

Janet P. Oakley confirmed as Secretary of Transportation

By Pete Poore

The South Carolina Senate voted to confirm the nomination of **Janet P. Oakley** as the third Secretary of Transportation on May 22. The vote was 37-0.

Secretary Oakley was nominated by Governor Nikki Haley on April 7. Gov. Haley cited Oakley's extensive experience with federal transportation programs that could benefit South Carolina.

Oakley has over 30 years of federal transportation policy experience. She spent the past 15 years of her career as the Director of Policy and Government Relations for the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in Washington, D.C.

In that role, she worked closely with a number of state DOTs to develop policy, coordinate initiatives to support and promote innovations in state transportation leadership, management and project delivery among a variety of many other talents and skills.

At the time of her nomination, AASHTO Executive Director Bud Wright praised the selection of Oakley for South Carolina's Transportation Secretary. "I could not be more proud and pleased for Janet. With her exceptional understanding of state and national transportation issues, she'll be a great resource to the Governor and the citizens of South Carolina," said Wright.

Shortly after the confirmation vote was taken by the Senate,



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Janet P. Oakley, right, listens to comments from senators, left, after her confirmation as S.C. Secretary of Transportation on May 22. She was confirmed by a vote of 37-0.

Oakley issued a statement to SC-DOT's employees:

"It will be my honor and privilege to work with you to serve

our customers – the citizens and businesses of South Carolina. It is my vision that we will work in partnership with the Govern-

nor, the Commission, General Assembly and our regional and local governments to demonstrate innovation and deliver be-

See OAKLEY on page 9

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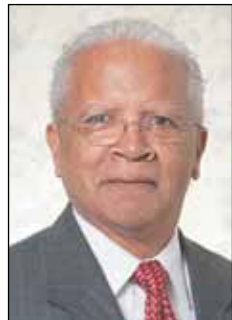
Tips for the Best Chance to Stay Alive on the Highway

Dick Jenkins of Traffic Engineering has compiled a list of driving tips to remember. They are placed throughout this issue for you to find and remember.

Three New Commissioners begin terms

Three new members have begun terms on the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission: **Samuel B. Glover**, of Orangeburg; **John N. Hardee**, of Columbia; and **Woodrow W. Willard Jr.**, of Spartanburg.

Glover, representing the 6th Congressional District, was director of the South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services from April 2004 to January 2011. He previously was director of the SC Army National Guard Youth Challenge Academy in Columbia from 2000 to 2004.



Glover

Glover received a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Science degree from S.C. State College (now University). He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1970 to 1978 and retired from the South Carolina Army National Guard as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1998.

Hardee, representing the 2nd Congressional District, is Director of Public Affairs for Lamar Outdoor Advertising. He previously served on the SCDOT Commission from 1998-2007 including a term as Vice Chairman from 2002 to 2004.



Hardee

Hardee has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Central Midlands Council of Governments since 2004. He is chairman of the Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports & Tourism and was a member of the Richland County Transportation Committee prior to becoming an SCDOT Commissioner again.

Willard, representing the 4th Congressional District, is President of Willard Incorporated, a real estate appraisal, consulting and brokerage firm. Willard has been

a member of the Spartanburg Association of Realtors since 1978. He is a South Carolina licensed real estate broker and certified general real estate appraiser.



Willard

Willard has been a member of the Facilities Committee of the Board of Trustees at Wofford College since 1990. He is a past president of the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce and was the Spartanburg Chamber of Commerce Representative on the Spartanburg Area Transportation Policy Committee from 1998 to 2014.

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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Janet P. Oakley is the South Carolina Secretary of Transportation.



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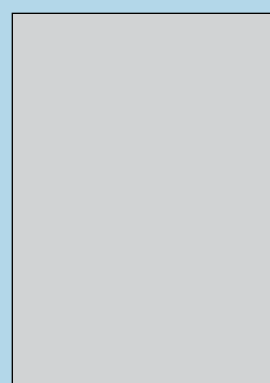
South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission



Jim Rozier
1st Congressional District



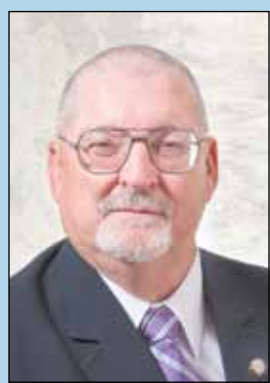
John N. Hardee
2nd Congressional District



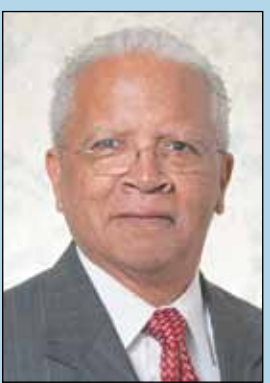
Vacant
3rd Congressional District



Woodrow W. Willard
4th Congressional District



W.B. Cook
5th Congressional District



Samuel B. Glover
6th Congressional District



Mike Wooten
7th Congressional District



Clifton Parker
Commissioner At-Large

I-385 safety improves after clear zone increased

By Bob Kudelka

Fewer motorists are crashing into trees and dying along a stretch of I-385 in Laurens County since several trees were removed during a widening project in 2010, according to data from SCDOT.

As a part of the project, the clear zone was increased to meet the current national guidance. A clear zone is the unobstructed area beyond the edge of the traveled way that allows a driver to stop safely or regain control of a vehicle that leaves the traveled way.

Clear zone values are based on many factors including: vehicle speeds, vehicle volume, and crash data. As a result, trees up to approximately 50 feet from the edge of the pavement were removed.

In a 5-year span before the I-385 improvement project, there was an average of 12.4 crashes involving trees per year. In nearly three years since the project's completion, that number has reduced to 3.1 crashes involving trees per year. This is a decrease of 75 percent.

In addition, there were six fatalities during the 5-year period before the improvement project, or an average of 1.2 per year, on this section of I-385 - and all of which involved trees. There were no fatalities in a nearly 3-year period of study after the project's completion.

Injuries from tree crashes have decreased 65 percent, from an average of four per year to 1.4 per year.

Overall, including all types of crashes, there have been 22 percent fewer crashes per year since the I-385 improvement project.

"The data clearly show a significant increase in safety, which is our main goal at SCDOT," said **Tony Sheppard**, Director of Traffic Engineering. "From six deaths in tree-related crashes to zero during the study period is a



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Traffic deaths from hitting trees have declined along I-385 since the removal of trees during a widening project in 2010.

dramatic improvement."

"The analysis of the crash data demonstrates the positive impacts of providing a forgiving roadway design and adequate clear zone for motorists of errant vehicles to safely bring their vehicle under control," Sheppard said.

The major work of the I-385 project consisted of pavement

removal and reconstruction of 15 miles of I-385 from the interchange at I-26 to just south of the (Exit 16) S.C. 101 interchange. Additional safety enhancements included a new 10-foot outside paved shoulder, a 4-foot paved inside shoulder and 57,350 feet of new guardrail were also added throughout the project.



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Matt Long is a reporter for the South Carolina Radio Network and has been recognized for his accurate and fair coverage of transportation issues.

S.C. reporter receives national award for transportation reporting

Matt Long, a veteran of the South Carolina Radio Network, was presented the prestigious American Traffic Safety Services (ATSSA) National Media Award during the association's 44th Annual Convention and Traffic Expo in San Antonio, Texas. ATSSA's Director of Communications James Scott Baron presented the award before an audience of more than 600 roadway safety professionals and federal, state and local public officials who traveled to Texas from locations across the country. Long was nominated for the award by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) for fair, balanced and informative reporting on transportation-related issues.

"Over the years, Matt has consistently, accurately and fairly covered transportation-related issues in South Carolina. Recently, his coverage of a critical story – the condition of South Carolina's bridges – stands out as an example of his enterprise and his commitment to excellence," said SCDOT Director of Communications **Pete Poore**.

In 2012, ATSSA's Board of Directors approved the new na-

tional media award to recognize a reporter or a news organization that has been fair, balanced and informative in reporting transportation-related issues on radio, television, in a newspaper, or on the web. Last year, the award was presented to Bryan Painter of the Oklahoman newspaper.

Through the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, state DOT public affairs offices were asked to submit their nominations to ATSSA to compete for the award. From those nominations, the association's Safety and Public Awareness Committee selected three finalists, and during their November meeting, the ATSSA Board of Directors selected Long as the winner.

"ATSSA is extremely proud to honor such a dedicated media professional who is committed to advancing roadway safety on South Carolina's roadways," said ATSSA President and Chief Executive Officer Roger Wentz. "Mr. Long sets the example for the nation as an exceptional transportation reporter."

ATSSA, an international trade association, is located in Fredericksburg, Va.

Do not make a fast maneuver at a high speed to avoid something in the road. You will lose control. Run over the obstacle unless it presents more of a threat to your life than swerving to avoid it. Do not be concerned with possible vehicle damage. Do not stop in an interstate lane for any reason with high speed traffic behind you.

State of the SCDOT: Hall updates Transportation Committee

By Bob Kudelka

On March 5, 2014, then-Acting Secretary of Transportation **Christy Hall** delivered the annual “State of the SCDOT” presentation to the State Senate Transportation Committee.

Just four weeks on the job that included dealing with ice storms and earthquakes, Hall fielded questions and gave a comprehensive look at the agency and the challenges ahead during a presentation lasting nearly 90 minutes and including more than 50 PowerPoint slides.

The State of the SCDOT was attended by several Commissioners as well as members of Hall’s senior leadership team.

Stressing “safety first,” Hall said: “We are constantly working to enhance safety by analyzing high risk corridors and intersections, and putting improvements in place.”

In 2013, traffic fatalities were lowest since 1982 and mileage death rate (fatalities per vehicle miles traveled) was the lowest ever recorded in the state. Edgefield County did not have a traffic fatality in 2013, but suffered its first in 445 days earlier that week, Hall said.

Hall also gave an update on the pavement condition of the various parts of the highway system, from interstate highways to secondary roads. More than 20,000 miles of secondary routes are not eligible for federal funding.

Since 2007, SCDOT has programmed an average of \$34 million per year for pavement improvements on the Non-Federal-Aid Eligible system. ACT 98 of 2013 increased this investment level by an estimated \$41 million.

“Nearly two-thirds of the interstate system is in good condition, from a pavement standpoint, however it is starting to age,” Hall said. “It’s over 50 years old.”

Hall spoke of getting the “most for your money” by stressing preservation of the highway system. For every \$1 million spent, the agency is able to pre-



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Acting Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall gives a report on the construction and maintenance accomplishments in 2013 to the State Senate Transportation Committee. Hall’s report on March 5 included a report on the conditions of highways across the state and the agency’s response and costs of the recent winter storms.

serve 50 lane miles of a primary route compared to rehabilitating only 8 miles or reconstructing 5 miles with the amount of funding.

“From a value standpoint, preservation is a key component of our portfolio as far as asset management,” Hall said.

Construction projects completed during 2013 included:

- SC 602/Platt Springs Road widening project – Lexington County

- US 601 bridge replacement project (4 bridges) – Calhoun/

Richland Counties

- I-385 widening and reconstruction project – Greenville County

- US 17 ACE Basin widening project – Colleton County

- I-77 rehabilitation project – Fairfield/Chester Counties

- US 278 widening project – Beaufort County

- Thirteen intersection safety improvements – multiple counties

Routine maintenance accomplishments in 2013:

- 570,000 potholes patched
- 8,000 encroachment permits processed

- 345,000 roadside acres mowed

- 8,400 miles of shoulder/ditch re-graded

- 42,000 fallen or hazardous trees removed

- 312,000 signs repaired or replaced

- 5,000,000 pounds of litter and debris removed

Of SCDOT’s 8,416 bridges, 1,624 are substandard; 413 are

load-restricted; 10 are closed; and 11 are under construction.

Hall said the agency continues to maintain a solid financial management posture, giving examples such as how invoices are paid within 30 calendar days; monthly Project and Resources Analysis Meetings continue to aid in program delivery; custom SCEIS management reports have been developed; the cashflow model has been expanded to reflect a three-year look-ahead; and employees are enhancing their skills through training and mentoring.

SCDOT has also been working on several areas of realignment within the agency.

Some examples include consolidation of all procurement activities; the Office of Planning was combined with Intermodal, Freight and Mass Transit to place more focus on intermodal needs; there has been an increased emphasis in Offices of Right-of-Way and Environmental Services – both units conduct sensitive and critical activities where major delays can increase the risk to project delivery schedules.

Looking ahead, Hall said areas of concern include the costs of hazardous weather response and recovery and the future of the Federal Program.

Senator J. Yancey McGill of Williamsburg County thanked Hall for taking the position of Acting Secretary, saying her academic background and knowledge is “tremendous.”

“I feel like you were God-sent for that position,” McGill said. “We wish you well... You’ve got a good DOT Commission and we want to thank them and we want to thank the professional employees of DOT for the hard work that is done each and every day to help the citizens of this state.”

“Where I come from, in five counties it’s nothing but a good response,” McGill said. “It’s not just improved from years ago, but our citizens say it’s a quick-time response and they appreciate helping us get the problem solved. DOT is alive and well and doing a great job.”

Do not be annoyed by a rude driver. Just figure that they are not as skilled as you are.

Coming up Aces

A safer trip along U.S. 17 in the scenic ACE Basin

By Bob Kudelka

They're closing down the construction trailer tucked behind the trees off U.S. 17 in Green Pond in Beaufort County, an event unlikely to be noticed by the thousands of motorists passing by each day.

But in the seven years since the trailer was set up as a local base of operations, SCDOT undertook one of the most important highway safety improvement projects in the agency's history.

The widening of a 22-mile segment of U.S. 17 between Jacksonboro and Gardens Corner dramatically improved what had been one of the deadliest two-lane roads in South Carolina.

From 1997 to 2005, there were nearly 1,000 crashes and 33 fatalities along this stretch. The fatality rate was more than three times higher than the other segments of U.S. 17 in South Carolina and 150 percent higher than that of other US primary routes in the state.

In March, finishing touches were being put on the last of three phases of the

project, which officially was completed in October.

"It's been a great project, and a good end result for both SCDOT and the highway users," said **Daniel Burton**, SCDOT's on-site project manager. "It's a vast improvement from what was in place prior to the start of construction."

U.S. 17, west of Charleston, provides a convenient connection to I-95 and continues into Georgia and Florida. Because of this connection, U.S. 17 attracts considerable truck and tourist traffic.

