

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

State of DOT ..... 2  
 HOV lanes ..... 5  
 New Technology ..... 8-9  
 Virtual Warehouse..... 12  
 Flower Man ..... 15  
 US 17 Widening.... 16-17  
 Mass Transit ..... 18-19  
 District Pages ..... 24-30  
 Viewpoints ..... 31

Read more about the new look of The Connector on page 32.



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## Commission approves highway stimulus funding

### South Carolina eyes 'shovel-ready' projects for \$463 million federal money

By Pete Poore

The South Carolina Department of Transportation's (SCDOT) Commission wasted little time in putting to work the highway funds provided to South Carolina through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) signed by President Obama in February of this year.

Over the course of a series of workshops and monthly meetings in February and March, the Commission made decisions as to how the \$463 million allotment would be used.

The Commissioners agreed in principle to adhere to the "Fix it First" policy instituted by Secretary H.B. "Buck" Limehouse Jr. in 2007. This policy shifted the agency's emphasis from new construction to the maintenance and preservation of the state's 41,500 mile highway system.

The ARRA requires state DOTs to ensure that the federal funds will be obligated for projects, some within as little as 120 days and others within a period of 360 days. In addition, stimulus-funded projects need to meet the requirement in state law for prioritizing projects.

Using recommendations from SCDOT staff, four categories of projects were approved at the following funding levels:

**Highway Resurfacing and Rehabilitation**  
 \$150 million

**Interstate Highway Maintenance**  
 \$74 million

**Bridge Replacements**  
 \$56 million

**Safety/Traffic Improvements**  
 \$19 million



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

John Walsh makes a presentation to the SCDOT Commission on Feb. 18 regarding the types of projects that will be ready to get under way once federal stimulus funds are made available to South Carolina.

Before the ARRA was signed into law, the Commission had already determined that federal stimulus dollars should be distributed across the state in an effort to create jobs in every county.

Moreover, the ARRA stated that consideration should be given to locating projects in "economically distressed areas" in each state. Federal standards show that 40 of South Carolina's 46 counties fall into that category based on income levels and unemployment rates. Only Aiken, Beaufort, Charleston, Greenville, Richland and Lexington counties do not have this status.

The Commission voted to approve a priority list of resurfacing projects for each of the 46 counties that had been identified by SCDOT staff.

The ARRA also requires each state to allocate 3% of its highway funding for enhancement projects.

That percentage translates into \$14 million in South Carolina. The Commission agreed to allot each Engineering District \$2 million dollars for sidewalk projects. Each District Engineering Administrator (DEA) will submit a list of projects to the Commission for approval. The Commission noted that these smaller enhancement projects will allow smaller contractors which cannot handle multi-million dollar projects to participate in the stimulus-funded jobs.

The remaining \$150 million in the state's allotment has a requirement that these funds are to be spent on local projects coordinated by SCDOT and the Councils of Governments (COGs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). A further stipulation in the new law requires South Carolina to spend \$44 million of the local projects funding

in "Transportation Management Areas," which are urban areas with populations of 200,000 or more.

South Carolina has five such areas; Greenville/Pickens, Columbia, Charleston, Rock Hill and Aiken/Augusta.

Commission approved the concept of dividing the remaining \$106 million equally among the six Congressional districts, with a share of \$17.75 million per district. Commission members are in the process of working with their local COGs and MPOs to identify priority projects in their areas.

Commissioner Charles Dalton, who represents the 3rd Congressional District presented a list of projects totaling \$17.75 million at the Commission meeting in March that had been reviewed

See **STIMULUS** page 6

# Secretary Limehouse delivers second 'State of the SCDOT' address

By Bob Kudelka

In his second annual "State of the SCDOT" address, Transportation Secretary H.B. "Buck" Limehouse Jr. told members of the Senate Transportation Committee that his cost saving measures and Act 114, the SCDOT Reform Act, have transformed the South Carolina Department of Transportation into an efficient and accountable state agency.

"SCDOT staff accepted a challenge that I put on the table, and that was to make cost savings a part of our everyday business," Limehouse said in the Jan. 28 address. "I am convinced that we've turned this agency around from one that was in the spotlight for having wasted millions of dollars to one of the most accountable and efficient agencies in all of state government."

