

TENNESSEE

ROAD BUILDER

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TDOT TURNS 100

TDOT

Centennial *** 1915 - 2015



TDOT TURNS 100

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Centennial * 1915 - 2015

THE ROAD TO 100 YEARS

1915 – Shortly after its creation, the Highway Department designated a 500-mile corridor from Memphis to Bristol as a top road priority. In 1917, funding was found. In 1920, it was officially designated State Route 1. Two-thirds were later designated as U.S. 70 and remained the main east-west route through the state until the completion of I- 40 in the late '60s.

1915 – The Tennessee Department of Highways was formed. However, the governing five-person, unpaid commission had little oversight and primarily funneled money to counties.

1915 – The 2nd priority of the Highway Department was designating Tennessee's portion of the Dixie Highway, stretching 4,000 miles from Sault Sainte Marie, Mich., to Miami, Fla.



MEMORIALIZING JULY 1, 1915

By Luanne Grandinetti, TDOT Communications

A 100-year birthday is a big one! What do you do to celebrate your transportation system and the agency behind the excellence we have in our Tennessee highways? You celebrate transportation, you educate the public and you commemorate the occasion. That's exactly what the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) intends to do.

Just prior to the creation of the highway department in 1915, a three-man commission recommended a road to connect 500 miles of Tennessee from west to the east. This early "interstate" had been discussed in the 1830s when there was a growing interest in corridors. The Dixie Highway and The Memphis to Bristol Highway, aptly numbered State Route 1, were placed in a statewide plan in 1917. In 2015, TDOT will be marking the 500-mile Memphis to Bristol Highway as a historical highway with signage. Participating with TDOT will be the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, which will provide special tourism information about Tennessee's First Highway on its website and in the Tennessee Vacation Guide. In late spring, TDOT also plans a convoy across the state to commemorate this important highway, a precursor to one of the nation's premier highways, Interstate 40.

2015 is not just about marking a special anniversary. We want to give Tennesseans an education on how our system developed and how we will move our system forward into the next 100 years. We will document the decades through a history book about the department and transportation in Tennessee. The last TDOT history book was published in 1958, which did not include the development of the interstate

system, the multimodal focus of the 1970s, the massive 1986 Road Program and many high-profile projects.

Our own historic staff will publish this book in mid-2015. We will take transportation across the state to communities with at least five mobile exhibits in libraries and will top it off with a Tennessee State Museum Exhibit in early summer 2015.

July 1, 2015, will be a special day as we will mark our 100th year with a permanent memorial to the beginnings of the "Department of Highways."

There are other ways we plan on marking this occasion. The 2015 state map will highlight the Memphis to Bristol Highway; and we have already launched our website and produced a brochure and video about the TDOT Centennial. Please visit our website to see our transportation development in Tennessee at www.tdot.state.tn.us/100years. If you have any photos or stories to tell about our history, please contact us in the TDOT Community Relations Division at 615-741-2331 or email us at: TDOT.100years@tn.gov.

Luanne Grandinetti serves as TDOT's Communications/Public Involvement manager and is coordinator of the TDOT Centennial celebration.



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MOVING

FORWARD

TOGETHER

By John Schroer, TDOT Commissioner



1919 – First federal-aid project contract awarded on July 10. It was for State Route 16 in Franklin County between Cowan and Monteagle.

It's easy to live in the moment believing you are the first to accomplish something. We all, however, know we mostly improve on ideas and processes that others put in motion. For a hundred years, our transportation system in Tennessee has evolved into one of the greatest in the nation. Since day one as commissioner, my goal has been for TDOT to provide the best multimodal transportation system in the nation.

There are many reasons why looking back over your history is important. It's comforting to know that past leadership wrestled with and conquered similar issues. We can also learn from past failures and successes. And we continue to prove that history does indeed repeat itself.

In 1923, Gov. Austin Peay was faced with the critical issue of transportation funding. Property owners were paying for roads, which was hardly an ideal funding mechanism. There was a growing demand from the public for better roads. Gov. Peay advanced a funding philosophy that is still in place today: "Those who use it pay for it."