Before the improvement project, the two lane highway with speed limits ranging from 45 mph to 55 mph had designated passing zones where motorists sometimes made poor decisions in trying to overtake traffic. Now, with four lanes throughout the corridor there is ample space for trucks and cars with a 60 mph speed limit. Other safety features include rumble stripes and cable median guardrails.

Claude Ipock, SCDOT's Design Build Special Project Engineer, said the 22-mile portion of U.S. 17 is not only safer and more efficient for travelers but also is a

"good-looking roadway."

"As much of the natural environment was preserved as possible while still providing an adequate clear zone," Ipock said. "I think we got an excellent project."

In one section, engineers spent months working to save about two dozen "very significant," live oaks with a diameter of 30 inches or larger.

From an environmental standpoint, the project was a challenging one due to location in the sensitive ACE Basin.

Created by the convergence of the Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto Rivers, the ACE Basin is one of the largest undeveloped estuaries on the East Coast and is renowned for its natural beauty.

While working on the project, Burton said he has seen armadillos, bald eagles, turkeys, deer, beavers and alligators. One day, employees got a surprise when a 3-foot-long alligator wandered into the parking area near the trailer. The baby gator was relocated to a nearby river.

Early in the project, a bald eagle's nest the size of a Volkswagen was discovered high in the trees near the highway. Special care was taken not to disturb the nest of the federally protected species. Engineers marked the area with "Quiet Zone" signs.

Less noise was another benefit of specially designed side dump trucks used for the widening project. The side dump trucks carry loads to the project and dump from

the road shoulder instead of driving on the soil. These trucks were built specifically for the U.S. 17 project to prevent "mud waves," displacement of the soil by repeated truck movement. The trucks simply pull up along the right of way and dump their load to the side.

The project also included "critter crossings," culverts where animals could cross underneath U.S. 17 instead of risking crossing the traffic.

The initial phase involved with the widening and replacement of the bridge over the Combahee River. Once complete, the Beaufort County portion of U.S. 17 (Segment 1) was widened from two to four lanes with a new and much safer interchange at U.S. 17/US 21.

Several bridges were replaced within this phase of the project. The portion of U.S. 17 along the Combahee River causeway (just North of the Combahee River bridge replacement) was also included within the Segment 1 project and also included widening the existing U.S. 17 from two to four lanes and extended to the beginning of the project limits for the Colleton County (Segment 2) project. Similarly to the Segment 1 project, the Segment 2 project consisted of widening the existing U.S. 17 from two to four lanes. Three bridges were replaced on the project and the intersection of U.S. 17/S.C. 64 in Jacksonboro was re-designed to improve safety.

I-585 reopened quickly after truck damages California Avenue overpass

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) reopened traffic on I-585 in Spartanburg County early Jan. 14 morning after its crews worked through the night to demolish the damaged bridge span on California Avenue (S-124).

Traffic was forced to shut down on the morning of Jan. 13 after the California Avenue bridge over I-585 was severely damaged when struck by a heavy truck. Several beams were damaged and the impact caused the span to shift five feet on the caps.

SCDOT's crews from Spartanburg Maintenance and the District Maintenance Operations worked through the rain overnight to demolish the span and haul off all materials in time for the morning rush hour traffic.

"This work was done in record time, working through terrible weather conditions and countless challenges to overcome," said SCDOT's District 3 Engineering Administrator **Steven Gwinn**. "I commend the SCDOT employees involved in the emergency effort to restore connectivity for the motorist public as quickly as possible."

The two-lane bridge, built in 1957, had been scheduled for replacement as part of the I-585 rehabilitation project with a planned September bid letting.



I-585 was closed for a day after a truck hit the California Avenue overpass and caused it to shift several feet. SCDOT crews worked through the night to demolish the damaged span by rush hour the next day. See more photos on page 26.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY DISTRICT 3/SCDOT

Maintenance employees participate in first statewide conference since 2008

By Bob Kudelka

Nearly 700 employees shared ideas and learned new techniques during the 2013 Maintenance Conference held in Columbia in December.

It was the first time a maintenance conference had been held since 2008, and it premiered a new structure. In the past, the agency held separate conferences for foremen and for Resident Maintenance Engineers (RMEs). The 2013 conference combined both audiences and included RMEs, assistant RMEs, foremen and crew leaders.

"I think it's a great idea," said attendee **Minnie Jones**, a sign crew foreman from Union Maintenance, during a break in the conference. "I think it's informative to all the employees and the input that people are giving is really great."

State Highway Maintenance Engineer **David Cook** said he received a lot of positive feedback from employees.

"I think the employees see the investment in the training that we've brought here," Cook said. "It's been surprising to me how everybody takes something different away from the conference."

Remarks kicking off the conference were made by Director of Maintenance **Jim Feda**, then-Deputy Secretary for Engineering **Van Fuller**, Commissioner Harrison Rearden; and then-Secretary **Robert St. Onge**.

Feda took a moment to remember employees lost on the job, stressing the safety challenges of working with just a white line separating employees from traffic.

"Watch out for each other; watch out for your employees," Feda said. "I really appreciate the work all of you do. We could not be successful as an agency without you...I know you're short-handed; I know you're doing more with less. I appreciate it."

Rearden, representing the 6th Congressional District, said: "You are where the rubber meets the road. You ought to be very proud of what you do. There is not an individual in South Carolina that you don't affect in some



Billy Nowlen talks about safety when spraying pesticides on highway vegetation.

way."

Fuller urged employees to be bold and to "try something different to make us better, faster and more efficient in how we do things."

"Don't just go back and do the same old thing. Use what you learn here to make things better in your shops," Fuller said. "Take care of your crew, take care of yourself - mentally, physically and spiritually. Take care of your family because they are what's going to bring you back every day."

Employees who gave presentations during the conference included **Billy Nowlen, Lyle Davis, Brandon Wilson, Jason Childers, David Cook, Kirk Richards, Michelle Benton, Chris McCurry, Bryan Jones, Alan Kozusko** and **Treasure Scarborough**.

Topics included pesticide safety, bridge maintenance, HMMS, right of way, ditching operations, culvert repair and pipe replacements.



Maintenance employees were scheduled to attend one of three days to keep maintenance units fully staffed back home. The conferences were held Dec. 10-12.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

The conference gave RMEs, assistant RMEs, foremen and crew leaders a chance to share the positive things going on in their areas, as well as a chance to brainstorm the problems they have in their different areas.

Workforce:

A Critical Management Area of the Strategic Management Plan

By Pete Poore

The SCDOT Strategic Management Plan (SMP) has six major sections known as “Critical Management Areas (CMAs). One of those CMAs is “Workforce.” This CMA is a public statement that SCDOT employees are the foundation of this agency. As the CMA title implies, employees perform the work of SCDOT, accomplish the broad mission, achieve the vision and strive to satisfy the goals and objectives of all CMAs.

SCDOT’s ability to attract, hire, train, develop and retain talented employees is key to its success. SCDOT must establish and maintain a work environment in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect and all adhere to ethical standards expected of public employees.

Staff from Strategic Management Planning and Communications have begun making visits around the state to talk to, but primarily listen to employees and gather their candid and anonymous thoughts about matters at SCDOT.

The first visit was made to Richland Maintenance earlier this year. There was interaction with crews before they departed the Maintenance yard, mechanics in the shop, administrative staff in the offices and engineers.

What comments did we hear?

- The need for training other than on the job (OJT) is very important to many employees. The general feeling is that much is lost in production

when an employee is untrained and it was especially a concern when supervisors are not trained at a level to be confident in leading their crews. Some mentioned that some supervisors intentionally hold back trained, confident workers because the supervisor may feel threatened by the employee’s knowledge and skills. Strong feelings for training for those who are foremen and training for the younger/newer employees. Also mentioned was a need for better cross training.

- Pay was as one might imagine the primary concern of most employees. Many have to have second jobs. Many were embarrassed of their pay, but find ways to make ends meet. One employee is wishing against raising the minimum wage because then McDonald’s workers could be making as much if not more than a lot of SCDOT workers. Another employee said overworked, underpaid means not being fully appreciated. Many would like to see a money for skills program.

Why does an employee come back year after year even when they believe they should be making more money?

- The hours (*gives them flexibility to do other things*)
- Family environment (*they receive great emotional support and understanding from leadership*)
- The people (*as a whole they really enjoy working with the other person they work beside*). An employee originally from New York said, “The people here in SCDOT

are so much nicer than they were in New York, I can accept less pay as long as people stay nice like they are now, just means that I take my wife out to dinner next month instead of this month, but the people are nice”

- Stability (*as long as they do their job, they know they will continue to have a job*)

- Not viewed as a job, but as a career and they see themselves as career professionals

- Service (*they know they are contributing to something very important*)

- Benefits (*But, don’t give a pay raise and then raise the cost of benefits by as much if not more otherwise, this is a double edged sword*)

- Teamwork (*if you are on a seasoned team*)

What would employees liked to see changed or fixed?

- The Women’s Forum (*several female employees talked at length about how important that program was to them and how it lifted their spirits and raised their morale and production both before and after the event*)

- Incentives, say more than thank you (*several mentioned this and echoed by many more*)

- Better tools for mechanics.

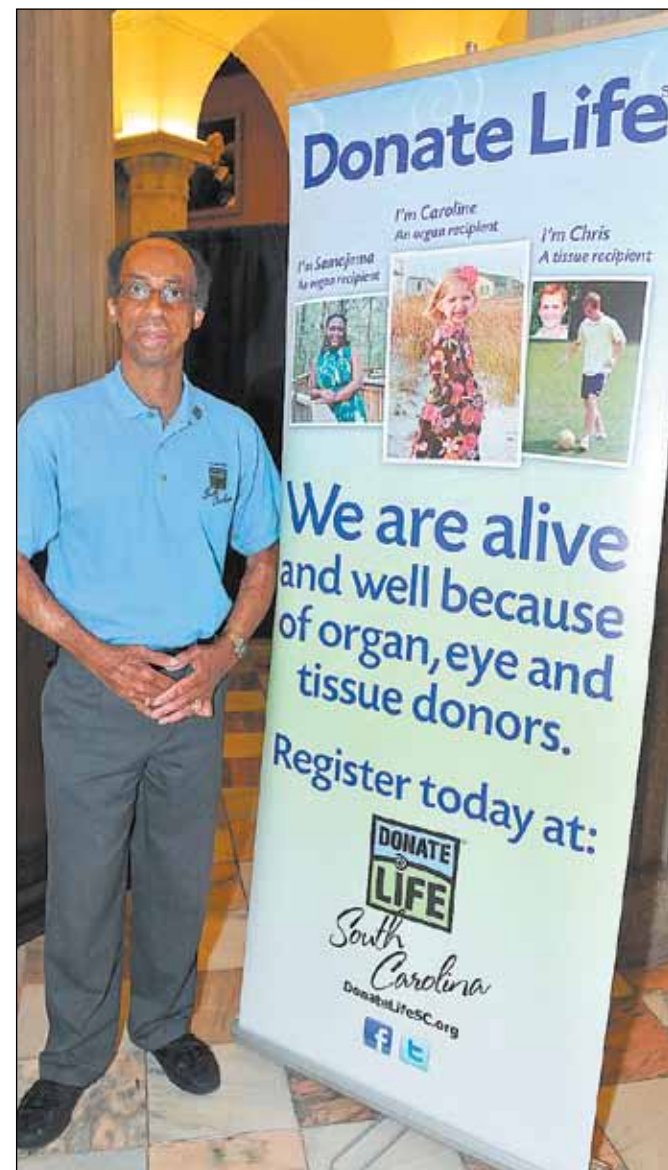
- Improve the surface of the maintenance bays.

- Better equipment in general, from trucks to desks and all equipment in-between (*safety came up more than once when discussing this*). Sand spreaders were mentioned specifically.

Fill your fuel tank when your gauge reads that a fourth of a tank remains.

Always use your turn signals.

While driving, know where the vehicles near you are located.



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Mark Walker encouraged others to be organ and tissue donors during a news conference on April 15 inside the South Carolina Statehouse. Walker received a kidney transplant in 1997. He has worked at SCDOT for 27 years.

SCDOT employee chairs organ donation group

By Rob Thompson

April is Donate Life Month and one SCDOT employee knows exactly how important that is.

Mark Walker, a right-of-way administrator in SCDOT’s Central District, serves as the board chairman of Donate Life South Carolina (DLSC). Walker received a kidney transplant in 1997 and was appointed to the

DLSC board in 2004 by then Governor Mark Sanford.

The organization educates South Carolinians on the importance of becoming an organ and tissue donor.

The group’s mission is to increase the supply of organs and tissues for transplantation and to provide assistance for South Carolina transplant recipients.

DLSC was started by Larry McManus, an orthopedic surgeon whose life was saved by a liver transplant.

U.S. 601 update

By Pete Poore

The U.S. 601 bridge replacement project on the Richland-Calhoun County border is nearing completion. The four bridges that comprise the project are complete and open to traffic, with the last bridge opening in November of 2013. The bridges plus a series of approaches and expanded causeways brought the length of the project to 4.2 miles.

The previous bridges, which are now undergoing demolition, were built in the 1940s. All four were classified structurally deficient and functionally obsolete. Those bridges had two lanes; each lane was 11-foot wide with two-foot shoulders. The new bridges have 12-foot lanes and 10-foot shoulders for increased safety.

One of the challenges this project presented was keeping U.S. 601 open during construction. The replacement structures were built adjacent to the existing bridges. Traffic was diverted to the new bridges as each one was completed. The alternative was to create an impractical 70-mile detour.

The Congaree River and the adjacent streams have slowed down the demolition of the old bridges due to high water. However, demolition is expected to be complete in four-to-six weeks once the waters recede.



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

The U.S. 601 bridge replacement project nears completion as the old bridges, which were to the right of the new construction, were removed or are being removed.

Edgefield County recognized for zero highway deaths

SCDPS Director Leroy Smith, left, and SCDOT Acting Secretary Christy Hall, second left, recognized law enforcement and county officials from Edgefield County on April 2 for having no traffic fatalities for more than a year. The recognition was done during the 9th Annual DUI Enforcement Recognition and 2013 Law Enforcement DUI Challenge Ceremony at Seawell's in Columbia. There were no traffic fatalities in Edgefield County in all of 2013. They went 445 days without a death.



OAKLEY
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beyond expectations! The staff of SCDOT demonstrate every day their commitment to delivering, maintaining and operating a safe and efficient transportation system for our customers. You are the Department's most valuable asset. I look forward to working with you on the journey of continuous improvement and thank you in advance for your support."

