

DIRECTIONS

By Elizabeth S. Mabry
Executive Director

Family reunions and homecoming events at school are special times. We use these special events to touch base with family and friends who may have been away and out of touch for a while.

We have some special family members at SCDOT who were away during the last year serving their country. Thirteen employees were called to active military duty, many of them serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. One other employee was also called, and she chose to leave SCDOT and make the military her full-time job.

As we have in the past, we thought it was only fitting to have a ceremony

celebrating the safe return of these SCDOT employees to their families and their co-workers. On the front page of *The Connector*, you can read about the event that was held as part of the Commission meeting on May 19.

This is the third ceremony we've held at SCDOT since the Iraqi War began. Our employees and their families mean everything to us. That's why we miss them, we pray for them, and we take the time to honor their service to this great country when they return.

The employees were honored by the Commissioners, the reigning Miss South Carolina, Ashley Wood and Maj. General Harry Burchstead from the SC Army National Guard. General Burchstead told the gathering that it was an important ceremony, because he knew

of no other state agency that sets aside time to honor its employees who leave their families and job to put their lives in harm's way.

One other person who was present to honor these special employees was a co-worker, Barbara Wessinger. Barbara is an attorney in the Legal Office. At the time of the ceremony, Barbara's husband was making his way back from the Middle East after being called to active duty 18 months ago. So you can see that our SCDOT family has members who either serve their country, or who send their loved ones off to defend our country and our freedom.

SCDOT employees are special people. All of us do our best to serve our state every day. And some of us take another step to serve our great nation as well. As Independence Day approaches, we'll take time to celebrate our country and remember what it stands for, and the freedom that we all enjoy. This July



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4th, let's take a moment to remember, celebrate and thank our special SCDOT family members who give their time to serve in the armed forces.

SCDOT receives prestigious international award

By Steve Meetze
and Eric Stuckey

Exciting projects are happening in the Planning Office. Director of Planning, Ron Patton recently was notified that some of his creative employees were being recognized for their work and was pleased to support their participation in the Annual Bentley Conference.

On May 9, SCDOT received the 2005 BE Award of Excellence for the North Myrtle Beach Connector project visualization, which was created by Steve Meetze in the Office of Planning.

This international award was presented by Bentley Systems (the developers of Microstation). SCDOT was among 224 nominations for this year's ceremony. Eight nominees were selected for Civil Visualization, including other DOTs, FHWA, consultants, and even one nominee from Quebec.

Thirty-three projects in the professional portion of the program received BE Awards during the conference in Baltimore, Md. These projects set benchmarks for their industries, and showcase the imagination and technical mastery of the organizations that creat-

ed them. Detailed information about the award can be found at <http://www.be.org/en-US/Be%20Awards/>.

The winners were announced during a dinner and ceremony hosted by Alan Farkas of Farkas Berkowitz & Company, a Washington-based management consulting firm specializing in infrastructure, and co-sponsored by McGraw-Hill Construction, publisher of *Engineering News-Record*. The independent panel of BE Awards jurors, which included accomplished Bentley users and distinguished industry experts, selected the winning projects from more than 200 nominees.

"Our esteemed jurors this year truly had their work cut out for them," said Greg Bentley, CEO. "The 2005 BE Awards competition attracted a record number of nominations - all world-class, all reflecting the incredible technical skill, imagination, and leadership of our users. Selecting from among them couldn't have been easy."

Eric Stuckey who, during the creation of the project, manipulated photographs to create several buildings surrounding the North Myrtle Beach Connector accompanied



Steve Meetze, left, and Eric Stuckey accept the award for the visualization project of the North Myrtle Beach Connector project. A frame from the winning project is shown at right.

Meetze on the stage. Todd Anderson also took part in the award acceptance. Anderson is the SCDOT CADD Manager in the IT Services section and has offered outstanding CADD support throughout the years. He has done an excellent job keeping our Bentley products up-to-date, which helped make the creation of this visualization possible.

Another SCDOT employee, Outdoor Advertising Manager Keith Melvin, also was nominated for an award in the Operations and Maintenance: Data Re-use category for his achievements with implementing an outdoor billing system.

Bentley's Microstation product is CADD software that is predominantly used by DOTs throughout the world to generate road and bridge plans. SCDOT began using Microstation in the 1980s during the migration from hand-drawn plans to creating electronic road and bridge plans on computers. Various other Bentley products are used throughout the agency, including Geopak & Projectwise.

The visualization consisted of a complex 3D model, which SCDOT used to address concerns from local officials and



citizens in South Carolina.

From the Microstation model, SCDOT produced visualizations in various media for display at public meetings in North Myrtle Beach.

Virtual tours of the model were valuable in communicating construction decisions regarding sound walls, placement of sign bridges, and landscaping to the community of North Myrtle Beach. In addition to the virtual tours of the project, rendered stills and flyovers were effective in explaining important details that contributed to decisions, but otherwise would have been difficult to communicate to the public.

The North Myrtle Beach Connector project was managed by Ron Willing and Berry Still, and designed by a consultant. Last year, Steve Meetze submitted the Fantasy Harbour project and was nominated but did not win the category.

The Fantasy Harbour project was managed by Rob Hamzy and Berry Still and was also designed by a consultant.

Next year, we're considering submitting the visualization work Meetze did on Meeting Street in Charleston for the Cooper River Bridge Replacement project.

For Bentley and many others, the BE Award of Excellence is a prestigious honor, which will be widely publicized in magazines, websites and news articles. Bentley even offers a screensaver every year that spotlights the ceremony and displays portraits of the winners receiving the awards trophy.

Anyone in the world who uses Microstation to create visualizations is encouraged to submit projects. SCDOT is now considered to be the best in the world at creating civil visualizations using Microstation software.

The Connector

Winner of awards from S.C. Division, Public Relations Society of America; Carolinas Association of Business Communicators; S.C. Press Association and AASHTO.

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The Connector is distributed free by mail to employees and to others upon request.

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Printed with soy ink on recycled paper.