The first state gas tax – two cents – was proposed by Gov. Peay and passed. Nearly a hundred years later, we continue to rely on a funding method that isn't keeping pace with our transportation demands. As cars become more and more fuel efficient, transportation revenues will continue to decline. Moving forward there must be a solution-focused dialogue about transportation funding in Washington, D.C. and here in Tennessee.

Prior to the creation of a highway department, counties handled roads in their jurisdiction. The result was disparate and fragmentary highway development. Nathan Dougherty, longtime University of Tennessee engineering professor, made numerous contributions to civil engineering, and he was one of the first to advocate in the 1920s a statewide survey to coordinate planning of Tennessee highways. We face similar issues today with fragmented land-use planning and development. Today and in the future, we can no longer confine our plans to the highway system. Our long-term transportation goals must work in harmony with our local communities, and we must foster strong partnerships with all transportation stakeholders.



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1919 – A three-person commission was formed and charged with laying out a state highway plan. As a result, nine divisions were created — four field offices in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville and Jackson.



1921 – First law gives Highway Department authority to regulate and control signs on state right of way.

1923 – House Bill 4 reorganizes the Highway Department, as a new era of intense road building begins. The name was changed to the Tennessee Department of Highways and Public Works. A single commissioner had charge over the department.

1921 – First law protecting highways from damage was passed, as the Highway Department was given authority to regulate for the purpose of protecting surface and foundation of highways.

The Tennessee Road Builder Association has been a valued partner for decades. According to a history of the association, TRBA was formed because road builders felt they needed a collective voice. Upon its founding in 1928, TRBA put forth three major goals: meeting the state's growing traffic demands; assurance that contracts were awarded to financially responsible and experienced companies; and fair inspections on projects. Sharing such similar goals has led to a close partnership between TDOT and TRBA membership. We truly value the relationships we have with the contracting community, and appreciate the quality work and cooperation that ultimately benefits the citizens of Tennessee.

Like our transportation forefathers who created our network of highways, we are now laying the groundwork for the next 100 years. Together, we will move Tennessee forward and strive to be the very best.



1924 – The first bitumen asphalt paved road built by the Highway Department was near Rutledge on S.R. 11W, also known as the Memphis to Bristol Highway.

1923 – The first gas tax was proposed, which established a philosophy that those who benefit from the highways should pay for them.



1925 – The Highway Department assumed control over the construction and maintenance of the state system and assumed control of motor vehicle registration fees.



DIFFERENT ROAD,

SAME RESULTS

By Paul Degges, TDOT Deputy Commissioner & Chief Engineer



The end game has always been the same for the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and Tennessee Road Builders Association (TRBA), whether it was a new road, a new bridge or new pavement. The road getting there hasn't always been smooth, as there have been potholes along the way as state administrations changed and new priorities were set in motion over the last 100 years.

The creation of TRBA was due to the highway department according to TRBA lore. A highway engineer-inspector in West Tennessee required contractors to grade the sides of cuts and fills so smoothly it was said a fly could slip on them. This type of grade was extremely costly and forced contractors to submit bids that said if this particular engineer was assigned to inspect their work, 10 percent would be added to their bid price. Who knows if their issue was resolved for those West Tennessee contractors, but those kinds of examples are why road builders decided they needed a collective voice in 1928.

Today, the partnership between TDOT and the membership of TRBA is on sound footing. An excellent example of this relationship is thin-mix asphalt. With the escalation of petroleum prices, TDOT was looking for ways to reduce project costs. The industry found an answer. Instead of using one-and-a-half-inch asphalt, a three-quarter-inch thin-mix was tested in East Tennessee by Summers-Taylor at no cost to the state. Its value was proven with no decline in the life of the highway.

When an issue arose between TDOT and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, TRBA membership brought significant resources to the table to help develop better industry standards in dealing with road building as it relates to the environment. Thanks to the partnership between TDOT, TRBA and TDEC, Tennessee is now a nationally recognized leader in complying with environmental standards.

Fifteen years ago, most of our projects were built or paved during the day and the public eventually got tired of fighting roadwork congestion. By working with contractors, who also were criticized by the public for the inconvenience of daytime roadwork, projects with closures are done on nights and weekends. Part of this effort includes accelerated construction of bridges. Working in partnership with contractors by using new methods of bridge construction, bridge replacements and rehabs can be done in significantly less time.