Prior to her tenure at AASHTO, Oakley served as the founder and first Executive Director of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and the National Association of Regional Councils as Director of Transportation and Director of Government

Affairs.

Oakley has state agency transportation experience in her home state of Kentucky. She was a transportation planner at the Kentucky Department of Transportation and she served as the Assistant to the Secretary for Federal Affairs in the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.

Oakley's experience includes stops along her career at the American Trucking Association; the Subcommittee on Transportation Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, where she worked as a budget analyst; the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), where she was a transportation planner; and at the City of Rockville, Md., where she served as a transportation planner.

Oakley earned both an undergraduate degree and a Master's degree in the field of Regional Planning at Eastern Kentucky University. She is affiliated with a number of transportation-related committees, associations and forums.



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Larry Grooms congratulates Secretary Oakley after her confirmation on May 22.

New Secretary of Transportation names new Deputy Secretaries

By Janet P. Oakley
S.C. Secretary
of Transportation

Effective May 27, 2014, I am appointing the following individuals as Deputy Secretaries:

- **Mark Lester** is appointed Deputy Secretary for Intermodal Planning. Lester has an outstanding and diverse 23-year career with the agency, beginning with SCDOT as a summer intern before starting full-time in Traffic Engineering in 1991. From 1993 until 2010, he worked in the Preconstruction Division where he served in a variety of capacities including Program Manager, Program Development Engineer and Regional Production Engineer for the Upstate region. He then served as the Director of Planning for 3½ years before being appointed as Acting Deputy Secretary for Intermodal Planning in February of this year. Lester currently sits on the AASHTO Standing Committee on Planning and the Standing Committee on Performance Management. He is a 1991 graduate of Clemson University with a B.S. in Civil Engineering and is a licensed Professional Engineer.

- **Jim Warren** is appointed Deputy Secretary for Finance and Procurement. He has more



Janet P. Oakley
S.C. Secretary of
Transportation



Mark Lester
Deputy Secretary for
Intermodal Planning



Jim Warren
Deputy Secretary for Finance
and Procurement



Christy A. Hall
Deputy Secretary for
Engineering

than 40 years of related experience in financial management and accounting as well as process improvement. He has served previously as the Chief Financial Officer for two separate private firms with long tenures in each firm prior to joining SCDOT in December 2011 as its Chief Financial Officer. He has been instrumental in leading the agency to a sound financial posture over the past 3 years and has worked diligently to improve the financial

operations, financial planning and transparency within SCDOT's Finance and Procurement Division. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Management from the State University of New York, Buffalo, and a MBA with a concentration in Finance from Canisius College.

- **Christy A. Hall** is appointed Deputy Secretary for Engineering. Hall is a 20-year SCDOT veteran with a diverse background of both HQ and field experience. She began her career

in Preconstruction before moving to the field to serve as the District Construction Engineer for District 3 and then as the District Engineering Administrator for District 2. She returned to SCDOT Headquarters in the fall of 2011 to serve as the Deputy Secretary for Finance and Procurement. In that role, she led the efforts to stabilize the agency's finances and instill fiscal discipline to SCDOT operations by deployment of revised business practices and cash

management techniques. Most recently, she fulfilled the role of Acting Secretary of Transportation and served in an outstanding manner. She earned a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Clemson University in 1994, is a Certified Public Manager and a registered Professional Engineer.

Please join me in congratulating these individuals and thank you for your cooperation and assistance as transition occurs over the next several weeks.

Albert Groves: Retires after 57 years of service

By Kim Corley

Albert “Junior” Groves’ wife, children, and extended family joined his SCDOT family on Wednesday, April 30, 2014 to honor the end of his 57 plus years of service to South Carolina. According to Groves, he began working at the Anderson Maintenance Office in 1950 at the age of sixteen, before records were kept. SCDOT records date Groves’ start to January 1953. Groves decided to officially retire just a few weeks shy of his eightieth birthday. He retired based on service in June 1994 but returned July of the same year. When asked why he decided to retire now, Groves joked, “my age for one thing.” He continued working long after the minimum 28 years to put his four children through college. During that time he said he, “just made a hobby out of running the motor grader.”

Groves recalls his first days on the job and the first pieces of equipment he was issued, a pick and a shovel. His job was to stay ahead of the equipment operators by removing mailboxes, signs, and debris. After the construction was complete, Groves would return the signs and mailboxes to their location. All the while, Groves had bigger plans in mind. When he saw an unattended motor grader, he would “throw that shovel down and take off.” Eventually, he convinced his supervisor to assign him his own motor grader. During the luncheon, Groves’ crew presented him with a special parting gift, a replica motor

grader with the numbers “99.11.5” emblazoned on the side -- just like the piece of equipment Groves considered his hobby.

Deputy Secretary for Engineering **Van Fuller** was on hand to present Groves with a plaque, pin and street sign to commemorate his years of service. Fuller said, “The thing that’s honored me the most since I’ve been with the Department is to come, and in some small way, recognize Mr. Groves and his service. Not only to this Department, but your home state.” He concluded by thanking Groves family for sharing him with the Department for all these years. The crew plans to find a special place to hang the sign to honor their beloved co-worker and mentor.

Anderson Maintenance said goodbye with a celebratory luncheon catered by Groves’ wife. Family and former co-workers attended the celebration to share well wishes, stories and laughter. Many commented that they wouldn’t be half the men they were if it wasn’t for Mrs. Groves as they patted their stomachs.

In addition to their four children, Groves and his wife ‘adopted’ countless crew members. **Gary Reese**, who was nineteen when he began working for Groves, described him as “more like a father figure than a supervisor.” He said, “They treated me like one of their kids, and I’ve always been grateful for that.” His eldest daughter, Julia, expressed the same affection when she addressed the maintenance crew. “We love you all as family,” she said.

Groves also instilled the same work ethic in his crew as he did his children. **Reese** remembers Groves instructing him that “if you are going to do something in someone’s yard, you do it like you are doing it at your mama’s house.” Anderson Resident Maintenance Engineer **Fritz Wewers** describes Groves as a “loyal, very good employee” who “likes to get his work done.” But Groves wasn’t all business. Wewers also described Groves as “always in a good mood, always laughing, and cuttin’ up.” Even though he was a supervisor, Groves still worked right alongside his men. Groves just “picks up a shovel and goes at it!” says Wewers. When asked if he thought he would ever supervise another employee like Groves, Wewers said Groves is a “rarity,” and there’s “not many left like him.” Groves recalled one particular winter storm where he worked for 38



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Albert Groves’ work crew gave him a toy motor grader at his retirement luncheon on April 30. Groves favorite job task is operating the motor grader.

hours. “They brought my breakfast, dinner and supper to the road.” “It got kind of rough,” he joked. Once, Groves asked his former superintendent why he was called on so frequently for tasks. He looked at him, laughed, and said, “That’s what you get for knowing so much.” Groves’ willingness to tackle any task before him has made him an inspiration to fellow co-workers and the Anderson community.

For Groves, retirement doesn’t mean slowing down. He plans on spending lots of time with his wife of 57 years, his children and grandchildren.

Here’s a link to SCDOT Connector Online videos where you can find an interview with Mr. Groves talking about his early days at SCDOT.
<https://www.youtube.com/SCDOTConnectorOnline>

RETIREMENTS

Donald Hendrix, trades specialist III at Pickens Maintenance, retired Apr. 21.

Herbert Barron, trades specialist III at Charleston Maintenance, retired Dec. 13.

Robert Holland, trades specialist III at Richland Maintenance, retired Mar. 31.

John Amaker, trades specialist IV at Lexington Maintenance, retired Dec. 31.

Leroy Robinson, trades specialist II at Orangeburg Maintenance, retired Dec. 31.

Allen Harrison, trades specialist III at Florence Maintenance, retired Dec. 31.

Brenda Smith, trades specialist II at Oconee Maintenance, retired Jan. 31.

Ann Deas, trades specialist III at Sumter Maintenance, retired Feb. 18.

Kelly Williams, trades specialist III at Fairfield Maintenance, retired Nov. 17.

Dale Williams, engineer/associate engineer II at Greenwood

Construction, retired Feb. 16.

Richmond Ryles, trades specialist II at Hampton Maintenance, retired Mar. 31.

Richard McKnight, communications specialist III at District 4 SHEP, retired Nov. 1.

Stephen Brown, trades specialist III at District 6 Bridge Inspection, retired Jan. 16.

Matthew Lifsey, engineer/associate engineer IV in RPG 1 Low-country, retired Mar. 31.

Johnny Hatchell, engineering/geodetic technician III at Richland Construction, retired Jan. 2.

Gerald Powell, right of way agent II at Right of Way Greenville, retired Feb. 1.

Brunell Rawlinson, administrative specialist II in Office of Compliance, retired Dec. 16.

Bobbie Shytle, administrative assistant in Business Development, retired Apr. 1.

Judy Jones, supply specialist III at Georgetown Maintenance, retired Feb. 5.

Lisa Vining, program coordina-

tor II in Call Center, retired Mar. 5.
Henry Lee, supply manager I at Anderson Maintenance, retired Apr. 16.

Tommy Anderson, trades specialist II at York Maintenance, retired Dec. 2.

Kathleen Gerrald, administrative specialist I at Anderson Maintenance, retired Dec. 1.

Donald Clark, engineer/associate engineer II at Pickens Construction, retired Jan. 2.

Alphonso Smith, engineering/geodetic technician III at Richland Construction, retired Feb. 14.

Richard McLaren, OSHA officer III at District 6 Office, retired Feb. 16.

Kenneth Bradley, trades specialist III at Charleston Maintenance, retired Nov. 27.

Robert Davis, trades specialist IV at Fairfield Maintenance, retired Nov. 7.

Joe Langley, engineering/geodetic technician III at Greenville Construction, retired Mar. 17.

Herman Crooks, procurement manager I at Procurement, retired Mar. 31.

Charles Frantz, trades specialist II at Colleton Maintenance, retired Dec. 31.

Ernest Jones, building/grounds specialist III at Building Maintenance, retired Apr. 5.

retired Apr. 5.

David Glenn, engineer/associate engineer IV at District 6 Office, retired Jan. 31.

DEATHS



Milton O. Fletcher, former SCDOT Materials and Research Engineer, died Nov. 21, 2013.



Marvin Clifton “Cliff” Moore, former SCDOT Bridge Design employee, died Nov. 24, 2013.

Public transit drivers compete, train at conference

By Cody Crouch

The 2014 Transportation Association of South Carolina (TASC) Annual Training Event, Bus Roadeo and Supplier Exhibition was held March 1-5 in Myrtle Beach.

Public transportation employees from transit systems across the state competed in the bus roadeo held in the parking lot of Waccamaw Mall. The competition categories included van, cut-a-way, 35-foot bus, 40-foot bus and maintenance teams. An awards banquet was held after the roadeo to congratulate all of the participants as well as award those who placed first, second or third in their categories.

Training classes and panels were held throughout the event. Classes included: fire safety, vehicle evacuation, defensive driving, medicaid updates and handling passengers with intellectual disabilities.

Speakers during the conference included Myrtle Beach Mayor John Rhodes, TASC President Al Babinicz, 7th Congressional District Representative Tim Rice and Executive Director of the Community Transportation Association of America Dale Marsico.

The annual conference also gathers vendors and suppliers from across the country to showcase their latest transportation-related products.



First place Cut-a-way
William Stinson
Chester County Connector



First place 40-foot bus
Brian Adkins
Clemson Area Transit



First place 35-foot bus
Phillip Patterson
Veolia Transportation

ROADEO WINNERS

Van Category

- 1st Place - **Marvin Young**, Georgetown County DSN Board
- 2nd Place - **Joe Johnson**, Lee County DSN Board
- 3rd Place - **Gloria Brice**, Chester County Connector

Cut-a-way Category

- 1st Place - **William Stinson**, Chester County Connector
- 2nd Place - **Casper Allison**, Coast RTA
- 3rd Place - **Richard Scott**, Williamsburg County Transit

35-foot Bus Category

- 1st Place - **Phillip Patterson**, Veolia Transportation
- 2nd Place - **Willie McKnight**, Williamsburg County Transit
- 3rd Place - **Robert Hyson**, Coast RTA

40-foot Bus Category

- 1st Place - **Brian Adkins**, Clemson Area Transit
- 2nd Place - **Matthew Guest**, Williamsburg County Transit
- 3rd Place - **Charles Bryant**, Pee Dee RTA

Maintenance Category

- 1st Place - **Stephon Willingham, Scott Yarborough, Antwone Douglas** of Fairfield County Transit
- 2nd Place - **Shannon Byrum, David Mungin, Andrew Stevanus** of Veolia Transportation
- 3rd Place - **Chris Smith, Hudson Smith, Lonnie Reaves** of Coast RTA



First Place Maintenance Team
From left: **Stephon Willingham, Scott Yarborough, Antwone Douglas**
and Maintenance Foreman **Rickie Mozie**
Fairfield County Transit



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CODY CROUCH/THE CONNECTOR

LEFT and ABOVE: Public Transportation employees from across the state competed and took safety classes at the annual TASC Conference and Roadeo March 1-5.

2014 Highway Engineers Conference

Engineers share technical details, lessons learned with fellow employees, private sector

By **Bob Kudelka**

The annual Highway Engineers Conference continues to be a popular event, with more than 600 attendees from SCDOT and the private sector joining together this spring for two days of learning and sharing best practices.

The 14th annual conference was held March 25-26 at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

Acting Secretary of Transportation **Christy Hall** and Deputy Secretary for Engineering **Van Fuller** gave welcoming remarks after introductions by Chief Engineer for Location and Design **Ron Patton**.

Hall challenged the audience to take full advantage of the two days of training sessions.

"It's so critical that we take the opportunity and realize the opportunities presented to us to network and to learn from areas outside of our normal silo of operations," Hall said.

Just seven weeks on the job, Hall already had led the agency through events including two winter storms, the biggest debris cleanup since Hurricane Hugo, two earthquakes, a bomb on I-95 and preparation for hurricane season.

She praised the work of the agency employees from the field to her leadership team.

"Twenty years at SCDOT have been very good to me but the last seven weeks have been extraordinary," Hall said. "I can't thank our team enough, as well as our partners, in helping the agency be successful.

Hall thanked organizers of the Engineers Conference including Conference Chairman **Patti Gambill** and Special Events Coordinator **Tina Kennedy**, as well as Shaun Gaines and the staff from Clemson University's Transportation Technology Transfer Service.