Limehouse, invited by Committee Chairman Senator Larry Grooms of Berkeley County, reported that the financial stability and efficiency of SCDOT can be attributed primarily to these factors:

- An extensive and on-going cost savings effort throughout the

agency

- A shift in priority from new construction to the preservation of the existing 41,474-mile state highway system (which includes 8,344 bridges). Secretary Limehouse has dubbed this strategy, "Fix it First."

- Act 114 has removed politics from the selection of projects. The SCDOT Commission now prioritizes projects based on engineering criteria alone.

- A newly-created Internal Audit Division has completed a review of the 2006 Legislative Audit Council's 44 recommendations. The Audit Division reported that SCDOT staff has taken action to address all 44 points.

"Today, the message is very positive," Limehouse said.

The Transportation Secretary explained to the Senate panel that cost savings measures have resulted in drastically reducing administrative costs in travel, cell phone usage and purchase of supplies and equipment. Also, SCDOT has undertaken a major conservation initiative related to energy and recycling.

"We recycle everything from office wastepaper to asphalt," Limehouse said.

Limehouse said these efforts

have produced a payoff for the people of South Carolina in terms of better roads and bridges. He noted that the administrative costs in SCDOT's budget for Fiscal Year 2009 has been reduced by \$18.7 million.

"The Commission, which supports our 'Fix it First' strategy, voted to use these saved dollars by increasing our maintenance budget to make roads and bridges safer," said Limehouse.

He also noted that SCDOT is currently under budget, and that he expects the agency to finish the year on June 30, under budget.

Limehouse summarized the budget picture by saying that 84 percent of SCDOT's entire \$1.05 billion budget (from both federal and state sources) is being used for maintenance, construction and mass transit programs.

Many of the Senators said they were pleased to hear of how SCDOT is operating.

Senator John Land of Clarendon County complimented Limehouse on his stewardship, saying the Department "functions better and smoother than I ever remember before."

Senator Greg Ryberg of Aiken County said he receives far fewer

phone calls from constituents.

*"I want to compliment you and your staff, and all the employees of SCDOT, on the fabulous job you all have done the last year and a half." —Sen. Greg Ryberg*

Senator Vincent Sheheen of Kershaw County thanked Limehouse and the Commission for emphasizing highway maintenance in the "Fix it First" strategy.

"If you can't repair and maintain what you've got, it makes it awful hard to justify building new anything," Sheheen said. "I know there are a lot of needs in more metropolitan areas, but out in the other 80 percent of the state where a lot of us live, things are falling apart and people are dying. Just because less people are living in my territory, doesn't mean we don't deserve to have our roads maintained and replaced."

Senator George "Chip" Campsen III of Charleston County said: "It's amazing in this environment that you're not laying off people...It seems like what you're doing is the only thing you're really capable of doing and that

is taking bites you can swallow at this point in time and not biting off more than you can chew."

Attending the Senate Transportation Committee meeting were Commission Chairman Hugh Atkins and Commissioners Henry Taylor, Sarah Nuckles and Marvin Stevenson, as well as Deputy Secretaries Tony Chapman, Glennith Johnson and Debra Rountree.

Despite SCDOT's stable financial situation, Limehouse pointed out that SCDOT is not immune from harsh economic times. SCDOT's primary source of revenue is from both state and federal fuel taxes. The skyrocketing price of fuel in 2008 caused drivers to drive less and buy less fuel. Also, people sought out carpooling, mass transit options and alternative fuels as ways to reduce gas purchases. Limehouse noted that drivers have not changed their driving habits as fuel prices have dropped, and continue to conserve. The result has been a 4 percent drop in revenue for SCDOT in the past nine months compared to the same time period one year before.

