



Governor Henry McMaster and Secretary of Transportation Christy A. Hall discuss the I-26 Midlands Connection Project in Newberry County and other interstate widening projects that are benefiting from additional federal and state funding made available to SCDOT this year.

The sound of progress

SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

By Bob Kudelka

There was plenty of good news to report when Governor Henry McMaster, Secretary of Transportation Christy A. Hall, Commission Chairman Gene Branham Sr. and Commissioner Bill Dukes met with the media in September.

“What you hear up and down this road is the sound of progress,” McMaster said, with a background of steady traffic rolling down Interstate 26 in Little Mountain. “This is progress in South Carolina.”

The Governor added, “Christy Hall and her team have found a way to use every dime that’s available to use the federal money that’s come in, as well as the state money.”

Accelerated construction along

South Carolina’s interstate system was a major theme of the Sept. 21 news conference, thanks to innovative methods of funding and design.

Hall first gave an update on SCDOT’s Midlands Connection Project, which improves a 16-mile segment of I-26 from exit 85 in Little Mountain to Exit 101 in Irmo. Twelve of the miles are being widened to six lanes and four miles from the Peak exit to Broad River Road will expand to eight lanes.

“This is nearly 60 percent complete,” Hall said. “We expect completion by end of 2024... This was accelerated and is being delivered about 3 years earlier than it would have traditionally been delivered.”

The project not only widens I-26, but also upgrades and modernizes three major interchanges

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Accelerated widening program starts on I-26

OCTOBER 11, 2022

By Bob Kudelka

All eyes were on **Greg Smith** behind the controls of an 86,000-pound trackhoe in the grassy median of Interstate 26. Governor Henry McMaster, Secretary **Christy A. Hall**, a host of dignitaries and news camera crews watched from atop a nearby overpass.

In his 36 years at SCDOT, never before had the Colleton resident maintenance foreman been in

such a spotlight.

On the Governor’s command via a two-way radio, Smith guided the trackhoe and made a ceremonial first dig into the bright green sod to cap off a media event for the I-26 widening project.

“That’s a groundbreaking right there,” the Governor said as, on cue and without a hitch, Smith’s trackhoe scooped up 27 cubic feet of fresh Ridesville earth.

The crowd applauded.

“Just another day at the DOT,” Smith said afterward. “I’ve been here too long to get butterflies.”

The Oct. 11, 2022, I-26 Widening Project Kickoff was held after the agency signed a contract

for the first leg to widen 70 miles of I-26 between Charleston and Columbia.

In addition to McMaster and Hall, speakers at the event included SCDOT Commission Chairman David E. “Gene” Branham Sr.; SC House of Representatives Speaker Murrell Smith; Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Larry Grooms; SC Manufacturers Alliance President/CEO Sara Hazard; SC Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Bob Morgan; and SC Trucking Asso-

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The I-26 widening project between mile markers 187 and 194 began with a ceremonial dig with a trackhoe on Oct. 11, 2022, by Colleton Maintenance Foreman Greg Smith. The dig was part of a ceremony by state officials including Governor Henry McMaster, House Speaker Murrell Smith, Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Larry Grooms and Secretary of Transportation Christy A. Hall.



Greg Smith
Colleton
Maintenance