Hall attended several sessions at the conference and delivered a detailed look at the agency in her "State of the SCDOT" presentation. Despite facing challenges on many fronts in the upcoming months, Hall detailed various strategies to keep the agency on solid footing.

Gambill said the conference was a success and that she received good feedback from attendees.

"Everybody seems to have enjoyed the topics that were presented. I think it was a good conference. We had representatives from county governments, several associations, contractors, consultants and the FHWA in addition to SCDOT employees," she said.

Highlights of the conference included a panel discussion, moderated by Director of Maintenance **Jim Fedra**, on lessons learned from the snow and ice storms; and a look at the new Strategic Highway Safety Plan from **Brett Harrelson**. In addition to presentations, SCDOT personnel had the opportunity to receive hands-on training in P2S and R/W Data Management Systems.

Topics included ADA requirements; I-20 widening in Richland County; Platt Springs Road project; DBE stakeholders discussion; A/E Professional Services; diverging diamond interchanges; use of probe data; base course stabilization; survey equipment update; lane width characteristics; inland ports; overview of CPM specifications; rumble strip policy updates; roundabouts; LPA changes; FHWA risk based stewardship; Bees Ferry Road project; Horry County Backgate project and general rights of way issues.

Presenters and panelists from SCDOT included: **Christy Hall, Van Fuller, Robbie Isgett, Brett Harrelson, Ashleigh Sandel, Sean Connolly, Dr. Arlene Prince, Ken Sersun, Eric Stuckey, Wendy Hollingsworth, Dale Wagoner, Jim Fedra, Efre Dantzler, Kirk Richards, Todd Cook, Mark DeZurik, Mark Hunter, Dipak Patel, Eric Carroll, Dr. Wei Johnson, Joey Riddle, Adam Payne, Bryan Jones, Machael Peterson, Mike Barbee and Bruce Wells**. Moderators included: **Ron Patton, Leland Colvin, Kenny Eargle, Todd Steagall, Tony Sheppard, Brian Keys, Herb Cooper, Doug Frate and Mitchell Metts**.

P2S and R/W Data Management Systems Demo room training: **Lynsee Gibson, Sherm Young, Doug Timmons and Evelyn Turner**.

Demo Room Set-up: **Doug Harper, Shawn Tucker, Eric Blume and Scott Meetze**.

Registration: **Terry Sharpe, Cathy Rice, Gwen Goodwin, Catherine Brooks, Mary Stepro, Michelle Walker and Tesa Griffin**.



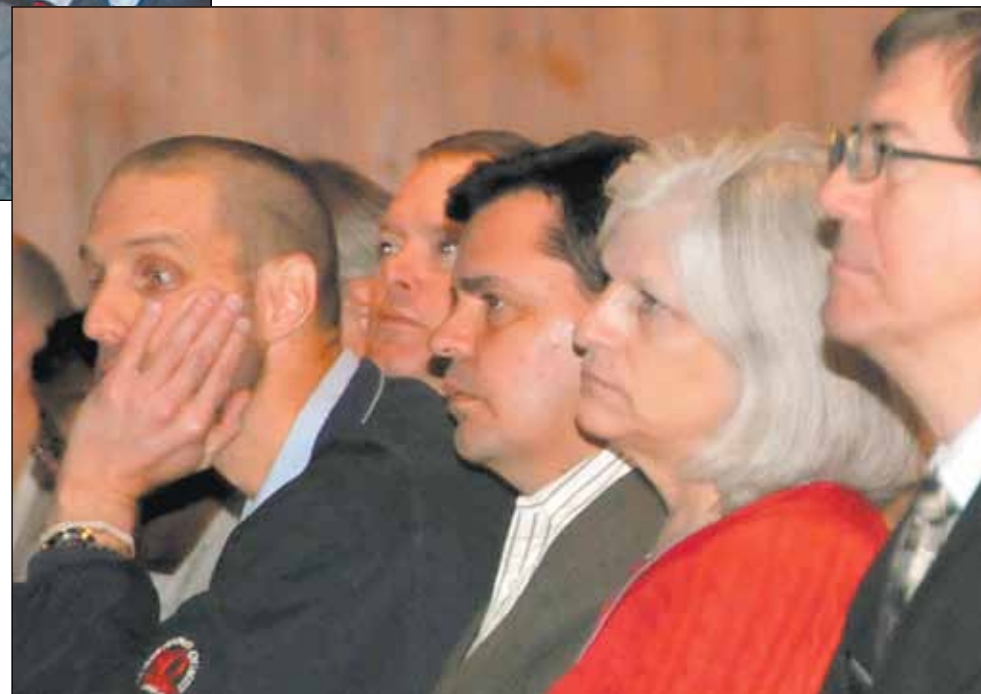
ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Chief Engineer For Location and Design Ron Patton introduces speakers during the opening general session of the 2014 Highway Engineers Conference.

See PHOTOS FROM THE CONFERENCE on next page.

If your vehicle tire drops off the pavement, ride it out while slowing down. Then gently ease the vehicle back onto the roadway.

PHOTOS FROM THE CONFERENCE



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

LEFT: One surprise of the 2014 State Highway Engineers Conference came when the fire alarm went off during a safety presentation. Chairman Patti Gambill and all other conference attendees waited outside the building until the fire department arrived to turn off the alarm.

PROMOTIONS



Kevin Gantt named Planning-Asset Management Engineer

Kevin Gantt, of Lexington, has been named Planning-Asset Management Engineer. He will develop and monitor a Transportation Asset Management Plan for SCDOT as a provision of MAP 21.

He joined SCDOT in 1993 as a Civil Engineering Associate in Construction. In October 2001, he was promoted to Assistant Resident Maintenance Engineer in Greenville County and in November 2006, to Resident Maintenance Engineer in Greenville County.

He was promoted to Program Manager in Regional Production Group 3 in November 2008.

A native of Prosperity, he is a 1988 graduate of Batesburg-Leesville High School, and a 1993 graduate of Clemson University. He has five children: Roxanne, Devin, Braydon, Michael and Maya.

Gantt is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and attends Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Batesburg, and Brookland Baptist Church in West Columbia.



Merrill Zwanka named Materials and Research Engineer

Merrill E. Zwanka, of Lexington, has been named Materials and Research Engineer, succeeding Milt Fletcher.

Zwanka oversees the daily operations of the Materials and Research Office, including materials engineering and oversight of the central and three district laboratories.

He joined SCDOT in 1987 as Assistant Asphalt Materials Engineer. He was promoted to Geotechnical Materials Engineer in 1998, State Materials Engineer in 2000 and Assistant Materials and Research Engineer in 2009.

He grew up in West Columbia, and is a 1982 graduate of Airport High School. He received a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering in 1987 from the University of South Carolina, and a Master's degree in Civil Engineering in 1992. He is a Registered Professional Engineer in South Carolina.

He attends Saxe Gotha Presbyterian Church in Lexington, and enjoys participating in triathlons, playing guitar, and spending time with his two teenage daughters.



Bryan Jones named District 1 Engineering Administrator

Bryan L. Jones, of Irmo, has been named District 1 Engineering Administrator, succeeding Thad Brunson. He is responsible for the management and oversight of field operations in District 1, including maintenance, construction, traffic and safety.

A native of Bamberg, Jones joined SCDOT in 1993 as an Engineering Technician at Bamberg Construction. He graduated from Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School in 1988 and received a BS degree in Civil Engineering from Clemson University in 1992. He is a Registered Professional Engineer in South Carolina.

He was promoted to Assistant Resident Maintenance Engineer at Aiken Maintenance in 1994; to Resident Maintenance Engineer at Barnwell Maintenance in 1997; to District 7 Mechanical Engineer in 2001; to District 1 Maintenance Engineer in 2003, and to District 1 Construction Engineer in 2008.

He is married to the former Becky Darnell, of Hilda in Barnwell County, and they have three children: Lauren, 16; Ben 13; and Luke, 3. They are members of Riverland Hills Baptist Church in Irmo.



Thad Brunson named Chief Engineer for Field Operations

Thad Brunson, of Little Mountain, has been named Chief Engineer for Field Operations, succeeding J. Clem Watson. He will provide support and oversight of field operations in SCDOT's seven engineering districts.

He is a 1981 graduate of Irmo High School, and received a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of South Carolina in 1986 and a Master of Engineering in Civil Engineering.

He joined SCDOT in 1983 as an engineering technician at the Research and Materials Laboratory. He was promoted to Assistant Resident Maintenance Engineer in 1989 and to Resident Maintenance Engineer in 1992 and to Resident Construction Engineer in 1994. He was appointed Assistant District 1 Construction Engineer in 2001 and District Construction Engineer in 2002, and District Engineering Administrator in 2004.

He is married to the former Liz Pender of Columbia. They have five children: Zachary, 25; Nathan, 23; Mary Beth, 21; Jacob, 18; and Patrick, 16.

Brunson attends Three Rivers Baptist Church in Irmo. He enjoys coaching baseball and hunting.

William Ramey, promoted to trades specialist III at Oconee Maintenance.

Lethaniel Gathers, promoted to trades specialist IV at Charleston Maintenance.

Eric Anderson, promoted to trades specialist IV at Aiken Maintenance.

Jason Sharpe, promoted to trades specialist III at Spartanburg Maintenance.

Larry Terry, promoted to trades specialist III at Chester Maintenance.

Chester Williams, promoted to trades specialist III at Orangeburg Maintenance.

Eric Bannister, promoted to trades specialist IV at Clarendon Maintenance.

Michael O'Cain, promoted to trades specialist III at Orangeburg Maintenance.

Scott Bohner, promoted to trades specialist III at Oconee Maintenance.

Frank Lawhorn, promoted to trades specialist III at Georgetown Maintenance.

Katherine Scott, promoted to engineer/associate engineer III at Georgetown Construction.

William Oliver, promoted to trades specialist III at Chester Maintenance.

Peter McKnight, promoted to trades specialist III at Clarendon Maintenance.

Russell Steagall, promoted to director of engineering at Director of Construction.

Samantha Carr, promoted to engineer/associate engineer II in RPG 4 Upstate.

Kenneth Williams, promoted to mechanic III at Chesterfield Maintenance.

James Mattox, promoted to engineer/associate engineer IV in RPG 1 Lowcountry.

Douglas Giovanetti, promoted to engineer/associate engineer III in Traffic Engineering.

Robert Giddens, promoted to state appraiser II in Rights of Way.

Lindsey Schirra, promoted to senior geodetic technician at Horry 1 Maintenance.

Wendell Jones, promoted to associate geodetic technician at Clarendon Construction.

If making a left turn while opposing heavy, slow moving traffic, do not proceed if a driver facing you 'motions' you through several lanes of opposing traffic.

Continued on next page

PROMOTIONS

Continued from
page 14

Jose Almeida, promoted to trades specialist IV at Lexington Maintenance.

Chris Gaskins, promoted to engineer/associate engineer IV in RPG 1 Lowcountry.

Christopher Williams, promoted to engineer/associate engineer II in Traffic Engineering.

Teresa Sharpe, promoted to administrative coordinator I in Deputy Secretary for Engineering.

Jessica Turner, promoted to engineer/associate engineer II in RPG 2 Pee Dee.

Terrica Turner, promoted to senior geodetic technician in Road Data Services.

Lynsee Gibson, promoted to program manager II in Program Controls.

Jeffrey Foster, promoted to trades specialist V at Laurens Maintenance.

Wilson Anderson, promoted to trades specialist IV at Greenwood Maintenance.

Kelly Stapleton, promoted to engineer/associate engineer II in RPG 4 Upstate.

Yvonne Clark, promoted to human resource manager I at District 4 Office.

Alexander Frazier, promoted to trades specialist III at Aiken Maintenance.

Johnny Clark, promoted to senior geodetic technician at Aiken Construction.

Tyrone Jones, promoted to trades specialist V at Aiken Maintenance.

Jimmy Frost, promoted to associate geodetic technician at Richland Construction B.

Robert Scott, promoted to trades specialist III at Florence Maintenance.

Brian Clack, promoted to trades specialist V at District 4 Traffic Signals.

Roger Bowers, promoted to engineer/associate engineer III at Charleston Maintenance.

Laurie Mazzell, promoted to right of way agent II at Rights of Way - Central.

Kevin Kretz, promoted to incident responder I at District 5 Incident Response.

William Woodward, promoted to chief geodetic technician at Spartanburg Construction.

Ronald Stokes, promoted to trades specialist IV at District 3 Traffic Signals.

Theron Bull, promoted to trades specialist IV at Williamsburg Maintenance.

Jennifer Allen, promoted to administrative assistant at District 4 Office.

Susan McGraw, promoted to engineer/associate engineer I at Anderson Construction.

Bryan Jones, promoted to director of engineering at District 1 Office.

Mark Lorick, promoted to administrative manager I in Preconstruction Support.

Jonathan Antley, promoted to trades specialist V at District 6 Signal Shop.

Patrick McKenzie, promoted to engineer/associate engineer III at Spartanburg Construction.

Brice Parker, promoted to engineer/associate engineer II at Williamsburg Maintenance.

Wilson Overton, promoted to senior geodetic technician at Greenville Construction A.

Janet Hendrix, promoted to administrative coordinator I at District 6 Office.

Claudia Fowler, promoted to program coordinator I in Traffic Engineering.

Michelle Wagner, promoted to executive assistant I in Intermodal and Freight Programs.

Mamie Spradley, promoted to engineer/associate engineer IV in RPG 1 Lowcountry.

Brian Rister, promoted to info resource consultant II in Human Resources.

Karl Hoffman, promoted to engineer/associate engineer II at District 2 Office.

Bradley Reynolds, promoted to engineer/associate engineer IV in RPG 4 Upstate.

Willie Anderson, promoted to trades specialist III at Laurens Maintenance.

Brian Christmas, promoted to mechanic II at Lee Maintenance.

Milton Davis, promoted to

trades specialist III at Laurens Maintenance.

Stacy Freeman, promoted to administrative assistant at Sumter Maintenance.

Jessica Crane, promoted to procurement specialist II at District 3 Office.

Joseph Hamilton, promoted to trades specialist IV at Horry Maintenance.

Travis Meinders, promoted to trades specialist III at Holly Hill Maintenance.

Dawn Weeks, promoted to state appraiser II at Rights of Way - Central.

Wade Warr, promoted to engineer/associate engineer II at Sumter Maintenance.

Ron Pressley, promoted to trades specialist III at Williamsburg Maintenance.

Matthew Perry, promoted to incident responder I at District 1 Incident Response.