[See STATE page 5](#)

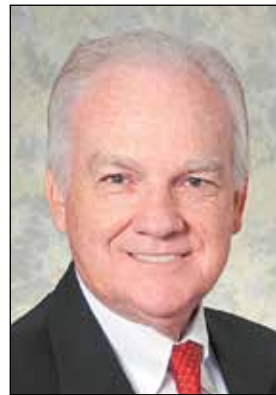
## South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission



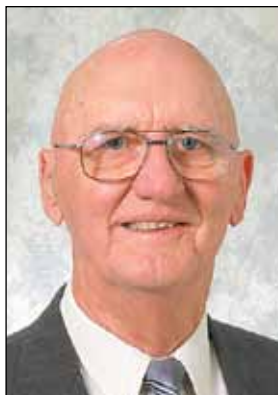
**Daniel H. Isaac Jr.**  
1st Congressional District



**Henry H. Taylor**  
2nd Congressional District



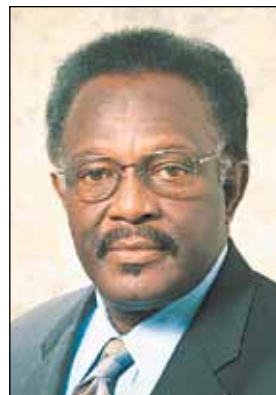
**Charles E. Dalton**  
3rd Congressional District



**F. Hugh Atkins**  
4th Congressional District



**Sarah B. Nuckles**  
5th Congressional District



**Marvin Stevenson**  
6th Congressional District



**Tee Hooper**  
Commissioner At-Large

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# Safety goes high-tech along mountainous highway

By Bob Kudelka

When SCDOT highway engineers were planning safety improvements for US 25, it would have been appropriate to cue the theme song to “Star Trek.”

The high-tech innovations they came up with boldly go where no one in South Carolina has gone before.

Moisture-detecting sensors linked to a weather station, LED signs with speed limits that change based on weather conditions, a specialized surface to give tires a better grip and closed circuit cameras are among the improvements designed to improve safety on US 25 in Greenville County.

“It’s the first application in the state,” Safety Program Engineer Joey Riddle said of the changeable speed limit. “I think we’ve identified the ideal location to install it and we’re pretty excited to try it out and see what happens.”

Transportation Secretary H.B. Limehouse Jr. announced last summer that the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) received funding from the Federal Highway Administration for a safety project aimed at reducing crash and fatality rates on rural highways in the state.

SCDOT sought this funding because South Carolina has long had one of the highest highway fatality rates in the nation, with a majority of those deaths occurring on rural roads. Greenville County has the second-highest number of rural fatalities in South Carolina over the last five years.

The highway chosen for the project was a segment of US 25 in a remote area of Greenville County with mountainous terrain, sharp curves and steep drop-offs.

It’s an area where the county coroner reported that he and his staff were nearly killed while investigating a fatal wreck when a vehicle hydroplaned and ran off the road toward them. They had to jump out of the way.

Crash data shows that 85 percent of the crashes on this segment of US 25 took place when the pavement was wet. A significant number of these crashes involved vehicles that hydroplaned as a result of speeding. In all the crashes reported in the last five years on this portion of US 25, law enforcement officers cited “Too fast for conditions” as a contributing factor in 87 percent of those incidents.

Motorists on US 25 in North Carolina have a relatively flat grade with

paved shoulders. When they cross the SC/NC line, they encounter sharp curves and a 6-degree grade drop along the four-lane highway, Riddle said.

“It’s enough that you nearly need to ride the brakes to maintain the speed limit,” Riddle said. “There are a lot of unusual characteristics along that stretch of highway.”

Frequent, sudden downpours are not unusual in the spring and summer; the highway also experiences slushy, icy conditions in the winter.

The elements of the safety project began in October with a high-friction surface on a 1-mile section of the highway. The surface overlay is a resin binder with fine angular aggregate.

Engineers say the high-friction surface works well to reduce lane departure crashes when used in spot locations. It has been used at one other place in South Carolina – the exit ramp at Greystone Boulevard and I-126 in Columbia.

The other safety features will be installed this year. They include Variable Speed Limit Signs (VSL).

These signs will receive information



Joey Riddle

from a weather station, a roadside unit that collects wind speed and temperature data, as well as data from sensors in the road that detect moisture.

The VSL signs will show the current speed limit, which could range from 55 mph in ideal conditions to 40 mph in poor conditions. These will replace the traditional speed limit signs.

“It’s a sign that looks the same but has an LED readout on the screen so we’re able to change it,” said State Traffic Operations Engineer

Tony Sheppard.

Sheppard said the technology is a long way from using “Slippery When Wet” signs.

