

# Boston's entire highway system under review after inspectors find additional trouble spots

**BOSTON (AP)** — Inspectors began reviewing the city's entire highway system Wednesday — every bridge, tunnel and roadway — after at least 60 signs of loose bolts and other potential failures were found in the same Big Dig tunnel where a motorist was crushed by falling concrete.

Initial inspections by state officials revealed that some bolts had started to corrode and the concrete in the east-bound connector tunnel, part of the main route to Boston's Logan Airport. Gaps also had developed between the ceiling and metal plates that help hold the massive panels in place.

There had been plans to reopen that section of tunnel Wednesday, but Massachusetts Turnpike Chairman Matthew Amorello said it would remain closed indefinitely to ensure monitoring crews can collect more evidence in a possible criminal investigation of the tunnel's designers and builders.

Amorello added that an undetermined number of similar problems areas were found in two adjacent tunnels, raising the possibility of a broader design construction problem. The widespread trouble spots

prompted the Turnpike Authority to order an inspection of the city's entire highway system — even parts that are decades old and not part of the \$14.6 billion Big Dig system, the nation's most expensive highway project.

Still, Amorello insisted the tunnels remain safe.

"What happened Monday was a tragedy," he said. "I'm taking every step to ensure it never happens again."

Late Monday, 12 tons of concrete ceiling panels in the tunnel collapsed, crushing a car and killing 36-year-old Milena Del Valle. Her husband barely escaped by crawling through a window.

"It was like a bomb," Angel Del Valle told the Boston Herald. "Everything was falling. It was too fast. I couldn't stop. I couldn't do anything."

Attorney General Tom Reilly said a contractor and project manager knew about problems in that section of the tunnel as early as 1999, when five bolts failed during testing.

"It was not only identified, but there was a plan to address that problem, and now we're trying to determine what went wrong so that plan implemented

ed," Reilly said, declining to provide any other details.

A spokesman for project manager Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff declined to comment on the attorney general's allegation. Contractor Moderna Continental did not immediately respond to a phone call and e-mail.

John Christian, an engineer hired to investigate for the Turnpike Authority, said the attachment bolts used a standard design: Holes were drilled into the tunnel's concrete ceiling and bolts were then inserted, along with pressure-injected epoxy.

He said it was possible that inspectors would find "some generic flaw in the systems that are used for designing these panels."

The strength and quality of the concrete used in the tunnel is key to the safe handling of the overhead panels, according to Avi Mor, of Dr. Mor & Associates, a California-based consulting firm specializing in analysis of construction defects.

He said if concrete failure were to blame for the collapse of the panel, investigators would likely find pieces of concrete still exposed to the tie rods.



Big Dig Project Director Michael Lewis, right, speaks Wednesday as Massachusetts Turnpike Authority Chairman Matthew Amorello listens at a news conference in Boston.

# Wildfire rages in desert

**TUOYA VALLEY, CALIF. (AP)** — Firefighters evacuated dozens of homes Wednesday as a wild fire raged across 26,000 acres of desert and destroyed 30 homes and buildings in an area where Gene Autry, Roy Rogers and others filmed Hollywood Westerns.

Historic buildings in the Old West movie set area of PioneerTown had been spared but several other structures were destroyed, fire officials said Wednesday.

Wind exceeding 40 mph fanned the flames, and officials said they didn't expect the weather to change anytime soon.

Dozens were evacuated Wednesday from communities in Little Morongo Canyon and Burns Canyon. As many as 1,000 people fled the flames Tuesday, authorities said.

Firefighters had no estimate Wednesday of when they might have the blaze under control.

"If we have more of the same with the high winds and high temperatures it could be trouble," said California Department of Forestry Capt. Marc DeRoiser.

The blaze burned through historic PioneerTown, destroying at least 30 houses and some of the less-historic buildings there and in surrounding towns, said state Department of Forestry Capt. Marc DeRoiser.



Homeowners Carl Dalton, left, and Vikki Dalton watch Wednesday as a helicopter drops water on the Sawtooth Complex Fire near the town of Tuoya Valley, Calif.

Gene Autry filmed "Last of the Pony Riders" and "Indian Territory" in PioneerTown. Hayden, who played the sidekick in the "Hopalong Cassidy" movies, used it for his "Judge Roy Bean" TV series, and "Cisco Kid" producers shot several movies and the TV series there.

By the 1960s, the town had become more of a residential community, although filmmakers began returning a few years ago. Car companies have filmed commercials in PioneerTown in recent years. Music videos have also been made there.

Investigators believe lightning started the fire during the weekend. About 2,500 firefighters aided by 13 helicopters and eight air tankers were working the blaze, DeRoiser said the force would be expanded.

Elsewhere in the West, Montana firefighters were trying to control a blaze about 40 miles west of Billings that had destroyed at least four structures, including two homes, officials said.

As firefighters urged residents of about 120 homes to leave because of the 3,000-acre fire. No injuries were reported.

Officials in Nevada said they had fully contained two wildfires burning toward the small town of Beatty, near Death Valley National Park.

# Tourists attacked at Nat'l. Mall

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Police beefed up patrols around national landmarks Wednesday, a day after the District of Columbia police chief declared a crime emergency in response to a string of violence that included the killing of a British activist.

At least 14 people have been killed in Washington already this month, and in the last 30 days robberies have risen 14 percent and armed assaults have jumped 18 percent. Last year, homicides in the city fell to a 20-year low of 15.

Police Chief Charles Ramsey's emergency declaration allows commanders more flexibility to adjust officers' schedules and reassign them to high-crime areas.