Gregory Fulton, promoted to trades specialist IV at Williamsburg Maintenance.

Christopher Cannon, promoted to associate geodetic technician at Marion Construction.

Jennifer Smith, promoted to right of way agent II at Rights of Way - Central.

Mark Walker, promoted to program manager I at Rights of Way - Central.

Sheila James, promoted to program coordinator II at District 6 Office.

Craig Wicker, promoted to trades specialist III at Newberry Maintenance.

Wallace Dobbs, promoted to trades specialist IV at Edgefield Maintenance.

Christopher Richardson, promoted to trades specialist IV at Richland Maintenance.

David Black, promoted to trades specialist V at District 3 Traffic Signals.

Robert Bean, promoted to program manager I at Marlboro Maintenance.

Bobby Collins, promoted to trades specialist III at Cherokee Maintenance.

Jeffery Taylor, promoted to senior geodetic technician at Aiken Construction.

Alton Griggs, promoted to

engineer/associate engineer II at Florence Maintenance.

Nicholas Depalma, promoted to engineer/associate engineer II at Greenville Construction A.

Robert Waller, promoted to trades specialist IV at District 3 Maintenance.

John Callahan, promoted to incident responder I at District 1 Incident Response.

Tracy Smith, promoted to trades specialist III at Spartanburg Maintenance.

Sunny Schweinsberg, promoted to trades specialist IV at Greenville Maintenance.

John Barnes, promoted to trades specialist III at Lancaster Maintenance.

James Jones, promoted to associate geodetic technician at Chester Construction.

George Hall, promoted to associate geodetic technician at Abbeville Construction.

Lisa Funderburk, promoted to supply specialist III at Lancaster Maintenance.

Michael Biege, promoted to engineer/associate engineer I at Greenville Construction A.

Randall Edwards, promoted to trades specialist III at Spartanburg Maintenance.

Morris Gregory, promoted to trades specialist IV at Beaufort Maintenance.

James Carswell, promoted to trades specialist IV at Berkeley Maintenance.

Marion Demons, promoted to trades specialist III at Georgetown Maintenance.

James Wiley, promoted to trades specialist IV at District 2 Traffic Signals.

Heath Garrett, promoted to trades specialist III at Spartanburg Maintenance.

Joshua Meetze, promoted to engineer/associate engineer II in RPG 2 Pee Dee.

Robert Dunn, promoted to mechanic III at Equipment Service Depot.

Alexander Burton, promoted to associate geodetic technician at Richland Construction A.

James Bodie, promoted to trades specialist III at Greenwood Maintenance.

Todd Visokay, promoted to

associate geodetic technician at Jasper Construction.

Thomas Steen, promoted to trades specialist III at York Maintenance.

Malachi Ford, promoted to engineer/associate engineer I at District 3 Office.

Jimmy Leonard, promoted to mechanic III at Horry Maintenance.

Phillip Wood, promoted to trades specialist III at Greenwood Maintenance.

Delisha Oakley, promoted to fiscal technician I in Finance and Administration.

Marc Shensky, promoted to engineer/associate engineer I at Cherokee Construction.

Norman Meyer, promoted to trades specialist III at Charleston Maintenance.

Charles Orsborne, promoted to trades specialist V at District 3 Maintenance.

Wesley Smythers, promoted to trades specialist III at Greenville Maintenance.

Trenton Thielbar, promoted to engineer/associate engineer II in RPG 4 Upstate.

Kevin Rosendahl, promoted to mechanic III at Richland Maintenance.

George Griffin, promoted to trades specialist IV at District 3 Maintenance.

Jerry Amos, promoted to trades specialist III at Georgetown Maintenance.

Keith Tate, promoted to trades specialist III at Cherokee Maintenance.

Jesse Hendrix, promoted to trades specialist III at Greenville Maintenance.

Paul Grier, promoted to trades specialist III at District 3 Maintenance.

Kristian Kieffer, promoted to trades specialist III at York Maintenance.

Dustin Meritt, promoted to trades specialist III at District 3 Maintenance.

Miranda Caldwell, promoted to accounting/fiscal manager I in Accounting.

Glenn Clark, promoted to trades specialist III at Jasper Maintenance.

Ready to Rumble: SCDOT responds to snow, ice, earthquake

By Bob Kudelka

Snow, ice, sleet, power outages, an earthquake and the biggest debris cleanup since Hurricane Hugo – the events of the winter of 2014 put SCDOT to its biggest test in years.

By all accounts, the agency once again stepped up and showed its biggest asset – dedicated, hard-working employees – was equal to whatever Mother Nature decided to throw our way.

“It’s been a challenge,” said Acting Secretary of Transportation **Christy Hall**. “However, each and every single time the team has risen to the challenge. I cannot thank our team enough, as well as our partners, in helping the agency be successful. It has been noticed by many outside of the agency, even outside the state, on just how suc-

cessful South Carolina was.

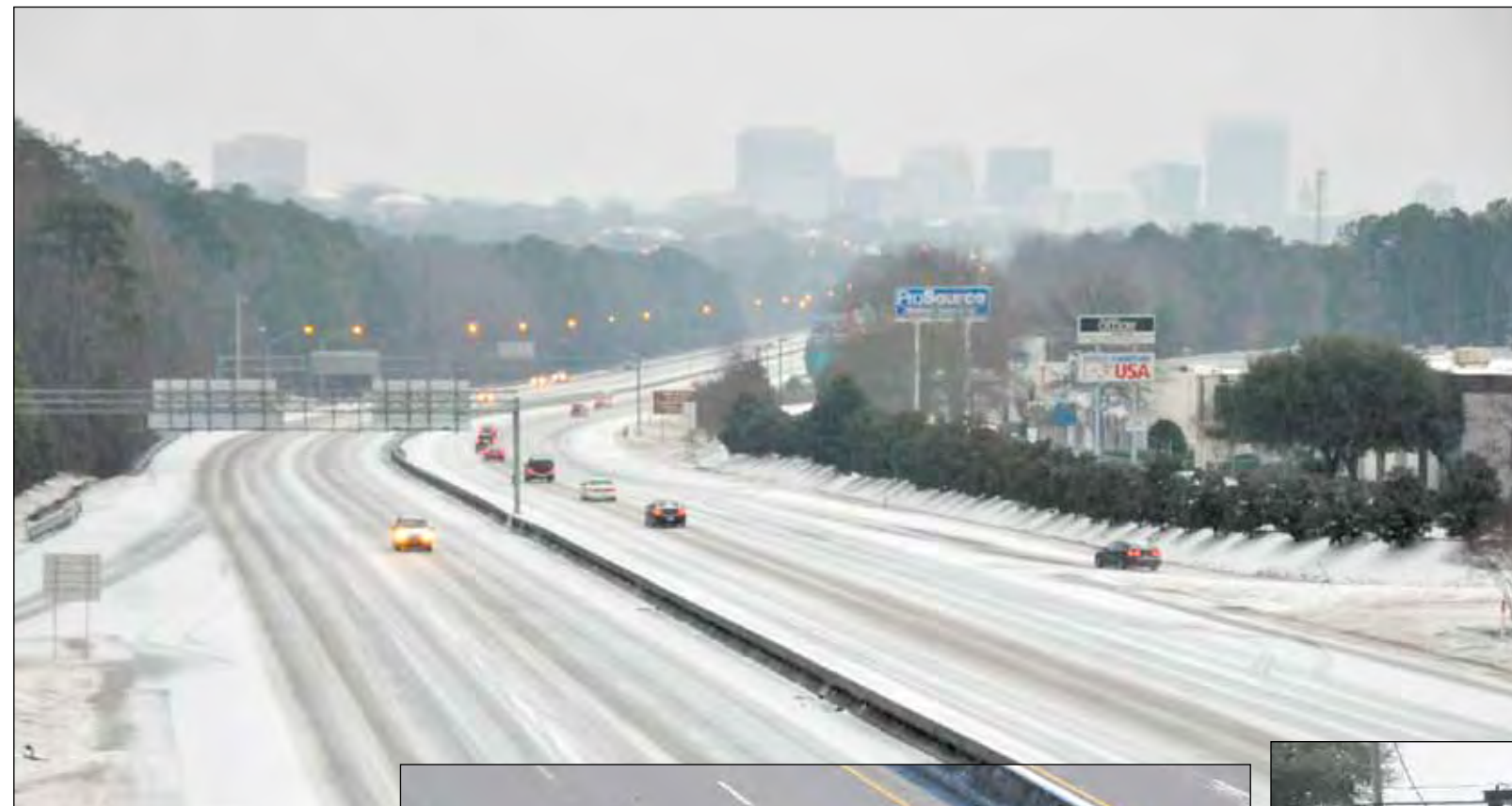
“We were able to deliver.”

In face-to-face meetings with Governor Nikki Haley, Hall said the governor praised the work of SCDOT employees in keeping roads open when other states were severely challenged by the storm.

Chief of Staff **Wendy Nicholas** managed agency-wide developments and worked closely with the Governor’s staff, emergency officials and state leaders. “I was proud of our employees and what a fantastic job they did,” Nicholas said. “The Governor’s Office and legislators continue to daily acknowledge the great effort by our agency.”

In addition, the SCDOT Commission passed a resolution honoring employees for their service noting that SCDOT employees remained focused on the tasks before them, and were unsung heroes to many citizens who needed their assistance.

“The large geographic area impacted by ice is very rare,” said Deputy Secretary for Engineering **Van Fuller**. “Nearly half of



South Carolinians were impacted by damage not seen in the state since Hurricane Hugo. The wide area affected is uncommon, since most ice storms affect smaller pockets, or just a handful of counties.”



Director of Maintenance **Jim Feda** attributed to the successful response to the tireless efforts of employees as well as preparation and rehearsing snow routes long before winter begins. Hall said it was critical that plans for debris cleanup were in place years ago - thanks to employees including **Kelly Jo Swygert, Tom Johnson and David Cook**.

President Obama, acting on a request from Governor Haley, declared 21 S.C. counties a major disaster area. Fuller said of the 21 counties, 18 sustained “significant” tree damage. SCDOT has more than 18,000 miles of roadways in the affected counties, and Fuller said that’s

Winter storm photo coverage by Rob Thompson

See WINTER on next page

WINTER from page 17

larger than the total state-maintained system of 40 other states.

The S.C. Forestry Commission labeled a 170-mile-long, 70-mile wide path of timber damage from the Savannah River to the N.C. border.

By late March, employees joined by more than 700 contract crews had cleared more than 6,000 miles of roadway and 1.9 million cubic yards of debris.

That is enough debris to cover a football field – 1,000 feet high.

The latest estimate for SCDOT's costs relating to storm response and recovery was approximately \$164 million, according to Chief Engineer of Operations **Leland Colvin**.

"This still is an estimate," Fuller said, adding that the cleanup would end around May 1.

The first of the two winter storms hit South Carolina on Jan. 28. Originally, forecast for earlier in the day, the snow spared the rush hour traffic and began later in the evening.

By the following afternoon, snowfall had accumulated from 1 to 3 inches in most areas of the state with freezing rain near the

coast. That night, crews continued working as freezing temperatures caused ice in some areas.

On the afternoon of Jan. 30, crews in all but two engineering Districts had returned to normal operations.

In all, the first storm used 16,150 tons of salt, 5,495 tons of sand, 132,368 gallons of calcium chloride; and 863,189 gallons of salt brine.

It was a typical winter storm for South Carolina, lasting about 48 hours, and things were back to normal.

This time, "normal" did not last long.

Eleven days later, forecasters called for a major winter storm to cut a path through the Southeast. The Weather Channel dispatched a reporter to Columbia, considered ground zero.

Meanwhile, many Districts had been given little time to restock supplies used up in the first storm.

"It was pretty intense in our area," said District 7 DEA **Jo Ann Woodrum**. Each of her eight counties ended up FEMA eligible.

Things were so bad that truckers delivering salt couldn't make it to parts of her District, Woodrum said, instead dumping off near the interstate in Orangeburg.

"We used everything we got and we hung in there," Woodrum said. "Because we're short on people, like everybody else, our construction employees pulled their share of the load just like the maintenance employees. We all pulled together.

"I think events like this bring the best out in our people."

In Aiken County, widespread power outages affected not only employees' families but the Maintenance shop itself. "It was warmer in a dump truck than in the office," said Aiken RME **Bobby Usry**.

"Some of our employees would leave their shifts and stay in motels with their families because they had no power at home," Usry said. "Never once did our people complain about what they had to do - they just jumped up and got in there and did it."

With back-to-back storms, Usry said it was challenging to put the work schedule together.

"We ended up using a lot more construction personnel, and it was a new role for many of them," Usry said. "We also had several people who ended up working longer than 12 hours shifts. You appreciate those efforts when you're in crunch time."

In District 4, **Todd Cook** said they had 8,820 tons of salt on hand before the storm. When it was over, they had used 8,810 tons – only 10 tons to spare.

Like many other places, District 4 ran into trouble just feeding their employees, with many local business shut down by the third day of icy conditions.

"By the end, there were no grocery stores open," said Woodrum. "And in places like Aiken, they had issues with power out at home. But it wasn't just us. Everybody in the state had it rough."

At Headquarters, Procurement Division's **Sherry Barton** went on a nationwide hunt to find deicing supplies.

Due to a national salt shortage, Procurement had to find salt from faraway places such as Knoxville, Tennessee, and even a town called Grand Saline in Texas. In all, more than 17,000 tons of salt was used on South Carolina roads.

Mark Hunter in the Director of Maintenance Office scrambled to find private haulers to help get supplies to the Districts and garnered help from the S.C. National Guard.

Beth Andrews, Wendy Hollingsworth, Tom Johnson and Todd Steagall, representing the team called ESF-1 (Emergency Support Functions 1 – Transportation), worked at the S.C. Emergency Management Division to relay information to the S.C. Emergency Management Division about road conditions, the Ravenel Bridge closing, debris removal, and coordinated efforts with law enforcement and utilities.

The Customer Service Center, which was converted to an Emergency Operation on Feb. 11 at 7 a.m. and was open during extended hours through Feb. 14. The Call Center received 1,111 calls as employees provided critical information on road and bridge conditions, according to **Ryan Cole**.

Director of Communications **Pete Poore** led the effort to inform the public of road conditions, the critical work being done by employees in the field and advising people to stay off the roads.

Poore was interviewed by outlets including Al Jazeera America and The Weather Channel. Communications used social media platform Twitter to get information quickly to the public around the clock.

During the second storm, the agency used 17,038 tons of salt; 7,153 tons of sand; 73,651 gallons of calcium chloride; and 1,444,597 gallons of salt brine.

