

July 21, 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.

[New Siam Bridge Among State's First Stimulus Projects Completed \(J. City Press\)](#)

It was a day of celebrations on many levels Tuesday morning in the Siam community as a new \$1.55 million bridge across the Watauga River was officially opened. Tennessee Department of Transportation Commissioner Gerald Nicely came to celebrate the completion of one of the first projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in the state. Because it was finished ahead of schedule, it is also one of the first federal stimulus projects to be completed in the state. "We are pleased to see this new bridge opened and completed two months ahead of the scheduled Aug. 31 completion date," Nicely said. "The new two-lane structure better serves the many visitors to the Siam community in Carter County and will improve access to the nearby Watauga Lake." For Speaker of the House Kent Williams, the new bridge is a fulfillment of a campaign promise to bring more state spending to Carter County and Upper East Tennessee, which he has often said has been neglected for 100 years.

<http://www.johnsoncitypress.com/News/article.php?ID=79051>

[Army Corps Of Engineers Report May Be Late For Flood Hearing \(Tenn/Theobold\)](#)

Senators will meet Thursday An Army Corps of Engineers report assessing the agency's actions after May's flooding and outlining ways to ease the impact of future disasters is supposed to be the centerpiece of a Thursday Senate hearing on the flooding. But Corps officials refuse to say the report will be done in time. "We have not set a time for ... completion," Corps spokeswoman Jacqueline Ashmon said. She said the timing of the report isn't tied to the hearing. Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander, who organized Thursday's hearing before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, said again Tuesday he expects the report will be available at the hearing. If it's not, he said, "I'll be disappointed." The report by the Corps is key because some have criticized the agency for how it used Cumberland River dams to control water flow, for not giving people enough warning about the severity of the flooding and for not providing accurate information to the public as the disaster played out.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20100721/NEWS01/7210360/Corps+flood+report+may+not+be+ready+for+Senate+hearing>

Across the State Line**[Rendell Wants Gas Tax Hike \(Pittsburgh Post-Gazette\) PA](#)**

A gasoline tax increase of 3.25 cents per gallon could help the state collect some of the \$472 million a year it needs for transportation projects, Gov. Ed Rendell said Monday. That's part of his back-up plan if lawmakers won't agree to higher taxes for oil companies. The revenue is needed to fund road improvements, bridge replacements and mass-transit projects, the governor said. Pennsylvania needs to make up \$472 million a year that the state had planned to collect from drivers on Interstate 80 before the federal government rejected the state's tolling application. "There's no way we can do the things we need to do ... without raising some form of taxes and fees," Mr. Rendell said. He prefers to raise the money by increasing taxes on oil profits while prohibiting companies from passing the cost on to consumers.

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/10201/1073904-147.stm#ixzz0uJafLFho>

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