"That's a short term solution," Ramsey said Wednesday. "Long-term is a lot more complicated than that, and it's going to take a whole lot more of the police."

Just hours after the declaration, two groups of tourists were robbed at gunpoint on the National Mall, both by men dressed all in black. The U.S. Park Police, who patrol the Mall and are separate

from the D.C. police, posted more officers in the area in response.

"We're going to reallocate our resources. We're going to see what improvements we can make," said Park Police Sgt. Scott Fear.

Park Police were looking for connections between the robberies and three similar incidents in the area in late May. There have been no arrests in any of those cases.

Park Police Chief Dwight Pettiford met Wednesday with Eleanor Holmes Norton, the city's delegate to Congress, to discuss the deployment of officers. Norton said the Interior Department had ordered the Park Police to assign officers at fixed positions, rather than walk beats.

Those killed in the recent violence include British activist Alan Smitá, a volunteer for the potential presidential campaign of former Virginia Gov. Mark R. Warner. He was shot July 8 Sunday in the affluent Georgetown area, and police say his attackers attempted to rape his companion.

**ONCE IN A BLUE MOON**

**WE HAVE A TRULY NEW BREAKTHROUGH IN HEARING AND DESIGN.**

Introducing the all new **vivatone**

*Featuring innovative Totally Open Canal™ Digital Technology*

**We are pleased to introduce a new hearing instrument that is changing the way people feel about hearing aids and changing how we fit them. A blue moon is now here.**

**Reserve your space today for a:**

**FREE Demonstration & Open House!**

(Hear the latest technology, customized for your hearing, in our office!)

**5 DAYS ONLY!**

**APPOINTMENTS ARE LIMITED, CALL TODAY!**

**410-758-2338 + 800-432-7012 + 302-674-1119**

**SOUND ADVICE HEARING AID CENTER**

*Serving Delmarva Since 1987*

[www.sahac.com](http://www.sahac.com)

Centerville, MD 410-758-2338      Easton, MD 410-763-8399  
 Cambridge, MD 410-901-2959      Seaford, DE 302-628-7951  
 Dover, DE 302-674-1119      Salisbury, MD 410-219-5088

**CUSTOMER SERVICE**  
 Our office hours are Sunday, 7:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.; Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
 To start a subscription, call the Customer Service Department for rates at 410-770-4005 or email: [sub@star-democrat.com](mailto:sub@star-democrat.com)

**DELIVERIES AT QUESTIONS**  
 CALL 410-770-4005  
 Subscribers in Talbot, Caroline, Dorchester and Queen Anne's counties receive a damage-free copy or do not receive a paper may be paid for special delivery. Calls regarding special delivery must be received by 9 a.m. Sunday through Friday.

**ADVERTISING**  
 Retail: Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Call 410-822-1500 • Fax 410-770-4048  
 Classified: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Call 410-770-4030 • Fax 410-770-4012

Classified Online: [www.stardem.com](http://www.stardem.com)  
 Ads may be e-mailed 24 hours a day to [mclass@cheb-us.com](mailto:mclass@cheb-us.com).

**ADVERTISING OFFICES CLOSED SATURDAY & SUNDAY**

**COMMUNITY NEWS**  
 We want to publish your community news in The Star Democrat and The Sunday Star.  
 To get your information published in the newspaper, write it down and include time, date, and contact person and phone number.  
 Mail to Community News, P.O. Box 600, Easton MD 21601, fax to 410-770-4019. Alternatively, Community News, email to [ext@star-democrat.com](mailto:ext@star-democrat.com), drop it off by the offices at 2908B Airpark Drive, Easton.

Please submit information two weeks before the event.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**  
 Main numbers: 418-822-1500, 410-228-5712  
 Offices open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday  
 Mailing address: The Star Democrat, P.O. Box 600, Easton, MD, 21601.

**DIRECT NUMBERS TO VOICE MAIL**

Classified Ad Manager: Fil Morrison...410-770-4054  
 Marketing Director: David Fike...410-770-4040  
 Customer Services...410-770-4005  
 Publishers Assistant: Sandy Russ...410-770-4033  
 Controller: Melodie Haufe...410-770-4020  
 Composition Manager...410-770-4079  
 Shirley Jackson...410-770-4034  
 President/Publisher: Larry E. Fittigham...410-770-4034  
 Sports Editor: William Haufe...410-770-4095  
 Financial/My Editor: John Gries...410-770-4093  
 Community Editor: Joy La Prade...410-770-4110  
 Business Editor: Vicki Fisher...410-770-4099  
 Special Sections Editor: David Everman...410-770-4107  
 Entertainment Editor: Peter Howell...410-770-4104

Photo Desk...410-770-4114  
 Managing Editor: Barbara Sowers...410-770-4090  
 Executive Editor: Denise Riley...410-770-4088

**NEWS & SPORTS**

You can reach The Star Democrat newsroom at 410-770-4010. The newsroom is OPEN Sunday through Saturday.  
 Mail news and sports items to: P.O. Box 600, Easton, MD 21601 or fax to 410-770-4019. E-mail news items to [stardem@cheb.com](mailto:stardem@cheb.com). Call sports at 410-770-4095 or email [sdsp@cheb.com](mailto:sdsp@cheb.com).

**Star Democrat Online: [www.stardem.com](http://www.stardem.com)**

The Star Democrat is published Sunday through Friday. Second class postage is paid at Easton, Talbot County, Md. Advertising, editorial and circulation offices are located at 2908B Airpark Drive at the Airport Industrial Park, Easton, MD 21601. USPS # 666360.  
 To Postmaster: Send all address corrections to: The Star Democrat, P.O. Box 600, Easton, MD 21601.