“If they constantly see slippery when wet, it becomes part of the roadway over time and they stop paying attention to it,” Sheppard said. “Now, we won’t make the change until the appropriate conditions exist, which makes it much more effective. When it’s dry and sunny, all they see is 55 mph and everything else is off.”

Motorist will also get information from two large overhead changeable message signs similar to the ones installed along interstate highways.

These signs will provide multiple functions. They will inform motorists of the 6 percent downhill grade, providing critical information especially for trucks.

The overhead signs will also connect to the weather sensors and display information as conditions warrant. Remote controlled cameras will allow traffic engineers in Greenville to monitor the signs.

Engineers will be collecting data and will see in about a year how the improvements affect safety.

“The goal is reduction of the crash pattern, reducing both crash rate and severity,” Riddle said. “I’m hopeful that these countermeasures will provide significant safety improvements along this roadway..”

Secretary Limehouse said one aim of the project is to educate drivers.

“Our engineers can design and implement many techniques that will improve the safety of our highways from an engineering standpoint, however drivers must make driving safely a priority so that these techniques can be effective and save lives,” he said.

Limehouse also thanked the US Department of Transportation for providing the funds for this project. The funding available for these types of projects nationwide totaled only \$14.7 million. Limehouse credited SCDOT engineers once again for having projects updated and ready to go when funding becomes available.



A high-friction asphalt resurfacing has been done along US 25 in Greenville County. Above, the contrast between regular pavement and the high-friction asphalt can be seen at the starting point of the resurfacing project.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DISTRICT 3



# SCDOT provides real time traffic information in Columbia



By Bob Kudelka

**“W**hen are we going to get there?”

That is the question answered by a new feature of the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) deployed by SCDOT in January.

For the first time in South Carolina, motorists can see real-time travel time information on overhead variable message boards located on interstates in the Columbia area.

This summer, SCDOT plans to expand real-time travel information to other areas of the state including Charleston, Greenville Spartanburg and Rock Hill.

Real time travel information messages include approximate travel time to major interchanges.

For example, a motorists traveling west on I-26 may encounter a message board with the message, “Travel Time to I-20, 6-9 Minutes.” These travel times change automatically to reflect current conditions

based on average speed of vehicles.

“This exciting new feature should help the every day commuters and give them an idea whether traffic flow is normal or heavier than normal,” said South Carolina Secretary of Transportation H.B. “Buck” Limehouse Jr. “SCDOT is continuing to expand its services to assist the traveling public in making informed decisions for a better, safer experience on South Carolina highways.”

There are 15 overhead message boards in the Columbia area, located on Interstates 20, 26, 126 and 77.

These travel time messages will be pre-empted to display information concerning incidents affecting traffic and Amber Alerts.

State Traffic Operations Engineer Tony Sheppard said the hard work behind the real-time travel information began about three years ago after a Federal Highway Administration initiative.

“It took a lot of coordination between Traffic Engineering and IT Services to

make this happen,” Sheppard said, adding that the project required connecting “our computer network with the devices in the field.”

“It integrates all ITS elements: signs, cameras, radar and puts them under one central control,” Sheppard said. “It’s the backbone for any enhancements we’re going to make in the future.”

The real-time travel signs use average speeds to provide messages to motorists on length of time to reach a certain interchange. The speed data comes from radar as well as a private firm that uses global positioning satellite (GPS) data.

This technology is aimed at helping the motorists.

“If the travel time normally to I-20 is 10 minutes and the sign reads 35 minutes, the commuter will recognize there’s a lot of congestion ahead,” Sheppard said. “They know how long it’s going to take and if it would be better to take an alternate route. It provides them the information to allow them to make those decisions.”

Travel time messages are usually in a range of two or three minutes, Sheppard said. It’s not exact because the speed data is an average from vehicles in the outside lanes and inside lanes, which varies.

The range of time on a message can depend on how far away the interchange is from the sign, with longer distances giving longer time frames.

The real time travel information is an automated system that operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week, except for when traffic is so sparse that there’s not enough data. That may occur in the middle of the night, or not at all, depending on traffic.

The human element is still involved in monitoring highways, however.