One of the best and most recent examples of our partnership occurred this summer, when a tractor-trailer exploded where a new bridge was being built by an existing bridge on I-65 near Franklin. The incident severely damaged both bridges. TDOT, LoJac and Brown Builders immediately got to work and successfully got the road opened to traffic within hours. We created working groups with the industry to make sure we are solving issues before they become problems, and together moving forward in building and providing a good transportation system in Tennessee.

Our relationship has sometimes been rocky, but just like brothers and sisters, we always know who we can count on when a crisis, a problem or issue rears its head.

The leadership and employees at TDOT look forward to a continued partnership with the membership of the TRBA and all of our key partners in building the best transportation system for the economic prosperity for Tennesseans.



1928 – The frustration of contractors with the Highway Department culminated with formation of the Tennessee Road Builders Association to represent them politically.



1929 – To promote growth in aviation, the Division of Aeronautics was created as part of the Department of Highways and Public Works.



1931 – Gas tax increases to seven cents, of which the county share increases to total of two cents.



1931 – “The Bloody July Massacre” resulted in discharge of all maintenance and construction forces due to a failure to fund highway construction by the Tennessee General Assembly. Newspapers owned by opponents to Gov. Horton’s bonding proposal were successful in blocking the funding of the department.



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EXPERIENCING THE ISSUES FROM BOTH SIDES

Several Transportation Commissioners Have Shared Unique Perspectives as DOT Officials, Road Builders

“I knew what their problem was and I could help them,” said Bruce Saltsman, one of several individuals during the Tennessee Department of Transportation’s (TDOT) first 100 years who served as transportation commissioner and also as a road builder.

Saltsman, who was TDOT commissioner from 1995-2003, recalls when he was thanked by a road contractor for literally getting him and a long-delayed project moving again. “There was a job that was a bad, bad job for the contractor,” recalls TDOT’s 36th commissioner. “I went to that job just about once a week to see if we couldn’t get it moving. Finally after a long, long time we got the job done. The contractor came and told me about how much he appreciated me coming up and looking at the job. He said, ‘You’re the only man in the world that could come up and see that dozer sitting on the side of the road, tracks rusting, and knowing how much it was costing me.’ He appreciated me helping him get the job done.”

Saltsman joins several of TDOT’s 38 commissioners who proudly served on both sides of the table when it came to DOT and contracting conversations. These combination DOT-road builder commissioners ran the gamut, from a long-time contractor who then served as transportation commissioner, to career-DOT officials who led the state’s transportation department and ultimately joined the contracting industry.

Over the years, individuals such as Saltsman, Carl Wood, Jimmy Evans, Robert Farris, William Sansom and Eddie Shaw helped DOT officials and the contracting industry see more eye to eye and build a working relationship between the state and industry. Evans served as both a president of TRBA in 1978 and as TDOT commissioner from 1987-92; this year he was posthumously honored with the association’s Lifetime Achievement Award.

Perhaps a shared trait among this group of TDOT commissioners was their desire to get the project finished in a way that was good for all involved – the public, the state and contractor. “He got along with everybody, and I think everybody liked him,” said Eddie Shaw II, of his late father Eddie L. Shaw, who served as TDOT’s 29th commissioner

from 1975-79. “I think he tried to view both sides of the aisle, so to speak, as far as doing the right thing for the state and being fair to the contractors too.”

Making sure all sides were treated fairly and with respect forged lasting relationships and friends for several TDOT commissioners who joined the road building industry following their time at the DOT.

Carl Wood was a TDOT employee for more than 37 years, of which the final two years were served as acting and deputy commissioner in the mid-1990s. After retiring, the 35th TDOT commissioner helped Banner Signing Construction, of Little Rock, Ark., gain a presence in Tennessee. “It was through their firm that I was a member of TRBA, because they were a member of Tennessee Road Builders,” Wood explained. “They became a member of Tennessee Road Builders through my recommendation.

“... Through the last few years of my career (with TDOT) we worked together an awful lot,” Wood added. “The Tennessee DOT and Road Builders worked cooperatively. So I was very familiar with them for a lot of years.”