With weather and road condition significantly improved by Friday afternoon, Feb. 14, the agency had for the most part returned to normal operations.

Again, normal was short-lived.

That evening, State Bridge Engineer **Lee Floyd** heard a rumbling noise that he first thought sounded like low-flying military helicopters. The phone rang, and on the other line was **Jim Feda** telling him he thought it was an earthquake.

Floyd immediately found out through his U.S. Geological

Survey (USGS) alert notification service that the USGS had just recorded a 4.2 magnitude earthquake (later revised to a 4.1 magnitude quake), centered seven miles west-northwest of Edgefield.

The earthquake was the second strongest in South Carolina since 1950.

The Bridge Maintenance office's threshold for formally responding to an earthquake is 4.0, so Floyd began coordinating initial emergency inspections beginning that night and ramping up at daybreak. It was Floyd who helped set that threshold years ago when helping create the earthquake response bridge policy, so he knew it was a conservative threshold for any damage possibility.

"I wasn't really worried and I didn't suspect we'd find anything, but you never know," Floyd said. "The best thing to do was to respond."

Beginning at 7 a.m., bridge inspectors checked bridges from just south of North Augusta to Beech Island to the Chatoga River on U.S. 76 Oconee County to as far inland as east of Greenwood. He also had his team check the I-20 bridge over the Savannah River, which is maintained by Georgia DOT.

Floyd mapped out the bridges most likely to have an issue. Inspectors looked at expansion joints to see if there was anything unusual warranting further inspection.

By 2:30 p.m. inspectors had checked 60 bridges, and each one was given a clean bill of health.

"The plan worked perfectly but it was a heck of a way to celebrate my birthday," said Floyd, who was born on the 15th.

As storm debris cleanup winded down in the spring, SCDOT was not quite ready to get back to "normal."

"Now we're getting ready for hurricane season," Hall said.

Editor's note: SCDOT employees have been honored for their exceptional response to the winter storms of 2014. While space does not permit naming every employee who contributed, this article represents a sampling of the excellent work by all.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Mark Hunter and David Cook of the Director of Maintenance Office monitor weather conditions and salt spreading operations during the storm.

If making a left turn when exiting a shopping complex do so at a traffic signal, if one is present.

Good job!



SCDOT employees received many compliments on Twitter during the winter storms. Here is a sampling:

Judi Gatson

@JudiGatson

S/O to @SCDOTPress! Your crews did a GREAT job! Thank you for making my late-night drive home easier than I thought it'd be.

Merry De Leon

@Cupids_Psyche

@SCDOTPress Excellent work, thank you for such a massive undertaking and for being proactive

Judi Gatson

@JudiGatson

Big thanks to @SCDOTPress crews for their hard work! Still some icy spots but hwy's look good. Clear roads + common sense = safe travels!

Jenny Wirtzberger

@wirtzbergerwltx

We've been hanging out with the wonderful people at @SCDOTPress all day. The next shift comes in at 8pm. #wintermess

Jarid Munsch

@JaridMunsch

Is anybody seeing #blackice in @columbiasc? Roads are looking good to me. Kudos to @SCDOTPress. #drivesafe #WinterMess

Allison Barnes

@acb388

@WLTX I am in Lexington. The roads look good.

Foster Senn

@fostersenn (Mayor of Newberry)

Great job by city staff today keeping Newberry running smooth & kudos to @SCDOTPress. Just saw DOT trucks filled w/sand heading out at 9 pm

Country Fried ROCK

@CountryFriedROK

@SCDOTPress They did a great job. I was really impressed, esp b/c I live in the country, not the town & they were working hard.

Country Fried ROCK

@CountryFriedROK

@SCDOTPress Thank you to SCDOTPeeDee for doing such a great job pre-salting, salting, and scraping our roads in & around Florence County.

Paige Hansen

@_PaigeHansen

@j1ax_13 You're right! @NCDOT and @SCDOTPress both have crews working nonstop! #winterweather

Jus Jai@JusBreakingNews

BRAVO @SCDOTPress!!!!

The Rogue Report

@thejournalist44

Must give the SCDOT and SCHP in the Upstate kudos tonight... roads mostly manageable and troopers' response quick

Andrew D Johnson

@getmorejohnson

@CityCharleston thank you and @SCDOTPress for all your hard work!

Rebecca Ryan Collett

@RebeccaRCollett

@SCDOTPress great job with the info! Thanks for the update!

Cuthbert Langley

@CLangleyWCBD

Good resources for info on roads #winterwatch @SCDOTPress: SCDOT prepares for winter storm.

Corey Davis

@CoreyLive5News

SCDOT crews breaking up salt for roads and prepping for winter storm. #chsnews pic.twitter.com/C2VIjw-4GdM

Jeffrey Collins

@JSCollinsAP

(Don Blizzard is) just the man to help clear the roads for SCDOT tomorrow. pic.twitter.com/rFFkqXs2Tk

Teresa Noisette Lundy

shared WIS TV's photo.

#thankyou #SCDOT!!

Kudos to the hundreds of men and women who worked 12-hour shifts to prepare for snow and ice, and clear South Carolina's roads after this week's winter storm.

Dawn Staley

@dawnstaley

Head Women's Basketball Coach University of South Carolina

S/O (Shout out) to SCDOT for making it possible for all the experienced & inexperienced drivers to travel safely throughout the state.

Johnny Deal

@Johnny_Deal

A big THANK YOU to all Public Works and SCDOT employees! Y'all Rock! #scwx #snowpocalypse @SC-

DOTMidlands pic.twitter.com/hKE5YonbXs

Marybeth Jacoby

@MarybethJacoby

@SCDOTPress 1,463 Maintenance employees actively involved in road operations keeping us safe

Shane Norris

@Shane_WBTW

@SCDOTPress is out monitoring the roadways. A work truck even stopped by my liveshot to check one me this morning. #Goodguys

Greg Suskin

@GSuskin

SCDOT in Lancaster County is salting south of the city where it's colder, and doing some brine to the north of town. #Cltsnow

Kate Valentine

@katevalentine

@SCDOTPress thanks for clearing roads!! @wsapa7on-yourside #snowpocalypse #snowmageddon pic.twitter.com/Yq1RK8OPZ0

Paige Hansen

@_PaigeHansen

Hard to see, but that's a @SCDOTPress truck spraying brine on HWY 9 North near Chester. @wsocvtv #snow-storm2014 pic.twitter.com/qwhymuSjOV

Hannah Moseley

@HannahLive5

It's almost better than Christmas. #RavenelBridge is reopened! @MountPleasantPD @SCDOTPress thanks for all the hardwork!

Chris McKagen

@chrismckagen

SCDOT clearing a fallen tree on Lake City Highway near Johnsonville. They say they've been busy this morning.

Maureen O'Boyle WBTU

@MaureenOBoyle

@ncdee1 how kind! Thank you! Real heroes @NCDOT @SCDOTPress and all 1st responders /and @WBTU_News crews and reporters!!!

Judi Gatson@JudiGatson

I spy #SCDOT crews working the roads on our drive back from Sumter!

Did you know SCDOT is on Twitter? Tell your friends and neighbors to get the latest news about SC roads and bridges by following us on Twitter.

Follow SCDOT on Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/SCDOTPress>

-- Compiled by Bob Kudelka

When entering an interstate, attain the prevailing speed of the interstate as you merge into traffic.

When in the right lane of the interstate and traffic is entering from a ramp, shift lanes if possible to allow them entry.

For a complete list of Dick Jenkin's Driving Safety Tips, go to: <http://www.scdot-transfer.org/SCDOTPHOTOS/DrivingTips.pdf>

SCDOT Ensemble lifts voices, spirits of employees

By Robert Johnson

The SCDOT Ensemble is a volunteer group from the employees of the SCDOT Headquarters building. While participation in this group is an additional duty for each of the volunteers, it is an honor to be given the opportunity to represent the agency and be a source of encouragement to fellow employees.

Creation of the SCDOT Ensemble

On September 11, 2001, the World Trade Center attack was perpetrated, which put the nation on alert. Locally, the South Carolina governmental agencies including SCDOT observed times of prayer for our nation. At that time, SCDOT Executive Director Elizabeth Mabry requested that God Bless America be sung at a memorial gathering. An impromptu request was made to gather singers from throughout the building to lead the singing of this song at the memorial gathering. **Robert Johnson** was contacted by **Val McCall** and tasked with making this request from the executive director a reality. In approximately thirty minutes, Johnson located a small group of singers and presented them at the gathering ready to lead the requested song. This original group consisted of the following participants: **Audrey Davis, Aliza Bolton, Glynnis Davis, Lavern Glover, Myra Crawford, Renee Williams, Myron Singleton, Sherron Harmon and Lawton Player.**

From that point on, the executive direc-



CODY CROUCH/THE CONNECTOR

The SCDOT Ensemble is a volunteer group that performs during the holiday season and at other events when requested.

tor began to make regular requests for this same group to sing God Bless America and other selections at commission meetings and various other SCDOT events, dubbing this group of singers the SCDOT Ensemble. Since then, subsequent executive directors have made similar requests for the

ensemble to perform at various SCDOT events and provide special performances like caroling at various locations around the headquarters building during the holiday season. As of today, the SCDOT Ensemble is represented by the following employees: **Audrey B. Davis, Susan H.**

Douglas, Chuck Blackwell, Robert E. Johnson, Delores Gilmore, Michelle L. Walker, Nancy Redmond, Michael D. Covington, Sandra W. Castor, Aliza Bolton, Tom Dodds, Marvin C. Carnell, Brunell Y. Rawlinson, Maceo G. Morris, Curtis Sims and Deborah S. Berry.

Letters

**To: Honorable Nikki R. Haley, Governor
State of South Carolina**

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) recently completed mowing rights-of-way along public roads that pass through young pine plantations that I own in Abbeville and Saluda counties.

I wish to commend the SCDOT Resident Maintenance Engineers and their staff in the above counties for the high quality of this work and to let you know how much I appreciate their efforts.

Obviously, this work makes our highways safer by improving visibility for drivers. This improved visibility affords drivers

better reaction time when meeting oncoming traffic. Also, it helps drivers avoid collisions with wild animals such as the deer and wild hogs that enjoy residing in my pine plantations.

As a tree farmer, particularly appreciate the improved fire protection this right-of-way maintenance provides for my property. My young pine plantations are extremely vulnerable to wild fire. The seasonal mowing of public rights-of-way by the SCDOT helps control dry, fire-prone vegetation that could otherwise fuel a potentially catastrophic wild fire. Fire that could destroy not only my property but that of my neighbors as well.

Many times, the hard work of dedicated state employees goes unnoticed and thankless. I hope this letter will at least let some of them know how much their efforts are appreciated.

Also, please convey to your husband my thanks for his service to our country during his deployment to Afghanistan.

Sincerely,

James C. Sanders Jr

To: Randy Young:

I am writing to express our appreciation for the excellent service provided by the South Carolina Department of Transportation staff throughout the design and construction of the Assembly Street Safety Improvement Project. As the project nears completion, we are receiving accolades

from the community which reflect the transformation which the project has created in this area of Assembly Street. We expect the project will serve as a prototype for future improvements by the City of Columbia for other blocks of Assembly Street and perhaps other roadways in the central business district.

There are numerous staff at SCDOT who contributed to the success of this project. In particular, we wish to recognize **Julie Barker, Jesse (Jay) Thompson** and **Benjamin (Benji) Branham** who represented SCDOT with professionalism distinguished by wisdom and tenacity. Their technical knowledge, problem solving capabilities and project oversight are significant factors which contributed to a successful process and an exemplary outcome

for which we should all be proud. Jay, Julie and Benji, along with other SCDOT staff, provided excellent service from our perspective as a client. In addition, their leadership, attention to detail and budget-conscious decision-making provided a completed project of great quality while remaining within the project budget.

It has been a pleasure working with Julie, Jay, Benji and other professional staff at SCDOT. We look forward to future collaboration when opportunities emerge to enhance safety and beautify our city along our roadway corridors.

With kind regard,

**Derek Gruner
University Architect
Director of Facilities Planning
and Programming**

SCDOT's Extreme Athletes

Three employees' abilities redefine endurance

By Pete Poore

Many people participate in running, cycling and swimming as part of an overall fitness program. "Moderate and regular exercise" is one of the standard recommendations for a healthy lifestyle. However, SCDOT has at least three people who have crashed through the word "moderate" and have made the pursuit of fitness an extreme challenge. Their goals for fitness include running marathons, ultra marathons, cycling from one city to another over 300 miles away and taking a 12-mile swim.

Meet **Mark Pleasant**, an employee in the Planning Office, **Mike Barbee** an engineer in Preconstruction and **Charlie Brown**, a director in the Human Resources Office. Pleasant ran his third marathon at the 2013 New York City Marathon last fall. Earlier this year, Barbee ran a 50k (31-mile) trail run in the Harbison State Forest. Brown is training for his second "Swim Around Charleston next September, a 12-mile, open water swim from Mount Pleasant, around the Peninsula and up the Ashley River. Before we reveal how these SCDOT employees find the time to compete at such high levels, the obvious answer is WHY?

For Pleasant, his first marathon at the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C. was a milestone event. "I ran my first marathon at age 40. It was a 'bucket list' event," said Pleasant. But there's more to running a marathon than just the run. "Running a marathon is a really fantastic experience, a rewarding and compelling experience. To set a goal that might seem unrealistic at first tests how committed you can be to the (four months) of training," he said.

Barbee said "normal running" was just part of his overall fitness program for decades...until 2008. He decided to "go long" out of fear. Up until then, he was hesitant to run 26.2 miles. "I decided I wanted to run the Myrtle Beach Marathon and I used fear to motivate my training for that event," said Barbee. "When you sit behind a desk most days, you want to challenge yourself to find out how tough you are. It's my nature to see if I can accomplish something that's hard. It's the opposite of instant gratification. I like to work toward something that's not easy and requires hard work," he said.

Brown had been a runner and a triathlete most of his life. He had run in countless short and middle distance races such as 5k and 10k events. Somewhere in his 30s, he noticed that his times were not getting any better. So instead of trying to run faster, he ran longer, putting marathons and ultra-marathons on his schedule.

Then arthritis in his ankles became enough of a problem to see a doctor. "I had just com-

peted in the Harbison 50k Ultra-Marathon before my doctor's appointment," Brown said. "He told me what I did not want to hear, my running days were over." But swimming was still an option and Brown was no stranger to the sport as it's one of the three legs of a triathlon. Brown said, "I was training for the 12-mile Swim Around Key West when I discovered the 12-mile Swim Around Charleston, so I decided to stay closer to home."

