

June 14, 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.

**[Volkswagen Leads Motorists Down Yellow Brick Road \(Times Free-Press/Pare\)](#)**

A major new connector -- which officials believe holds so much promise they nicknamed it the Yellow Brick Road -- soon will open to tie the Volkswagen plant to Interstate 75. The \$8.77 million parkway, officially called Volkswagen Drive, will provide an improved link between the automaker's \$1 billion assembly plant and the area around it, City Engineer Bill Payne said...At the I-75 interchange, a "green" multimillion-dollar VW welcome center is planned as a lure for motorists traveling between Michigan and Florida. Jennifer Flynn with the Tennessee Department of Transportation said signs are to go up at the I-75 interchange, which was built several years ago but has never been open to traffic. "Everything should be ready," Ms. Flynn said. The parkway will have two roundabouts, one near the plant and the other close to the entrance to the massive nature park serving as a buffer between I-75 and the factory. Eventually, the parkway is to continue from the VW plant through the rest of Enterprise South to state Highway 58. The road project's entire price tag is about \$22.5 million.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2010/jun/14/volkswagen-leads-motorists-down-yellow-brick-road/>

**[Loop Added To \\$35 Million I-55 Revamp Project \(Associated Press\)](#)**

A loop connecting Interstate 55 to area neighborhoods near the Mississippi River has been added to a \$35 million revamp of the roadway. The Memphis Commercial Appeal reports that planners with the Tennessee Department of Transportation are considering options including "roundabout" similar to an old traffic circle allowing right turns only. The idea will be discussed at a meeting held by TDOT on Tuesday. The I-55 project is now the subject of environmental studies and construction still years away on what is considered one of the most problematic sections of interstate in Memphis. Tennessee transportation officials are looking to revamp the Crump interchange to allow for a continuous flow of traffic along I-55. Currently, motorists on have to negotiate single-lane ramps at an outdated cloverleaf interchange at Crump before continuing north toward St. Louis or south toward Jackson, Miss. The 25-mph loop ramp for northbound traffic is a major source of congestion, with 18-wheelers often backed up for miles.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=33783663.story>

**[Metro To Use Adviser To Guide Nashville Flood Rebuilding \(Tennessean/Paine\)](#)**

Metro hopes federal money would fund consultant's projects Metro plans to seek out a consultant to develop a long-term community flood recovery plan that could open the door to federal grants and other post-disaster funding. The Federal Emergency Management Agency offers a variety of financial assistance for towns, though part of that requires going through such a planning process. "First and foremost is to look at mitigation, reinvestment and redevelopment," said Curt Garrigan, assistant director of Metro Parks, who is overseeing infrastructure and planning for the mayor's flood recovery team. The team already has gone over work that consultants did for a couple of other towns, including in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, after catastrophic flooding there in 2008. Metro will issue a request for proposals from consultants to assist here, which could go out before next month, Garrigan said. The cost hasn't been determined. The consultant would be asked to look at such things as housing impacts, strategies for possible new housing or infill and neighborhood stabilization adjacent to flood-affected areas.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100614/NEWS02/6140328/Metro+to+use+adviser+to+guide+Nashville+flood+rebuilding>

### **[Nashville Flood Drives Argument For More Green Space \(Tennessean/Paine\)](#)**

Advocates: Tragedy offers opportunity Advocates for more green space in Nashville say last month's flooding has given the idea of balancing conservation and growth new emphasis. Open land can act as a sop for floodwaters, and the topic drew more attention than originally planned at meetings earlier this month for Nashville: Naturally. The public-private project is exploring ways to make the city healthier and more economically vibrant through the right mix and network of development and natural areas. "For the most part, people said any tragedy presents you with an opportunity," said Bob Brandt, a founding board member of the Land Trust for Tennessee and a member of the Metro Parks Greenways Commission. "That's what we have here." At two meetings June 3 seeking public input on saving and enhancing open space in Nashville, benefits discussed included decreasing the flood risk. Impenetrable pavement and traditional buildings are among contributors to quickly rising floodwaters like those seen during last month's unprecedented rainfall.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100613/NEWS02/6130360/Nashville+flood+drives+argument+for+more+green+space>

