories/2010/05/31/daily13.html?surround=lfm>

[Magazines Offer \\$100,000 In Ads To Promote Nashville Flood Relief \(Tennessean\)](#)

Dozens of local magazines across the country are donating more than \$100,000 in print and online ads to promote flood relief efforts in Nashville. The ad campaign is the work of the City and Regional Magazine Association, a national membership organization consisting of 72 magazines with a collective readership of 2 million. Over 40 magazines are devoting full or partial-page ads in their June issues that direct readers to a website listing a host of local organizations collecting donations, supplies or coordinating volunteers for flood relief. Nashville Lifestyles Magazine, published by The Tennessean's parent company, Gannett, compiled and hosts the website referral list at www.nashvillelifestyles.com. Jeffrey Goldberg, publisher of Memphis magazine, also played a key role in the effort.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100603/BUSINESS01/6030321/2221/BUSINESS/Magazines+offer++100+000+in+ads+to+promote+Nashville+flood+relief>

[TDOT Soliciting Public Comment On Pellissippi Extension \(The Daily Times\)](#)

a public hearing from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on July 20 at Heritage High School to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the findings of the EIS and the proposed project prior to completion of the final environmental document. The Pellissippi Parkway extension would tie Old Knoxville Highway to East Lamar Alexander Parkway. The most recent extension of the Pellissippi Parkway to Old Knoxville Highway was completed in August 2006. The state is looking at alternatives including a no-build option. The two routes under consideration would terminate at either Kensington Place Mobile Home Park or across from Hubbard School Road.

<http://www.thedailytimes.com/article/20100530/NEWS/305309981>

[State Officials Says Water Samples Show Normal Bacterial Levels In Middle Tenn. Streams \(WHNT 19\)](#)

The state environmental agency says most of the increased bacterial water pollution caused by flooding early in the month has ceased. The exception is the Cumberland River downstream of the wastewater treatment plant in Clarksville. The plant failed when it flooded after record rainfall the first weekend in May and is only partly operational.

<http://www.whnt.com/news/sns-ap-tn--tennessee-floods,0,239267.story>

Across the State Line

[Canton Mill Water Permit Issued \(Citizen Times\)](#)

The N.C. Division of Water Quality on Wednesday issued Evergreen Packaging a permit renewal for the discharge of treated wastewater into the Pigeon River. The mill had been operating on permit renewal extensions since 2006. The new permit won't be up for renewal until 2015. However, differences of opinion over the paper mill's discharge of wastewater into the river aren't likely to end soon. The issuance of the permit came after years of debate between environmental groups, the mill and local officials, and the state and federal governments over terms of the permit, most notably concerns over the color of the discharged wastewater.

<http://www.citizen-times.com/article/20100527/NEWS/305270031/1007/COLUMNISTS>

Opinion

[More Flood Help \(Leaf Chronicle\)](#)

When it comes to natural disasters, providing immediate relief for those who have been stricken may be the easy part. Far more difficult is sustaining a long-term relief effort. Now that this community and surrounding areas are a month removed from the flooding of early May, it's good to see that a local long-term recovery effort is being pulled together for Montgomery, Stewart and Houston counties. A steering committee will meet next week to decide the direction the effort will take. Although financial aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency is both expected and appreciated, it's not set up to cover a property owner's complete losses. The maximum amount that FEMA will pay out is \$29,000. Beyond that, the Small Business Administration will make up to a \$200,000 loan to those who meet the qualifications. Unfortunately, not everyone qualifies for an SBA loan. Then, what can flood victims do? Various agencies that focus on disaster relief can step in.

<http://www.theleafchronicle.com/article/20100603/OPINION01/6030303/1014/OPINION>

###