

June 28, 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.

[More Tn Commuters Choose Buses, Trains To Save Money And Go Green \(TN/Moy\)](#)

After Tami Giles saved money by riding the Spring Hill Express bus service to work in Nashville, she wanted to recruit other passengers to keep the service going. "I started the first day, and we had like five people," Giles said of the bus route that began in December. Giles, who works for the state Department of Tourist Development, asked for fliers to post on every floor of her building to spread the word about the new route. "Now, it's like, 'Oh my gosh, now I don't have a seat,'" she joked. "No, it hasn't gotten that bad." But interest in regional public transit appears to be on the rise, according to the Regional Transportation Authority. There are more riders using bus services to get to Nashville from Williamson and Rutherford counties, and the Music City Star, the commuter rail service connecting Lebanon and Nashville, also reports an increase in passengers. <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100628/NEWS01/6280317/1001/news/More+TN+commuters+choose+buses++trains+to+save+money+and+go+green>

[Fort Loudoun Dam Bridge To Be Replaced \(TheDailyTimes.Com\)](#)

TDOT and Loudon County officials announced the \$58 million project on Friday. Contracts for the work will be let in December with construction expected to begin in the first quarter of 2011. The bridge is expected to be completed in three years. The new bridge will also reduce the strain on the Fort Loudoun Dam, Bobo said. "We support the security for the dam and TVA has told us time and again that dam is seeing wear and tear because of the traffic on top of it." <http://www.thedailytimes.com/article/20100626/NEWS/306269997>

[New \\$58 million bridge coming to ft. Loudoun dam \(WBIR\) with video](#)

The new \$58 million dollar bridge over the Tennessee River won't cost the city or county a dime. It's part of Tennessee's "Better Bridge Program", an effort by the state legislature to repair or replace structurally deficient bridges in the state. The four year program is currently in year two and uses bonds to pay for the construction costs. "It's wonderful, we appreciate the support of the state," Matt Brookshire, Lenoir City's Mayor said. Just a few football fields away from the current overpass, the new four lane bridge will repave an area that likes to call itself "The Lakeway to the Smokies". <http://www.wbir.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=125154&catid=2>

[Senate Hearing On Army Corps Handling Of Tennessee Flood \(Chattanooga.com\)](#)

Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) today announced that the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, of which he is a member, will hold a hearing on July 22 "to examine how federal agencies responded to the historic Tennessee flood of 2010." Sen. Alexander said the hearing will focus specifically on how the Army Corps of Engineers and the National Weather Service communicated with other agencies and the public about rising waters and that "the goal of the hearing is to determine what actions can be taken to improve those communications to prevent loss of life and property in future floods." http://www.chattanooga.com/articles/article_178822.asp

[Deadline Extended For Seeking Flood Help \(Tennessean/Cass\)](#)

The deadline for flood victims to apply for federal assistance has been extended by a month, Gov. Phil Bredesen and U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper said Friday. The deadline to apply to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Small Business Administration, which provides loans to homeowners as well as businesses, has been extended to Aug. 5. It had been July 6. The deadline applies to 46 Tennessee counties eligible for federal money after the devastating floods in early May. There are 63,633 people in Tennessee who have applied for FEMA money, and more than \$141 million in checks have been written. But far fewer people have applied for U.S. Small Business Administration loans, a key part of the process. Mayor Karl Dean held a news conference Friday morning to emphasize that it is a key part of the process every flood victim must do, even if he or she doesn't want a loan. <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100627/NEWS01/6270367/Deadline-extended-for-seeking-flood-help>

[Bredesen Announces Extension Of Registration Deadlines \(Clarksville Online\)](#)

Governor Phil Bredesen today announced Tennessee has requested and received a 30-day extension of deadlines for FEMA assistance programs that will assist individuals in the 46 counties eligible for Individual Assistance as a result of the extreme weather and flooding that struck the state April 30th – May 2nd. "I'm extremely pleased people will have more time to register to get the help they need as Tennessee recovers from these historic and devastating floods," said Bredesen. "I appreciate the support Congressman Jim Cooper, members of the Tennessee delegation and FEMA have provided as we've worked in partnership to assist affected Tennesseans." FEMA has approved the state's request to extend the registration deadline for Individual Assistance to August 5th, 2010.

<http://www.clarksvilleonline.com/2010/06/26/bredesen-announces-extension-of-registration-deadlines-for-fema-assistance-programs/>

[Bids To Go Out On I-65 Widening \(Tennessean/Wiersma\)](#)

Construction could start late this summer on the long-awaited widening of Interstate 65 in southern Williamson County. The Tennessee Department of Transportation has \$100 million in federal money for the work, divided into two sections: from Highway 96 to the Goose Creek interchange and from Goose Creek south to State Route 840.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100627/NEWS01/6270328/1001/NEWS/Williamson+County+Briefs++Bids+to+go+out+on+I-65+widening>

[Cleveland Airport Funds May Come Soon \(Chattanooga Times Free-Press/Higgins\)](#)

The second phase of airport construction funding could come faster than the Cleveland Municipal Airport Authority originally expected. Chairwoman Lynn DeVault said Friday that, because some communities do not have the local money they need to match Federal Aviation Administration grants offered through the state, money expected next spring could be available this year. That unclaimed money would then be available for Cleveland, which has enough money to match the grants, she said. She will ask for \$8.2 million for phase two construction July 8 when the Tennessee Aeronautics Commission meets, she said. "We have no reason to expect that won't be approved. They don't let you apply unless it's going to be approved," she said. Phase two is the site preparation for the airport itself. Current work is more about meeting environmental requirements, including ponds to collect water runoff plus rerouting part of Old Tasso Road and part of a stream.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2010/jun/27/cleveland-airport-funds-may-come-soon/>