### **[Concrete Highway Recognized In National Register \(Associated Press\)](#)**

One of the last untouched concrete sections of the original U.S. Highway 11 running through southeast Tennessee has been added to the National Register of Historic Places. The new U.S. 11 signs along what is also Market Street in Charleston were unveiled last Saturday during the 50th anniversary celebration of "Wild River," the first movie filmed in Tennessee, the Chattanooga Times Free Press reported. Larry Williams, from the Horseless Carriage Association who helped unveil the new signs, said the highway is an important piece of history. "From these humble beginnings came the interstates, themselves now 50 years old," Williams said. "It's hard to imagine that this quiet lane was once the grandest road around, the high-tech interstate of its time." The concrete highway was first proposed in 1913 and in 1927 the segment between Chattanooga and Charleston was completed. Charleston Mayor Walter Goode said the highway connected Chattanooga to Bristol and opened up communities to travelers.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=33777999.story>

### **[TDOT Envisions Roundabout At Interstate 55-Crump Interchange \(CA/Charlier\)](#)**

Circular intersection would aid congestion, planners say Transportation planners have added an unusual twist -- or loop, actually -- to a proposed \$35 million project to revamp the long-troubled Interstate 55-Crump interchange near the Memphis & Arkansas Bridge over the Mississippi River. Options now being considered by the Tennessee Department of Transportation would incorporate a "roundabout" similar to an old traffic circle linking Riverside Drive, Crump Boulevard and Alston Avenue. The roundabout would not be part of the interstate but would connect it to area neighborhoods. The roundabout -- a circular intersection allowing for right turns only -- is among the possible features of the larger I-55-Crump project that will be discussed at a meeting hosted by TDOT Tuesday evening. Now the subject of environmental studies, with construction still years away, the I-55-Crump project is intended to fix one of the most problematic sections of interstate in Memphis.

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2010/jun/13/tdot-envisions-roundabout-solution/>

### **[FEMA Disaster Declaration for Putnam County \(UC Daily News\)](#)**

Governor Bredesen today announced the federal government has authorized a major disaster declaration for Putnam County in Tennessee as a result of extreme weather and flooding that struck the state April 30-May 2. "This assistance will be tremendously helpful to the people of Putnam County who suffered losses as they work to rebuild," said Bredesen. "I encourage residents and business owners who sustained losses to begin applying for assistance immediately." Putnam County residents can apply for assistance by registering online at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). President Obama's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Putnam County, including both individual and public assistance. Individual assistance can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses.

<http://www.ucdailynews.com/news/local/96195929.html>

### **[SmartFIX40: One year later \(WBIR-TV Knoxville\)](#)**

One year ago Saturday, Interstate 40 reopened to traffic in downtown Knoxville after being closed 14 months for construction. The \$200 million SmartFIX40 project revamped 8 miles of the roadway with extra lanes, 25 bridges and 48 retaining walls. In the year since construction wrapped up, more than 100,000 motorists have tested that portion of the interstate. They have more good things to say about the road renovation than bad. "There's an access road over to every part of North Knoxville over here," said Sande MacMorran of Knoxville. "The alignment is a lot better. It looks a whole lot better driving into town," Bert Morton of Knoxville added. Steve Borden, the Region 1 Transportation Director for the Tennessee Department of Transportation, said SmartFIX40 has been a huge success from a functional standpoint.

<http://www.wbir.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=124061&provider=rss>

### **[UT Academy Aims to Get Girls Interested in Transportation Careers \(UT Press Release\)](#)**

The summer academy introduces rising 7th and 8th grade girls to the world of transportation and the wide range of career possibilities open to young women. Each day will have a different transportation focus: teamwork; planes, trains and automobiles; freight and logistics; transportation safety; and international transportation. The goal is to get the girls interested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and to think of transportation as a career option. "Our hope is that each girl leaves the academy knowing that transportation is fun," said Jerry Everett, research director for CTR and academy organizer. "Even though the path to a career in transportation or another technical field is challenging, it is an achievable goal."

[http://media-newswire.com/release\\_1120848.html](http://media-newswire.com/release_1120848.html)

### **[Community Group Challenging EPA Clean Water Permit Issued To Evergreen Packaging \(WBIR\)](#)**

About a hundred Cocke County residents showed up at a "Rally for the River" Friday night to let the Environmental Protection Agency and the state of North Carolina know that they aren't happy. They are upset about the provisions in a clean water permit issued to Evergreen Packaging's Blue Ridge Paper Products plant in Canton, NC at the end of May. Community residents have formed a group called, "Clean Water Expected in East Tennessee," or "CWEET," that is planning on filing an administrative challenge to the permit. They want the pollution levels of treated wastewater the company is allowed to dump into the Pigeon River lowered, which they say will make significant change to the condition of the water.

<http://www.wbir.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=124060&catid=2>

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