

July 9, 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.

[The Dragon On U.S. 129 Ready To Reopen \(Knoxville News-Sentinel/Jacobs\)](#)

The Dragon, a section of U.S. Highway 129 offering more than 300 curves, will beckon this weekend to its international fan club of motorcyclists. After being closed for nearly four months because of a massive rockslide, The Dragon should be accessible from the Tennessee side this weekend. Weather permitting, authorities expect the roadway to be opened to traffic today, according to the Tennessee Department of Transportation. That would be three weeks ahead of the scheduled reopening date of July 31. The rockslide occurred March 14 near Chilhowee Dam in Blount County. Two weeks later, TDOT awarded a \$1.99 million contract to Pacific Blasting and Demolition Ltd. to clear and stabilize the slope. The contract offered daily incentives of \$6,500 for each day the contractor reopened the roadway before the July 31 deadline.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/jul/09/the-dragon-on-us-129-ready-to-reopen/>

[Businesses Eager For Dragon To Reopen \(WATE-TV Knoxville\)](#)

Businesses near the famous Dragon roadway in Blount County are looking forward to a wonderful weekend. A section along US 129 has been closed since mid-March because of a rockslide, but crews say repairs are almost complete. The winding mountain road is well-known among motorcycle riders and sports car drivers looking for a thrill. "The last couple of months have been terrible," said Peggy Reynolds, manager at Punksin Center Motorcycle Resort in Maryville. "Not no business, but it's about 90% to 95% down from last year." But all of that is about to change, since word spread throughout the country that Blount County access to the Dragon is expected to reopen sometime this weekend. "We have rented our whole motel, our hostel which holds eight people and all of our cabins within two hours," Reynolds said. This will be their first full house in months. "We've got just 10 people here right now," she said.

<http://www.wate.com/global/story.asp?s=12777951>

Opinion

[Gerald Nicely: TDOT's 3-Year Plan Targets State Bottlenecks \(Dickson Herald\)](#)

Nothing is more frustrating than inching along a congested highway. Now in the final year of Gov. Phil Bredesen's administration, TDOT is including a number of major improvements designed to alleviate some of the worst tie-ups in the state in the 2010-2013 three year multimodal transportation program. The department has undertaken a series of "corridor studies" to determine the best mix of initiatives to relieve congestion. Studies have been completed for the I-40, I-81 and I-75 corridors, and similar studies will be conducted for the I-65 and I-24 corridors. One of TDOT's key components in combating congestion is the SmartWay system of traffic cameras and HELP trucks. With systems in place in Nashville, Knoxville and Memphis, we will officially launch a new SmartWay Traffic Management Center in Chattanooga later this year. The Nashville SmartWay system, now seven years old, is undergoing an upgrade to be completed this year. Camera feeds to the facility are being switched to faster fiber optic lines and more traffic cameras are being added.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100708/DICKSON07/100708065/TDOT-s-3-year-plan-targets-state-bottlenecks>

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