So how do these full-time SCDOT employees work in the training required to compete in endurance events? Barbee, who runs 40-50 miles per week during "normal times" and peaks at 70-80 miles per week when training for a specific race, says it's like having a second job. "I personally have no competing interests," said Barbee. "I don't play golf, fish, hunt or go to football games."

All three athletes agree that flexibility is the partner of commitment. "You sacrifice sleep if necessary and you do it because the worst feeling is the regret you'll have the day after you miss a workout. That's why you get yourself out on the road early before the sun comes up or late at night," Barbee said. Pleasant agreed, "if you have to run at 4 a.m. or 5 a.m. or 10 p.m., that's what you do."

Brown said, "I'm usually standing outside the YMCA waiting when the doors open at 5 a.m. for a 5,000-yard swim, three days per week and five days when the event gets closer." Weekends are reserved for an 8,000-10,000 yard swim, including workouts in open water at Lake Murray. This May, Brown is scheduled to take a few days out from swimming to participate in a 335-mile bicycle ride from Pittsburgh, PA to Washington, D.C.

These SCDOT employees have reasons for training and competing as they do besides superior levels of fitness. "To complete a long-distance race and run it well is an incredible sense of accomplishment," said Barbee.

Pleasant said the best feeling comes before the actual marathon. He said, "Finishing that last 20-mile training run prior to a marathon is most exhilarating. It's a cause for celebration because you know you've completed the four months of training that have dictated your life. Now you can enjoy the race," Pleasant said.

Brown said, "Whether it's running or swimming, going long distances is addictive. I have been looking for challenges all of my life and I will always do so."

If you participate in endurance events like marathons, ultra-marathons, triathlons, swimming, powerlifting or any endurance sport that requires substantial training time, we'd like to hear from you. Contact Pete Poore at poorej@scdot.org or call 803-737-1270.



Charlie Brown, pictured above and below, swims 12 miles from Mount Pleasant around Charleston and up the Ashley River.



ABOVE: Mike Barbee runs between 40 to 80 miles each week.



RIGHT: Mark Pleasant runs in the New York Marathon.

SCDOT Softball Tournament

By Cody Crouch

The 31st Annual SCDOT Softball Tournament took place at the Lexington County Recreation and Aging Sports Complex in Pelion.

Six teams competed in a double-elimination tournament in front of family, friends and co-workers.

Patrol Supply came in first, Dillon came in second and Planning came in third.

The MVP trophy was awarded to Brad Suggs of Patrol Supply. The Sportsmanship trophy was awarded to **Bobby Meekins** of Dillon. A trophy was awarded to first and second place teams. First place team members received a t-shirt.



CHARLESTON



RICHLAND



ROAD DESIGN



PATROL SUPPLY - FIRST PLACE



DILLON - SECOND PLACE



PLANNING - THIRD PLACE

Engineering News

SCDOT Encroachment Permit Processing System

By Tameki L. Watts, District 3 IRC

As technology advances and the demand for service increases, SCDOT has initiated a paperless process to keep up with technology and demand. Encroachment Permit Processing System (EPPS) is an online system developed by District 3 Engineering staff and IT software development staff that manages encroachment permit applications submitted by private citizens and engineering firms. It was designed to increase efficiency, accountability, reliability and reduce the wait time for application decisions. Applicants have the option

to open an account to facilitate multiple applications or submit an application once via an application online. As any other new program has been introduced there have been adjustments for applicants and SCDOT employees that process the applications. Overall EPPS has earned a space in the paperless initiative category as well as customer satisfaction category.

Since its inception, it has been revised to accommodate user needs and design changes that continue to make it user friendly and effective. District 3 Traffic Engineer **Eric Dillon** said, "The greatest thing is the instant access to viewing all files pertaining to the permit." He said

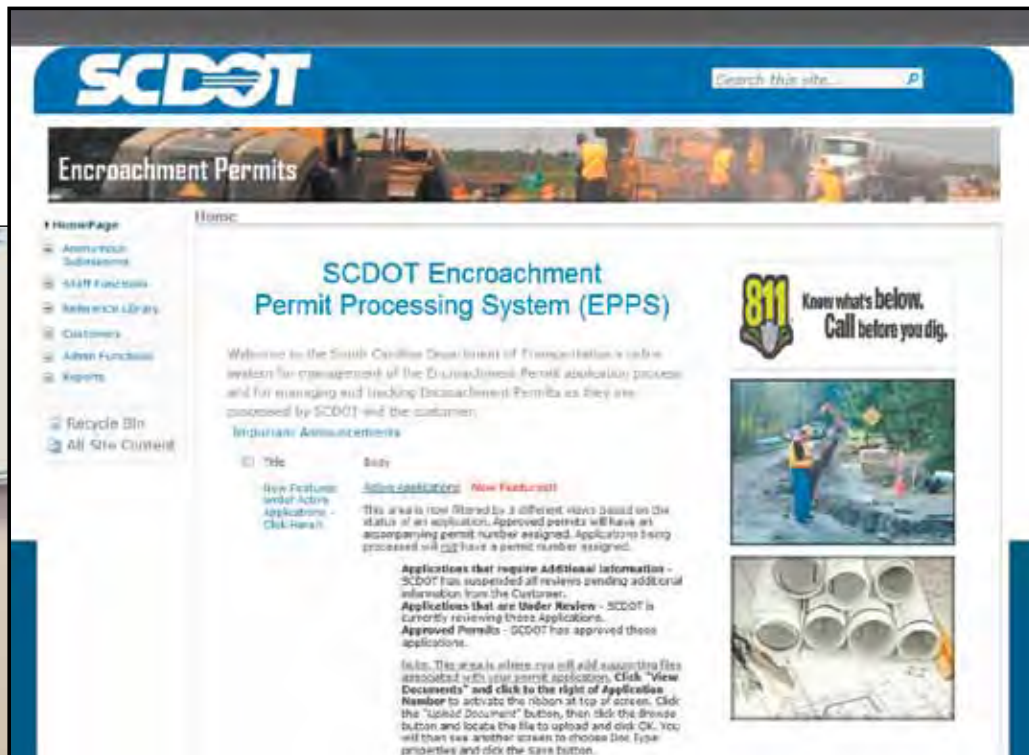
Got news?

Contact
Dede Elmore at
803-737-7900
or email her at
ElmoreDD@scdot.
org.



Dede Elmore

benefits include not waiting for SCDOT internal courier mail to return plans so that the plans can be returned to the applicant for revision. With its continued improvement and expansion, EPPS is destined to bring about customer satisfaction and efficacy.



District 3 Traffic Engineer Eric Dillon works in the Encroachment Permit Processing System.



District 1 News

Kershaw, Lee, Lexington, Richland and Sumter counties

*District Engineer: Bryan Jones (803) 737-6660
FAX (803) 737-6401*

Got news?

Contact Teresa Jackson at:
803-737-6715 or email her at
JacksonT@scdot.org

**Teresa
Jackson**



Thad Brunson honored at D1 *District 1 gives DEA a good-hearted send off*

District 1 Engineering had a “goodbye” lunch for District Engineering Administrator **Thad Brunson** on March 20 at one of his favorite places, Doc’s Barbeque.

Brunson started a tradition of sending employees off with “The Box” and, this time, it was his turn.

He was presented items that will help him in his new position at headquarters. One of these items was an Indian headdress to let everyone know he is the “Chief” engineer for field operations.

All District 1 employees wish him the best in his future endeavors.



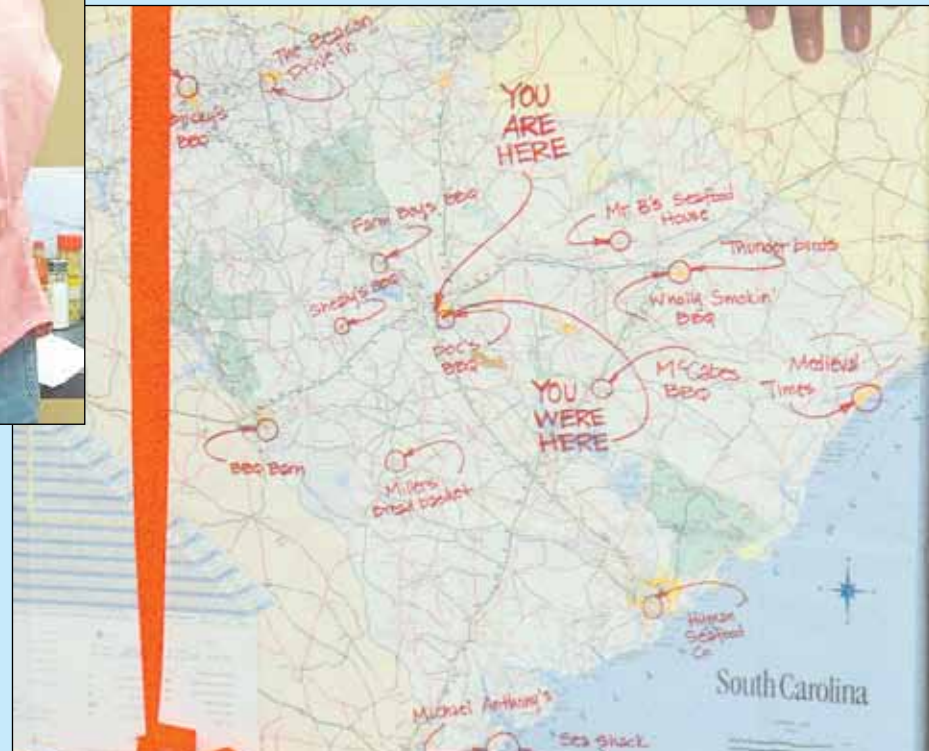
ABOVE: Thad Brunson shows off his gift, a block “C,” with his wife, Liz Brunson.



RIGHT: Thad Brunson served as District 1 Engineering Administrator since 2004.



Brunson’s new position is “Chief” engineer for field operations.



His gift was wrapped in a state map with some of his favorite restaurants highlighted.

District 2 News

Abbeville, Anderson, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry and Saluda counties

District Engineer : Kevin McLaughlin (864) 227-6971
 FAX (864) 227-6567

Got news?

Contact Sarah McKinney at 864-227-6971 or email her at McKinneySB@scdot.org.



Sarah McKinney

Information Technology

We would like to recognize the hard work and diligence of District 2 Information Resource Consultants

Dwayne Scott and **Stephanie Stevens**. They are working to get all computers in District 2 updated to Windows 7.



Flagger: Train the trainer

Wilma Magyar, of Clemson's T3S, held a Flagger Train the Trainer course in District 2 on March 3. At left, **Hugh Pitts** and Magyar demonstrate flagging during the class.

All District 2 Safety Representatives and Resident Maintenance Foremen attended the class and have become certified instructors. The certified flagger instructors will soon begin training District 2 personnel. Magyar was joined by her assistant, Chris Tumbleston, who has been a great help in coordinating this class and all of the Clemson T3S Work Zone Classes within District 2.



State Safety Representative Meeting

The SCDOT Safety Staff held its quarterly meeting at the S.C. Fire Academy on March 4. District 2 Safety Representatives hosted the meeting for the SCDOT OSHA officers. They

presented an agenda covering various aspects of effective Incident Investigation, including Protocol Books for each district, an update from **Amanda Taylor** in Claims and a group exercise.



Hearing Tests 2014

It was time for Annual Hearing Testing again. All eight maintenance units in District 2 participated in the testing.

Special thanks to Nurse **Dale Thomas** of SCDOT and Technician **Tony Aquilino** of Enviromed Corp

in Lindenwold, NJ, who helped make the process go smoothly. Shown above is Thomas assisting **Shirley Wise** of Newberry Maintenance with paperwork for her hearing test.

District 3 News

Greenville, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg counties

District Engineer: Steve Gwinn (864) 241-1010

FAX (864) 241-1115

D3 handles the snow, ice



Bridge and SHEP personnel did their jobs to ensure our roads and highways were safe for the traveling public. Strategic equipment and Maintenance work force planning disbursed de-icing material and snow plows to areas deemed high priority.

Resident Maintenance and Construction Engineers in Greenville, Spartanburg, Pickens and Oconee counties each did their part during the inclement weather.

The Bridge and Maintenance Operations' manpower provided additional support to District 3 staff and maintenance units by operating equipment, completing reports and providing critical information to aid making ice and snow clearing decisions.

SHEP incident responders worked tirelessly in assisting stranded motorists on our interstates.

District 3 did its job by keeping South Carolina citizens safe and moving during the winter weather.

District 3 experienced two snow and ice events in January and February 2014. District Engineering Administrator **Steven W. Gwinn** and the District 3 Maintenance, Construction and Traffic Engineers managed clearing the highways of snow and ice.

District 3's Maintenance, Construction,

Meet Abha Thakore

Abha Thakore has been with SCDOT since March 2007 and has worked in Construction, Maintenance and the District 3 office.

Prior to working in District 3, she had 18 years of experience working with a state agency in India.

She is currently an administrative assistant in the Greenville Construction Office.

Thakore said, "I enjoy working here and have great respect for my colleagues and I do hope to continue to advance my career within the company."

She is married to **Chinmay Thakore** who is highly regarded as an excellent chef by family and friends. He also works at SCDOT construction office. They are proud of their

only son, Harsh, who works as an Assistant Manager at Verizon in Raleigh, NC, and is a Marine in Reserves.

Thakore said, "Our family feels very fortunate to have come to the United States – the country of endless opportunities."

She just finished her second year in a 3-year Master Training program with BTB Fengshui School and travels to New York to attend quarterly workshops. She also practices as a Fengshui consultant. Fengshui is an ancient art that helps create harmony in our surrounding and in our lives by balancing five elements (water, wood, fire, earth, and metal).

To receive her Master's Certification in 2015, she is required to present a thesis and plans to research the



geographical aspects of South Carolina from the Fengshui perspective.

Got news?

Please contact
Bonita Davenport
at 864-241-1010
or by emailing her at
DavenportBG@scdot.org

**Bonita
Davenport**



Bravo!

We would like to thank both Spartanburg Maintenance and District Maintenance Operations employees for their expeditious response in the clean-up efforts from an accident that caused major damage to the California Avenue Bridge in Spartanburg County.

