

## Chickamauga Dam Construction Continues

Beneath the 129-foot-high Chickamauga Dam, construction cranes have replaced sandhill cranes this summer as one of Chattanooga's biggest and longest construction projects takes shape in the Tennessee River. The foundation for a new and bigger lock through the dam should be completed over the next 15 months, says project manager Wayne Huddleston. "We're moving ahead on time and on budget," Mr. Huddleston said during a tour by lawmakers of the \$374 million project.

But keeping the federally funded project on schedule for completion by 2014 will require the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to battle strong currents in both the Tennessee River and in Washington, D.C., politics. Dam and lock projects are typically funded equally by the U.S. Treasury and funds from fuel taxes paid by barge operators into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund.

Lt. Col. Bernard Lindstrom, the director of the Nashville district of the Army Corps of Engineers, said the new Chickamauga lock "will bring the lock up to the standard size" of all other locks downstream from Chattanooga and thereby allow barge operators to take multibarge tows through the Chickamauga Dam in only a fraction of the current time. If nothing is done, the deteriorating rock aggregate in the existing lock walls eventually will force the lock to be closed altogether, Mr. Lindstrom said. The current lock was completed along with the Chickamauga Dam in 1940.

The lock replacement is one of four major construction projects planned or under way in Chattanooga which collectively are valued at more than \$2 billion. All of these projects have significant economic impacts to our region and serve as a magnet to draw even more business here," said state Sen. Bo Watson, R-Chattanooga. Congressman Zach Wamp said the local building boom should help Chattanooga weather the current economic slowdown better than many communities.

"Thankfully, at a time of a national downturn in the economy, things in the Tennessee Valley are moving forward in a very positive way," said Wamp.