Eddie Shaw II explained how his father went from running a restaurant and gift shop, to state transportation commissioner, to a road builder. “He was in the restaurant business and then he became the transportation commissioner,” the son said. “He and Governor Ray Blanton were best of friends. Ray wanted to be surrounded with his friends in the cabinet, and that’s what he did. The only commissioner I think he didn’t have filled was Transportation. He asked Daddy: ‘Do you want it?’ And Daddy said, ‘Well yes, I’ll try.’ That’s how his affiliation started with road builders. Then of course, after he (began serving as TDOT commissioner) he understood and realized how good and important the Road Builders Association was to the state. So he just sort of fell right in. He got along with everybody, and I think everybody liked him.”

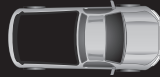
About the time his father was working in Nashville, Eddie II was finishing his education and purchased a bulldozer. He added one or two

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1933 – Passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act, built on President Roosevelt's New Deal, provided numerous work programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps that would help road and bridge construction in Tennessee and the nation.



1941 – World War II resulted in the enlistment of men from the Highway Department, as a skeleton crew was able to keep the department going.



1933-1941 – The Tennessee Valley Authority directly affected Tennessee's bridge construction as it attempted to solve problems in the Tennessee Valley watershed involving 63 of Tennessee's 95 counties. However, with the construction of nine major dams and lakes as part of its extensive flood control program, many Tennessee bridges and roads were significantly impacted.

1939 – Gov. Prentiss Cooper began "the state's first state-wide prison labor program on the highways," claiming the prisoners enjoyed the opportunity to get outside in the fresh air and sunshine. Contractors did not like this action and called it "force account road work."



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1944 – The Highway Department began resurfacing work following the destruction of the highway system due to World War II. Called the Betterment Program, 51 miles were resurfaced in 1944.

1946 – All toll bridges were freed. No toll bridges or roads have existed in Tennessee since 1946.

more pieces of equipment and started a sand and gravel operation in Adamsville, which Eddie Sr. joined shortly after leaving office. Adamsville Sand and Gravel joined TRBA as suppliers. “We were never road builders so to speak,” said Eddie II, who is now president of Shaw Concrete Inc. “We supplied road builders with base materials, crushed gravel, sand and what have you.”

“I remember when they came out with this ‘partnering,’” Saltsman added. “I didn’t even know what the heck partnering was. But once I got there and got involved in it, I found out that partnering was they just wanted people working together; I tried my best to work with the contractors. I tried to go to their jobs and see their problems and help them with them. Sometimes, some of my staff thought I overdid that. They would say, ‘You’re just too much of a contractors’ commissioner.’ I was there for eight years, so apparently I wasn’t doing a whole lot wrong. I think we got into partnering pretty well there. When it was all over, I thought we were working great with the contractors.”

Wood admits to being “very biased” about his feelings toward Tennessee’s transportation system. “... Having spent 37 years with TDOT, I’m proud of our road system.” His fondest memories were the working relationship forged among all parties involved in two mountainous road projects in Johnson City and Chattanooga. “It required a lot of cooperation between our department, the contractor and the Department of Environment and Conservation.

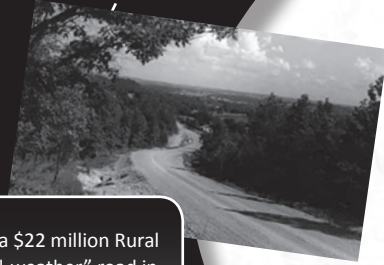
“When I was with TDOT, the Road Builders formed a committee to work with TDOT to see about doing some contract maintenance ... things like guardrail installation, mowing grass ... they formed a committee to work with us and we worked out the details of how to write the specifications and award the contracts. It was a good working committee, and I enjoyed working with them,” Wood said. “I thought it was a really good joint venture ... Another item we worked on was letting contracts to man our rest areas.”

Saltsman, who fondly recalls his time spent as a TRBA member and with TDOT, said that when he was commissioner if he heard of problems on a project he would visit the site himself. “I had to go see what the problem was before I could help with it,” he said. “I was proud of making those site visits. I was then and I am now.”