SCDOT employees at the Traffic Management Center on Shop Road in Columbia, and TMCs in other areas of the state, use camera feeds to monitor traffic and look for “non-recurring incidents” such as collisions or debris in the road. These operators enter traffic management messages such as, “Incident Ahead - Use Right Lane.”



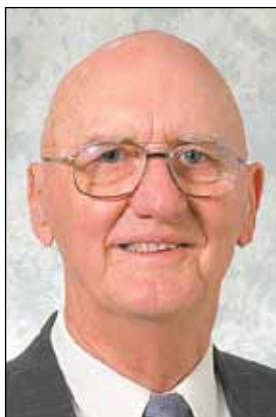
ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Message boards around Columbia started displaying real-time travel time information in the Columbia area on Jan. 27. Above, a message board on I-126 near Greystone Blvd. tells you the travel time to I-20 and Exit 103.



*F. Hugh Atkins, Henry H. Taylor*

## SCDOT Commission re-elects Chairman, Vice Chairman



**F. Hugh Atkins**  
SCDOT Commission  
Chairman



**Henry H. Taylor**  
SCDOT Commission  
Vice Chairman

The South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission (SCDOT) has re-elected F. Hugh Atkins of Spartanburg to a third term as Chairman of the Commission, and Henry H. Taylor of Lexington to a second term as Vice Chairman. Both were re-elected unanimously at the Commission's monthly meeting in Columbia on Jan. 14.

Atkins has represented the 4th Congressional District as an SCDOT Commissioner since 2006 and was first elected Chairman in 2008. He previously served on the Commission from 1998 to 2002.

A graduate of Clemson University, Atkins has in the past 40 years served in leadership positions in the Real Estate industry, including as President of Spartanburg and South Carolina Homebuilders Associations, president of the Spartanburg Board of Realtors and Director of the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce, where he served as chairman of the Chamber's Transportation Committee.

In 1995, he received the state's highest honor, the Order of the Palmetto, recognizing his many years of

service on various boards and commissions, including as chairman of the Spartanburg County Planning and Development Commission, chairman of the Permanent Advisory Council, State Development Board, Clemson University Board of Visitors, Spartanburg Technical Education Commission, and others.

In 2002, Atkins received the South Carolina Homebuilder's Keystone Award for lifetime dedication to the homebuilding industry.

Atkins is married to the former Nettie Allgood, and they have two daughters, Lanette and Melody.

Henry Taylor has represented the 2nd Congressional District on the SCDOT Commission since March of 2007. He holds a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of South Carolina, and he is a cum laude graduate of the University of South Carolina's School of Law.

Taylor used his training as a mechanical engineer in design division at the former Charleston Naval Shipyard in Charleston. He primarily prepared and coordinated test programs for mechanical systems on Polaris submarines.

After earning his law degree, Taylor spent 18 years practicing civil and criminal litigation with firms in the Midlands. In 1990, he moved into the corporate arena as Vice President of Legal Affairs for Laidlaw Environmental Services, and later with the Safety Kleen Corporation.

In 2001, Taylor returned to private practice as Senior Partner in the Taylor Law Firm in West Columbia where his practice consists primarily of civil litigation and commercial and business matters. Taylor is licensed to practice in South Carolina, the United States District Court for South Carolina, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court.

Taylor is married to Mollie DuPriest Taylor, and they have three children, Theresa LeeAnn, Pierce Butler II and Lever Curren II.

Taylor also serves as the Chairman of the Commission's Legislative Committee.

SCDOT's preparations for any funds that South Carolina might receive. Limehouse said that the Commission and agency is still waiting to hear what the criteria in the bill will be, but that Congress clearly wants to fund projects that are "shovel ready." That means projects will need to have all engineering, permitting and administrative processes complete and be ready for construction to begin in a short period of time, perhaps as little 90 days, up to possibly 120 days.

Limehouse said the Commission has given SCDOT's engineering staff the approval to qualify as many projects as possible, depending on the

level of funding the state will receive from the bill. Limehouse also stressed that SCDOT engineers are using a formula that will qualify highway projects in every county of South Carolina, so that all areas of the state would share in stimulus funds.

