



**Tennessee Department of Transportation
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Work Begins On Emergency Clean-up of U.S. 64 Rockslide

U.S. 64 Expected to Remain Closed for at Least Eight Weeks

NASHVILLE – Work is now underway to remove a major rockslide along U.S. Highway 64 in Polk County, Tennessee. The Tennessee Department of Transportation has awarded a \$2.1 million emergency repair contract to Sevierville, Tennessee based Charles Blalock and Sons, Inc. The rockslide buried portions of U.S. Highway 64 at approximately 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 closing the major east-west corridor through Southeast Tennessee just east of Chattanooga. TDOT originally estimated at least three weeks for clean-up, but after a closer look at the slide area the removal process will likely take at least eight weeks.

“We know the closure of this roadway is a major inconvenience to the many motorists who travel U.S. 64 between Cleveland and Ducktown each day,” said TDOT Commissioner Gerald Nicely. “We appreciate your patience while the work is completed. TDOT will work very closely with the contractor and the community to get this roadway back open as soon as possible.”

Before any material can be removed from the site crews with Charles Blalock & Sons, Inc. will first work to stabilize the slope. Workers will immediately begin scaling and trimming the rock along the face of the mountain. Crews will remove unstable material from the top of the mountainside and will drive large 40’ long rock anchors to help secure other material along the slope. Once the rock along the face of the mountainside has been stabilized, crews will begin removing the large boulders and other slide material located at the bottom of the mountain. After all slide material has been removed, the contractor will repair the damaged roadbed on U.S. 64 and TDOT crews will repave the roadway and reopen it to traffic.

“We estimate that some 30,000 cubic yards of rock and other debris will need to be removed from the site, which is approximately 3,000 dump truckloads of material,” said TDOT Chief Engineer Paul Degges. “This is dangerous work that requires a highly skilled contractor. Our geotechnical engineers will be working closely with Blalock throughout the project to ensure the slide removal is completed safely and as quickly as possible.”

TDOT has created a special web page for the U.S. 64 rockslide (<http://bit.ly/1Tlc8m>). The site currently includes news releases, photos and a map of the slide detour. In the coming days TDOT will be adding daily progress updates, updated photos, periodical video updates and a live time-lapse camera of work at the site. Due to the dangerous and unpredictable nature of the work, once the removal process is underway no one will be allowed on the work site without a TDOT escort. Media wishing to gain access to the site must contact TDOT Region 2 Community Relations Officer Jennifer Flynn at (423)-510-1164 or Jennifer.Flynn@tn.gov.

Information on the slide is available to travelers by dialing 511 from any land line or cell phone. Updates will also be provided on TDOT’s Chattanooga area Twitter page www.twitter.com/Chattanooga511 and on TDOT’s statewide Twitter site www.twitter.com/TN511. Motorists should always use motorist information tools responsibly and refrain from texting, tweeting or using a mobile phone while operating a vehicle. TDOT advises drivers to “Know before you go!” by checking traffic conditions before leaving for your destination.

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