He added that he gets asked to this day, “Do you miss TDOT?” “Do you miss being there?” I’m 84 years old,” Saltsman answered. “... I say there are two things I will miss about TDOT until the day that I die. One of them is Angie Martin, my executive assistant; she ran my life beautifully. The other thing that I’ll miss until the day I die is that fleet of airplanes,” he laughed. “I have to drive now ...”



1948 – Tennessee Highway Research Program established as a collaborative effort between the department and the University of Tennessee to study problems concerning the design, materials and construction of highways.



1949 – Legislature passes a \$22 million Rural Road Bill to provide an “all-weather” road in proximity of every farm home in Tennessee. A Rural Road Division was created.



1953 – Planning for superhighways (interstates) began under Gov. Frank Clement and Highway Commissioner William Leech. In his 1954 address to the General Assembly, Gov. Clement said something needed to be done in order to avoid an adverse effect on economic prosperity. He added, “Today we are trying to move 1954 traffic over a system designed to accommodate 1941 traffic.”



Timeline continued on page 20

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONERS

Here is a listing of individuals who served as Tennessee's highway and transportation commissioner in TDOT's first 100 years:

Six-Commissioner Structure, 1915-1919

Ex-Officio members: Gov. Tom C. Rye; State Geologist A.H. Purdue; University of Tennessee Dean of Engineering Charles, E. Ferris; and appointees Authur Crownover, Charles W. Williams and William H. Crox (succeeded by C.F. Milburn)

Three-Commissioner Structure, 1919-1923

W.P. Moore, W.W. House and W.T. Testerman

Single Commissioner Structure, 1923-present

J.G. Creveling Jr.	January 1923-Oct. 21, 1925
C.N. Bass	Oct. 21, 1925-Feb. 16, 1928
Harry S. Berry	Feb. 16, 1928-Feb. 27, 1929
R.H. Baker	Feb. 27, 1929-Jan. 17, 1933
F.W. Webster	Jan. 17, 1933-Dec. 11, 1934
H.S. Walters	Dec. 11, 1934-Sept. 20, 1935
Briggs Smith	Sept. 20, 1935-Jan. 18, 1937

M.O. Allen	Jan. 18, 1937- Jan. 11, 1939
C.W. Phillips	Jan. 11, 1939-Jan. 16, 1949
E.W. Eggleston	Jan. 16, 1949-Aug. 10, 1950
Charles Wayland	Aug. 10, 1950-Sept. 1, 1951
C.W. Bond	Sept. 1, 1951- Sept. 18, 1952
Herbert A. McKee	Sept. 18, 1952-Jan. 15, 1953
W.M. Leech	Jan. 15, 1953-Nov. 15, 1958
Herbert M. Bates	Nov. 15, 1958-Jan. 19, 1959
D.W. Moulton	Jan. 19, 1959-Jan. 15, 1963
David M. Pack	Jan. 15, 1963-Jan. 16, 1967
E.W. Speight	Jan. 16, 1967-Jan. 16, 1971
Robert F. Smith	Jan. 16, 1971-Jan. 18, 1975
Eddie L. Shaw	Jan. 18, 1975-Jan. 20, 1979
William B. Sansom	Jan. 20, 1979-June 30, 1981
Robert E. Farris	July 1, 1981-Oct. 31, 1985
Dale R. Kelley	Nov. 1, 1985-Jan. 17, 1987
Jimmy M. Evans	Jan. 17, 1987-Dec. 7, 1992
Carl Johnson	Dec. 28, 1992-Oct. 21, 1994
Carl Wood*	Oct. 21, 1994-Jan. 21, 1995
J. Bruce Saltsman	Jan. 21, 1995-Jan. 18, 2003
Gerald F. Nicely	Jan. 18, 2003-Jan. 15, 2011
John C. Schroer	Jan. 15, 2011-Present

*Acting Commissioner



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1956 – The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 authorized funds for the completion of the U.S. Interstate System, increasing the share paid by the federal government from 50 percent to 90 percent for interstate projects.