[State Decides Against Knoxville Regional Parkway \(Associated Press\)](#)

State transportation officials have decided not to proceed with a proposed Knoxville Regional Parkway that drawn controversy for a decade. Gerald Nicely, commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Transportation, said Friday that updated traffic projections showed the route wouldn't meet demands. According to The Knoxville News Sentinel, it was years away from construction. It was designed to connect Interstate 75 in Loudon County where Interstate 40 joins it to I-75 in Anderson County. The 25-mile route would have been a four-lane, median-divided road with one interchange.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=33896055.story>

[Beltway's End Cheered \(Knoxville News-Sentinel/Lakin\)](#)

Mark Richey can finally start working on his house again. "The first thing my wife said when we heard about the Orange Route being killed was, 'Yahoo!' " he said. "The second thing she said was, 'Now we can make that addition to the house.' " Richey, president of Citizens Against the Beltway Orange Location, his wife and other Hardin Valley residents spent the past 12 years fighting the proposed beltway that would have swallowed up homes and cast a cloud of exhaust fumes over the rural area they love. "It's been a struggle," Richey said. "It wasn't about the money, and it was broader than the 'not in my backyard' syndrome. It was a matter of somebody else's vision for our community." Tennessee Department of Transportation officials' eulogy Friday for the Orange Route got a joyful shout from the residents who'd opposed the plan for so long.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/jun/26/beltways-end-cheered/>

[Interstate 40 Rock Project In Putnam Nearly Done \(Associated Press\)](#)

A Putnam County work project to prevent rock slides along Interstate 40 is to be completed in July. On Tuesday, a large boulder tumbled onto eastbound lanes while a state contractor blasted rock as a way of heading off rock slides. No one was hurt, but traffic was slowed for some three hours. According to the Cookeville Herald-Citizen, the \$3.6 million project covers several sites in Putnam County. A spokesman for the Tennessee Department of Transportation said the work along the heavily traveled highway was recommended as a safety measure by the agency's geo-technical office.

<http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=33890143.story>

[Homeowners Take Flood Fixes Into Own Hands \(Tennessean/Snyder\)](#)

Homeowners stuck with damaged homes from the early May flooding are taking matters into their own hands — literally. With tens of thousands of dollars in damages, many homeowners are rebuilding their own homes, tile by tile and room by room. As of Thursday, homeowners, not licensed contractors, had pulled more than 60 percent of the 2,440 building permits for flooded homes in Nashville. Some of those may end up hiring general contractors. But others are trying to save money in the face of limited government aid and no flood insurance by handling much of the work themselves.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100626/BUSINESS01/6260334/Homeowners+take+flood+fixes+into+own+hands>

[Corps Gives Different Answers On Post-Flood Report \(Associated Press/Loller\)](#)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been giving different answers about whether it will produce a Post-flood Report for the Cumberland River basin and surrounding areas. In an interview, Corps Programs Integration Division Chief Gary Loew said Thursday that the district office in Nashville has requested the report and Washington leadership is considering it. On the same day, the Corps' Nashville district commander, Lt. Col. Anthony Mitchell told U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper that the in-depth investigation will be carried out. Cooper issued an angry statement last week demanding the Corps investigate "their response to a multi-billion dollar disaster" and saying officials in Washington had told him it would be too costly. Record rainfall in early May killed 22 people across Middle and West Tennessee and caused more than \$2 billion in damage in Nashville alone. "I got a tip from Washington that we're already being forgotten," Cooper said in a Friday interview. "They think that we're recovering nicely, so why bother."

http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cld=tennessean&sParam=33895861_story

[Funds To Boost Kingston Water, Sewer System \(Knoxville News-Sentinel\)](#)

The city of Kingston has received more than \$3.9 million in federal funding for water and sewer system improvements, officials announced this week. Mayor Troy Beets hailed the funding, saying it will take care of the city's infrastructure needs for "many, many, many years to come." This week's announcement involves U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development low-interest infrastructure loans totaling just over \$3 million and grants of \$906,700 to help fund three projects. Homes and businesses along Gallaher Road that now rely on septic systems will be hooked into the sewer system through 3.5 miles of new sewer lines, 64 access points and a lift station. Kingston and Rockwood water supplies will be linked up through Roane Central Utility District by the construction of four miles of water lines, officials said. Federal funding also will assist in the installation of more than 3,700 automated water meters that help reduce waste from leaks and control customer costs.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/jun/26/062610stbrfs/>

Opinion

[Killing Orange Route Project Justified \(Knoxville News-Sentinel\)](#)

After eight years and \$7.5 million, the proposed Orange Route has died on the vine. The Tennessee Department of Transportation gave up on the Knoxville Regional Parkway on Friday, citing high costs and a new traffic study indicating that fewer vehicles than previously predicted would have used the road. The bypass, which would have been formally known as State Route 475, would have stretched 25 miles from where Interstate 75 joins I-40 in Loudon County, though Northwest Knox County to I-75 near Clinton. Though we have been supportive of the roadway in the past, TDOT made the right decision based on altered circumstances. Spending an enormous amount of money on a road project that cuts through a rural area has to be justified in every mile. The Orange Route, quite frankly, isn't worth it. The stretch of I-40/75 from Loudon County to downtown Knoxville carries more than 173,000 vehicles a day. In 2002, TDOT projected more than 30,000 vehicles a day - 18 percent of them commercial trucks - would bypass Knoxville on the parkway. Once a new study determined the numbers likely would be lower, the rationale for the road evaporated. If there was any doubt, increasing cost estimates put the final nail in the coffin.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/jun/27/killing-orange-route-project-justified/>

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