

Carolinas AGC, SCDOT, AGC of America release results of Work Zone Safety Survey

By Bob Kudelka

Secretary of Transportation **Christy A. Hall** joined members of Carolinas Associated General Contractors (AGC) and AGC of America this past spring for a news conference on work zone safety.

“Drivers, I’m pleading with you, please do your part,” Hall said during the May 26 event in front of SCDOT Headquarters. “Pay attention, slow down, safe a life. That life could be your very own.”

Carolinas AGC (CAGC) partnered with AGC of America (AGC) and SCDOT to release the South Carolina results of AGC of America’s 2022 Work Zone Safety Awareness Survey. AGC members from across the nation participated in the survey, including many from South Carolina and North Carolina.

The survey showed that 93 percent of highway contractors in South Carolina had motor vehicles crash into their work zone in the past year. That’s nearly a third of the national average.

Marty McKee, Vice President of King Asphalt and CAGC Highway Division Vice Chair, began the media event at the SCDOT headquarters by saying, “As a contractor, safety is the most im-

portant thing for our employees and for everyone working on our jobsites.”

Brian Turmail of AGC of America highlighted the survey results with members of the media, CAGC members, SCDOT employees and OSHA employees. According to the survey results, motorists are in even greater danger from highway work zone crashes than construction workers, Turmail noted. While 17 percent of South Carolina contractor survey participants experienced crashes that resulted in injury to construction workers, nearly three times as many, 42 percent, reported experiencing a crash in which drivers or passengers were injured.

“The best thing anyone can do to protect themselves and workers is to slow down, put the darn phone down, and pay attention when you are in a work zone,” Turmail said.

“SCDOT is entering the second half of our Strategic 10-Year Plan to repair South Carolina roads and bridges. From the beginning of the plan in 2017, SCDOT has been working in every county of South Carolina,” said Hall, who joined Turmail and others to release the new work zone data. “More work zones are occurring all across our state as we make progress. For the

safety of all highway workers, it is imperative that all motorists use an abundance of caution when approaching and driving through work zones.”

Hall said roadwork is currently at an unprecedented level—four times the normal level—and is continuing to increase with road work in every county of the state.

“There are probably close to 10,000 people on a daily basis working on our roadside just a few inches—a paint line—away from what could be a catastrophic event,” Hall said.

Hall and Turmail noted that contractors and SCDOT are doing their part to make work zones safer through improved technology, lighting, signage, and safety gear as well as increased law enforcement. They begged motorists to do their part as we enter the summer season, the peak of both traffic and road construction.

“Roadwork has ramped up all across the state,” Hall said. “There’s roadwork happening in every county of this state... Memorial Day starts not only the peak of travel and vacation season, but it is also the peak time for highway construction. These workers put their lives on the line every single day.”

SCDOT crews prepare for hurricane season



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

SCDOT workers from Lexington Maintenance stand ready to put out cones and barricades during the June 9 hurricane lane reversal drill.

By Bob Kudelka

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) participated in a statewide hurricane evacuation lane reversal drill on Thursday, June 9.

No lanes were closed during the drill, which ran from 8 a.m. to early afternoon.

Motorists were advised to use caution as SCDOT crews were stationed along roadsides.

SCDOT crews rehearsed the placement of traffic control devices along portions of I-26 between Columbia and Charleston; U.S. 21 and U.S. 278 in Beaufort County; and U.S. 501 in Horry County.

During the exercise, SCDOT Maintenance crews traveled to pre-designated locations along these routes to deploy barrels and cones. Employees deployed the barrels on roadsides and shoulders for the drill so as not to interrupt traffic, but during an actual hurricane lane reversal these barrels and cones would be used to safely manage evacuation traffic. During an actual evacuation, barrels would be deployed on the travel lanes, intersections and exits. Other SCDOT staff members were involved in monitoring the flow of traffic from the Traffic Management Centers and deploying

traffic control devices such as message boards along the routes that would be reversed.

“With the ever-increasing popularity of South Carolina’s beautiful coastal region, the number of residents and visitors continues to grow,” Secretary of Transportation **Christy A. Hall** said. “This makes it critical that we rehearse implementing lane reversals should they be needed during hurricane evacuations. Please watch for our employees and our partners as we conduct this drill.”

SCDOT in 2020 announced an updated plan for reversing lanes on I-26, which includes beginning the reversal at a median crossover near the Nexton Parkway, exit 197, instead of at I-526 as in past years. While this shortens the length of the reversal by 15 miles, it is designed to reduce traffic impacts for the Charleston area and be simpler for motorists to access the reversed side of I-26.

Motorists are encouraged to identify their evacuation routes well ahead of an actual evacuation, and can do so by accessing SCDOT’s 511 traveler information site, www.511sc.org and clicking on “Evacuation Resources.”

SCDOT crews were ready for Hurricane Ian on Sept. 30. See story on pages 16-17.



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S.C. Secretary of Transportation Christy A. Hall makes remarks on May 26 during a news conference with Carolinas AGC and AGC of America on work zone safety. From right, Brian Turmail of AGC of America and Marty McKee of Carolinas AGC.