1958 – First interstate contract was awarded in Tennessee to McDowell and McDowell for \$1.3 million to build a two-mile section of I-65 from the Alabama line to Route 31 in Giles County.

1959 – The state spent \$130 million on highway construction.

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1961 – The number of employees in the highway department grew to 5,000 due to the demands of interstate road building.



1960 – At the request of Gov. Ellington, the federal Bureau of Public Roads investigated the progress on the interstates and found Tennessee ranked 6th in the nation in number of miles under construction.



1961 – The first female flaggers were used in Tennessee by contractor Cecil Morgan in Montgomery County.

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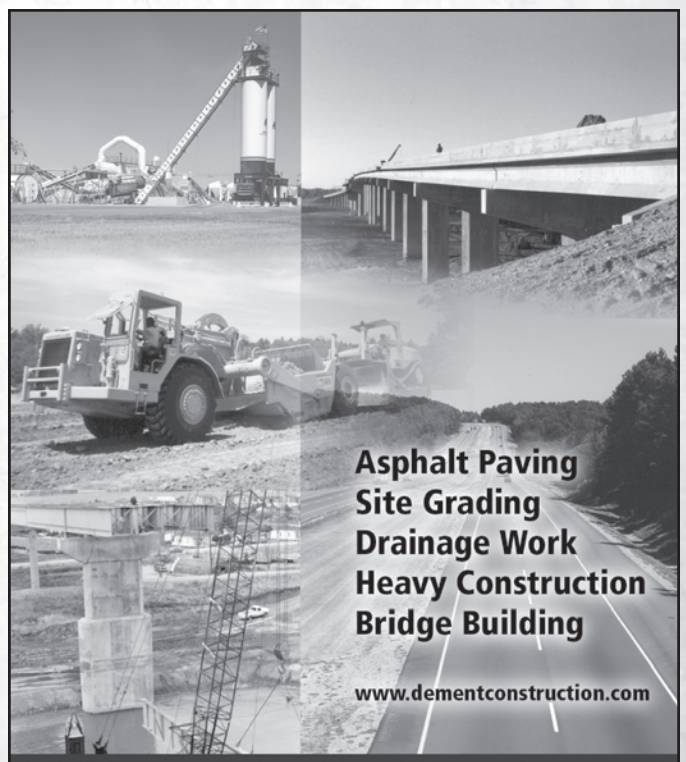
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1961 – The first preconstruction conferences were held between contractors and the department to discuss potential conflicts.



1983 – Under Commissioner Robert Farris, TDOT took over 3,000 miles of county roads due to funding struggles by the counties in maintaining them. This added significantly to the state's responsibility of the Tennessee highway system.



1972 – Responding to a nationwide movement for closer coordination among transportation modes, Gov. Winfield Dunn changed the name of the Tennessee Department of Highway and Public Works to the Tennessee Department of Transportation.



1984 – Tennessee became the second state in the nation to have rural public transportation available in every county.

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1986 – The Better Roads Program proposed by Gov. Lamar Alexander included a phased-in 3-cent increase in the gas tax.

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Timeline continued from page 22

1990-2010 – TDOT begins early deployment of a camera system in Nashville to help monitor and provide a more-efficient urban highway system. By 2010, all four of Tennessee's urban areas had a transportation management center, multiple cameras and message signs to aid in more-efficient travel.

1998 – TDOT begins a HELP program with a goal to remove obstacles such as vehicles and debris to keep traffic flowing. The Nashville and Memphis programs are followed in 1999 by programs in Knoxville and Chattanooga.



2003 – TDOT became a hot button campaign issue in the 2002 gubernatorial election. With the election of Gov. Phil Bredesen, there was a philosophy adjustment in two areas: environmental stewardship and community outreach.



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2009 – The federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included transportation programs as priorities. Tennessee completed more than 300 highway projects with the \$572 million received for highway infrastructure improvements; improved \$21 million of transit-related services; and completed an airport expansion with \$4 million.



July 1, 2014 – TDOT kicks off its one-year Centennial celebration.

100
TDOT

Centennial • 1915 - 2015

For a complete timeline and additional photos and information regarding TDOT's first 100 years, visit www.tdot.state.tn.us/100years.



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