

SCDOT wins regional transportation award for Harbor River Bridge Replacement project in Beaufort County

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) has won a regional transportation award for innovative technology used in the U.S. 21 over Harbor River Bridge Replacement Project in Beaufort County.

"We are extremely honored to accept this award that is an example of some of the great work by SCDOT," South Carolina Secretary of Transportation **Christy A. Hall** said. "SCDOT continues to lead the way in innovation for both operations and project designs."

Sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), AAA, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the America's Transportation Awards competition was created to showcase the tremendous projects delivered by state departments of transportation every year to tell the broader story on the importance of transportation. SCDOT won in the "Best Use of Technology and Innovation, Medium Project" category.

SCDOT's winning project consisted of a 3,353-foot long fixed-span Harbor River bridge to provide uninterrupted access for shrimping and sailing vessels along the river below as well as improved safety for motorists. The new bridge replaced a swing-span bridge that was deteriorating and required on-going repairs and maintenance.

To keep the road open during construction and to minimize environmental impacts, the SCDOT project team used an innovative construction-staging scheme, which involved using connectable barges to create a wide access road across the salt marsh and open water.

The barges created little or no impacts to the salt marshes, oyster banks or essential fish habitats and helped reduce the overall time to build and open the new bridge.



CODY CROUCH/THE CONNECTOR

HARBOR RIVER BRIDGE

The Harbor River Bridge in Beaufort County won a SASHTO award for innovative technology used in the bridge replacement project.

SCDOT is debt free: Agency makes final payment on outstanding highway bonds, loans

SCDOT officials announced the final payment on the agency's outstanding highway bonds. By paying off all outstanding debt, including State Infrastructure Bank loans, the agency is saving money on future interest payments and that money can be reinvested into ongoing projects.

With this announcement, the SCDOT becomes one of six state departments of transportation in the nation with no outstanding highway bonds or loans. This

announcement follows the early repayment of loans to the State Infrastructure Bank in December 2021. By using one-time funding, that action saved SCDOT \$9.2 million in future principal and interest payments.

Secretary of Transportation **Christy A. Hall**, P.E. said, "I'm proud to announce that we have reached this significant milestone. We are grateful to Governor McMaster and the South Carolina General Assembly for their

continued investment in our work and we take seriously our responsibility to be responsible stewards for the people of South Carolina. We appreciate the support of our colleagues at the State Treasurer's Office as we continue to plan strategically for the future of the agency."

SCDOT Commission Chairman David E. "Gene" Branham Sr. said, "The SCDOT is making tremendous progress on our Strategic 10-Year Plan and we are

better positioned than ever before to expedite the projects we have in the pipeline."

"I want to congratulate Secretary Hall and her team for reaching this important financial milestone," said State Treasurer Curtis Loftis. "Under Hall's leadership, SCDOT's financial stewardship has continued to grow, and I appreciate her efforts to support accountability and transparency in state government."

In 2003, the Agency carried

approximately \$1 billion in transportation debt, with annual payments up to \$100 million in 2008. Those funds were used to expedite a large number of projects across the state including the Ravenel Bridge and the widening of U.S. 17 in the ACE basin. By paying off debt now, the agency is in a better position financially, preserving and building debt capacity for financing larger projects, like the reconstruction of I-526 between Mt. Pleasant and West Ashley.