On Jan. 13 the California Avenue Bridge over I-585 was struck by a tractor trailer hauling equipment which caused structural

damaged to the bridge. SCDOT employees were immediately dispatched from the Spartanburg Maintenance and District Maintenance Operations Offices to begin advancing the removal and cleanup of the bridge.

These employees represent commitment and perseverance as they worked around the clock to clear the travel lanes from bridge debris in rainy and below normal temperatures before morning rush hour traffic.



District 4 News

*Cherokee, Chester, Chesterfield, Fairfield, Lancaster,
Union and York counties*

*District Engineer: John McCarter (803) 377-4155
FAX (803) 581-2088*

Got news?

Contact Edward Moore with your ideas at 803-377-4155 or by emailing him at MooreEO@scdot.org



Edward Moore

Let us plow, let us plow, let us plow

District 4 experienced two winter weather events, one in January and one in February. Crews from across the district worked tirelessly to ensure that the roadways were cleared in a timely manner.



Union Maintenance employees attach a snow plow to a truck.



Ricky Boyd of Fairfield Maintenance applies salt to U.S. 321.



York Maintenance trucks are loaded and ready to begin the night shift of salting and sanding roads overnight.



Bill Walls of Chester Maintenance makes room in the salt shed for another delivery of salt.



Harry Williams of Chester Maintenance uses a motorgrader to remove snow from S.C. 9.

Service Awards



Melvin Lott
Union Maintenance
30 Years of Service



Charles Wilson
Cherokee Maintenance
30 Years of Service

District 5 News

Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Marion, Marlboro and Williamsburg counties

*District Engineer: Dennis Townsend (843) 661-4710
FAX (843) 661-4704*



PHOTOS BY AMY CARDWELL, PHYLLIS WILSON AND KEN COGLEY

Williamsburg Maintenance spreads salt on the roadway to keep it passable.

District 5 employees successfully dealt with the two major winter storms this winter. South Carolina DOES get

snow, and when it does, the DOT keeps the roadways safe and clear for the traveling public. Here are some scenes from the storms.



Darlington Maintenance prepares salt brine for spraying.



Dillon Maintenance trucks were ready to deploy to pretreat the roadways.

Got news?

Contact Michael Miller at
843-661-4710 or by emailing
him at MillerMW@scdot.org

**Michael
Miller**



Thank you, Conway!

Dear Dot workers
Thank you for getting up so early
as you can to make sure the
roads are safe enough for us to go
to school. Thank you for getting
us out of ditches if we get stuck.
Thank you for your help with
car trouble and accidents
and other.

Your friend,
Nathan Lester



Jamie Milligan's 5th grade class at River Oaks Elementary School in Conway sent Thank You letters to the DOT employees for all the work they do every day and keeping the roads safe during the ice and snow. Our employees greatly appreciated their kind words! Here are two of the letters the students sent.

Dear DOT workers,

I just want all of you to know
that I want to thank you for all you have done
for us. I wanted to tell you guys that I appreciate
you for getting up so early to make sure we're all
safe when we go to school. Also I wanted to thank
you for helping us incase we crash or we need help.
So thank you for all you do for us kids.

Sincerely,

Jameson Lozith

**To see all the Thank You notes, check out the link below:
<http://www.scdot-transfer.org/SCDOTPHOTOS/ThankYouNotes>**

District 6 News

Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester and Jasper counties

District Engineer: Robert Clark (843) 740-1665
 FAX (843) 740-1663

Winter storms close Cooper River Bridge



We knew the Arthur Ravenel Jr. bridge was absolutely stunning when illuminated at night, but after 2 winter storms, the bridge proved to be just as beautiful when covered with ice. However, the prolonged snow and ice storms caused the bridge to be closed during part of the storm.



Ice storm brings down many trees

When the February ice storm hit Colleton, Dorchester and Berkeley counties, trees and limbs began falling from the weight of the ice.

LEFT: Employees Brent Nelson and Jimmy White from Colleton Maintenance take a moment to pose at a large tree that fell across the road.

Got news?

Contact Michelle Benton at :
 843-538-8031 or
 by emailing her at
 BentonMP@scdot.org



Michelle Benton

SCDOT military connection



Private First Class Jason Rajabi, with the United States Army's 4th Squadron 2D Cavalry Regiment received his Combat Infantry Badge (CIB) in Afghanistan. Rajabi is the son of Resident Bridge Construction Engineer **Jeff Rajabi** of Charleston Bridge Construction.

THANKS!

We would like to send a very special thanks to the employees in District 3 and District 4 who came to assist Charleston Maintenance during "Leon's" visit at the end of January.

THANK YOU to **David Allen** and **Fred Calloway Jr.** from Spartanburg Maintenance; **Larry Terry**, **Randolph Sandifer**, **Dennis Moore**, **Benjamin Yost** and **William H. Oliver** from Chester Maintenance; **Ricky Horne**, **Timothy Smith**, **Timothy Mullinax**, **Tracy Hebert**, **Bobby Collins** and **Keith Tate** from Cherokee Maintenance; **Roger Pearson**, **Tommy Sawyer Jr.**, **John Cathcart**, **Matthew Collins**, from Fairfield Maintenance.

It takes TEAMWORK and all of these employees stepped up to the plate and did whatever was asked of them. We truly appreciate each of you.

District 7 News

Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Clarendon, Hampton and Orangeburg counties

*District Engineer: Jo Ann Woodrum (803) 531-6850
FAX (803) 531-6854*

D7 class promotes safety on the job



District 7 clerks participated in a safety training held on Feb. 10 at the Orangeburg Maintenance training room. The training was facilitated by the new District

7 OSHA Officer, **Aleksandra “Ana” Endsley**, with assistance from **Robert Wiggs** and **Deborah Berry** of the Occupational Safety and Health Office in Columbia.



Kenny Harris of Aiken Maintenance was chosen to attend a luncheon at the Governor’s Mansion after the snow/ice storm on Feb. 20. Here, Harris poses with Governor Nikki Haley.

Got news?

Contact Aleksandra Endsley at: 803-531-6850 or by emailing her at EndsleyA@scdot.org

Aleksandra Endsley



Carter retires from Calhoun Maintenance

Charlton “Rick” Carter will be retiring June 30 from Calhoun Maintenance after 14 years as a Shop Supervisor. Calhoun Maintenance shop is a prime example of how a well-maintained shop should look like. Under Carter’s guidance they have set up their Lock Out-Tag Out program which is one of the best in District 7.

He is married and has two children and four grandchildren. He absolutely adores his grandkids - three boys and a girl. He is an avid Gamecock fan and supporter, enjoys spending time in the moun-



tains and riding his motorcycle.

Carter was a great asset to Calhoun Maintenance and Shop and will be greatly missed. We all hope he enjoys his retirement!



Snake!

Lookout for surprises when clearing debris

Doyle Hayes Hill of Clarendon Maintenance was picking up debris in front of a slope mower on Nov. 18, 2013.

As he picked up a tire on the side of the road, a rattlesnake came out. The snake came at him, so he hit it three times in the head and killed it. He wasn’t expecting to see a snake during cold weather.

The snake measured 4 feet, 6 inches with seven rattles and one button. Hill has also run into copperheads while on the job.

This happens more often than people realize.

CAUGHT DOING GOOD!

Boy Scouts honor Robert Wiggs with Silver Beaver Award

SCDOT OSHA Officer **Robert Wiggs** has given outstanding leadership to Scouting behind the scenes and without fanfare for nearly 40 years. His most significant contribution has been overseeing the First Aid Responders of the Exploring programs at the University of South Carolina Gamecocks football home games, where he has shown enthusiasm and professionalism in dealing with literally millions of fans over the years.

Typically at a home game, there are between nine and 15 fans that are transported to the hospital. Irreverent behavior and lacerations, headaches and fights are not unusual, nor are lost children or messy scenes from minor medical situations. On one occasion, 135 people had to be transported out of the stadium due to heat.

Each time, Wiggs and his team of Explorers and adults are on the scene promptly, usually quickly transporting the fans to a first aid station to continue to administer aid before the paid EMT's are called. Wiggs has been doing that and leading others at every home game since the 1970s.

Wiggs became a Cub Scout at Columbia's St. Joseph's Church in 1963, where he continued in Scouting into Boy Scouts. In 1972, he received his Eagle Scout award with Troop 37 at Shandon United Methodist Church and in 1972

then earned the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Palms. He became a member of the Order of the Arrow in 1973 and became a Brotherhood Member a year later.

Wiggs was a member of the Camp Barstow staff in 1973 and 1974; was a member of the Explorer Leader Training Committee, and was a Congaree Girl Scout Camp First-Aid instructor in the 1980's.

In 2000, Wiggs was awarded the highest honor in Exploring leadership, the William H. Spurgeon Award. This was followed by the District Award of Merit in 2002.

Outside of Scouting, Wiggs has been deeply involved with USA Wrestling, having officiated more than 700 tournaments for more than 25 years. He was recognized in 2001 by the International Olympic Committee for his service and by the USA Wrestling Junior Division with the 2012 National Award as Person of the Year. He has also been a volunteer assistant high school coach for Lower Richland and Brookland-Cayce high schools for twenty-eight years. He is the head wrestling coach at Fudo Shin Jujitsu MMA and Fitness.

Wiggs is currently Treasurer of the Knights of Columbus, where he has been active for seven years. He is a certified Red Cross Instructor, and has been employed by SCDOT for 25 years as the Industrial Safety Coordinator.



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

SCDOT OSHA Officer Robert Wiggs was honored on March 20 with the Silver Beaver Award given by the Indian Waters Council of the Boy Scouts of America for his contributions to scouting in South Carolina.

SCDOT employees recognized for service through storm



SCDOT employees from across the state, representing their respective offices, were recognized during the Feb. 20 SCDOT Commission Meeting for service during South Carolina's early 2014 winter storms.

Front row, from left: Christy Hall, Acting Secretary of Transportation; Beth Andrews, representing the South Carolina Emergency Management Division; Lisa Vining, Customer Service Center; Linda McDonald, Legal Services; Sherry Barton, Procurement Division; Jo Ann Woodrum, District 7 Engineering Administrator (DEA) representing all SCDOT DEA's.

Back row, from left: Jack Craft, Lexington County Resident Maintenance Engineer (RME); Corey Watkins, representing Lexington Maintenance; Mark Hunter, Office of the Director of Maintenance; Tony Magwood, Richland County RME; Bob Kudelka, Office of Communications; Andrew Rowe, representing Richland Maintenance.

CODY CROUCH/THE CONNECTOR

THE CONNECTOR

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SPRING 2014

SCDOT



Christy A. Hall
Deputy Secretary for Engineering

VIEWPOINTS

By **Christy A. Hall**
Deputy Secretary for Engineering

As we look forward to Secretary Oakley's tenure, I would like to take just a few moments to reflect over this past winter and spring.

The agency faced a myriad of challenges: back to back winter storms, earthquakes, bridges suddenly placed out of service, numerous traffic jams and threats of federal fund insolvency... just to name a few. Each time, we have collectively met these challenges head on and have delivered results.

I could not be more proud of the team and I appreciate the contributions towards success each and every

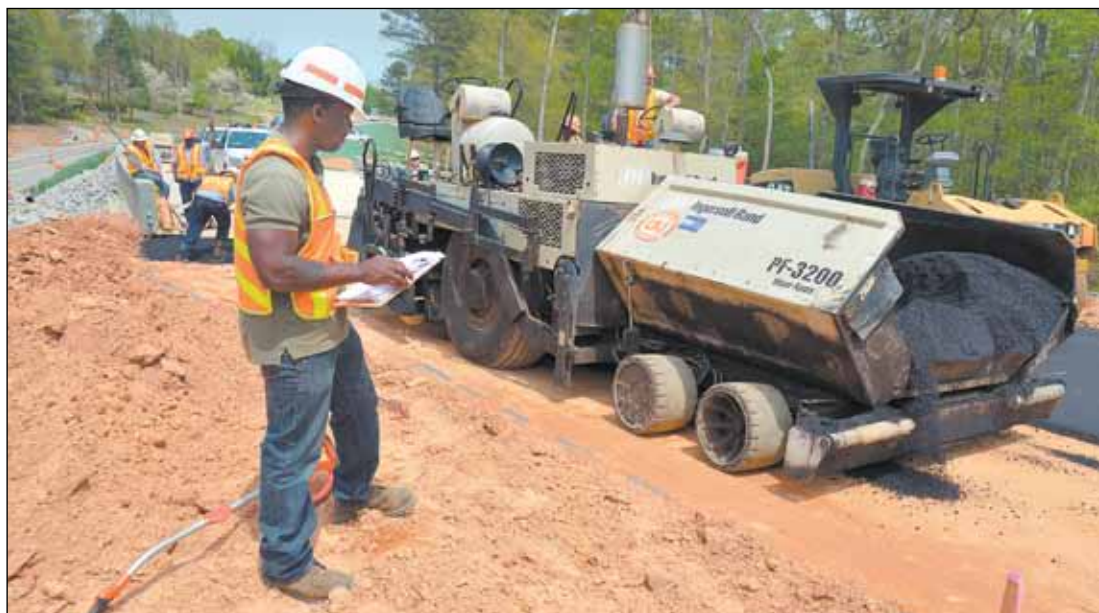
one of you made through your tireless efforts, commitment to service and dedication to our great state.

Our relationships with our partners at the city and county level as well as with our contractors enabled us to call upon them for assistance in order to get the job done.

Your efforts have been widely recognized by many across the state, including Gov. Haley and the SCDOT Commission. We have done a great job at building confidence in our abilities and I am looking forward to us continuing to make great strides under the leadership of Secretary Oakley.

I thank you for your support and assistance over the past few months and it has truly been an honor to serve as your Acting Secretary.

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ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

SCDOT Lexington Construction B employees manage and monitor the work of contractors as they replace a bridge and realign the roadway of a portion of Hope Ferry Road off U.S. 378 in Lexington County on April 11. Here, Derrick Goodman records asphalt depths, loads of asphalt delivered and asphalt temperatures during the project.



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Then Acting Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall, left, looks on as other officials break ground on the U.S. 378 widening project in Florence County. Those with shovels, from left, are: Rep. Lester Branham, SCDOT Commissioner Samuel B. Glover, Senator Hugh Leatherman, Senator Kent Williams, Senator Yancey McGill and Florence County Council Chairman James Schofield. U.S. 378 will be widened from two to five lanes along eight miles in Florence County between Lake City and Kingsburg.

Be sure to subscribe to our Youtube channel SCDOT Connector Online
by SCDOT video producer Drew Stewart:

<https://www.youtube.com/SCDOTConnectorOnline>