Limehouse gave credit to SCDOT employees for carrying out the initiatives that he started beginning in May 2007. He also credited the continual support of his administration by the SCDOT Commission, the backing he has been given by the General Assembly and the open lines of communication between SCDOT and the Senate Transportation Committee.

## Cost Savings Report 2007/2008

*Saving money starts with top management*

Secretary Limehouse's State of SCDOT address to the Senate Transportation Committee in January highlighted many significant and successful initiatives that the agency had completed in the last year. One of those major initiatives highlighted was the cost savings report for fiscal year 2007/2008 that reflected dramatic decreases in operating expenses among other categories.

Limehouse told the committee that the goal of saving money is a continual process at SCDOT that starts with top management. His report showed operating expenses in the Secretary's office dropped from just over \$61,000 (\$61,608) in fiscal year 2006/2007, to \$9,762 in fiscal year 2007/2008. Those savings were accomplished by greatly reducing the expenses for travel, cell phones, supplies and postage & shipping. Those cuts began when Limehouse assumed the leadership of the agency in May of 2007.

The cost savings report indicated that administrative expenses agency-wide had been reduced by \$1.6 million compared to the previous year. Some examples of the savings realized:

Reduction in postage supplies.....	\$13,429
Cell phone service .....	\$71,240
Land line phone services.....	\$25,190
Travel (lodging, meals, mileage reimbursement) .....	\$27,959

Efforts made by the Engineering Division resulted in one-time cost savings of \$5.1 million, and recurring savings of \$11.3 million (fiscal year 2007/2008). One-time cost reductions came about by eliminating mowing cycles, aggressive contract negotiations and value engineering on projects.

Recurring savings came from a number of categories. Some of those include the use of in-house forces for capital improvement projects, sign salvage, use of inmate labor, utilizing LED traffic signals and many more. Limehouse told the committee, "Our employees have worked very hard to cut down dramatically on travel, to consolidate equipment and supplies, to conserve energy and to recycle everything from wastepaper to asphalt."

Limehouse assured senators that cost reductions are an on-going process at SCDOT and several initiatives have been undertaken to realize more savings. Some of the major areas that are under constant review are administrative costs, training costs, consolidating copiers and printers, travel and fuel consumption, conferences and events, the use of outside legal counsel, conducting an energy audit to improve efficiency as well as reduce costs, reviewing state-wide contracts for maintenance equipment and many other areas. He also noted that all cost savings ideas are being shared with other Cabinet agencies.

Limehouse stated that there is a practical motivation for all of the cost savings efforts at the agency. He said, "The real payoff is for the people of South Carolina. Every dollar saved goes back into the maintenance of our roads and bridges. Cost savings are paying off in other areas such as reducing deaths and injuries on the highways."

He added that job number one for SCDOT is spending as many of its dollars as possible out on the roads and bridges, and that it's simply the right thing to do.

### STATE from page 2

Limehouse said, "We have significant needs in this state and the trend in declining revenues will not help us meet the projected 20-year needs which total \$20 billion. We are going to have to find another mainstream source of revenue." South Carolina's state fuel tax stands at 16 cents per gallon. That rate has not changed since 1987.

Senate members asked Limehouse to share his thoughts on the stimulus bill being debated in Washington and

Secretary Limehouse's complete remarks can be found online at this link:  
<http://www.scdot-transfer.org/scdotphotos/StateofSCDOT2009.htm>



## STIMULUS from page 1

commended by the Appalachian COG. The Commission voted to allow SCDOT staff to move forward on the list for the 3rd District.

Limehouse praised the Commission for its swift action on the stimulus funds, and the staff for preparing for these funds since November of last year. "Our engineers have been working very hard for months to qualify projects that met both the federal and state criteria. Our goal is to use every penny made available to us by the ARRA," said Limehouse.

He noted that South Carolina's stimulus funds nearly doubles SCDOT's annual federal highway budget for this year, which will help other projects. "The more work we can qualify for ARRA funds, the faster other projects not receiving stimulus funds can move up the priority list," Limehouse said.

South Carolina also received an allotment of \$41 million for Mass Transit funding above and beyond the \$463 million. To this date, the Commission has approved the use of over \$16 million for upgrading and expanding transit facilities, replacement of buses and purchase of new technology to streamline transit services for the elderly, disabled and other customers of social service transportation systems in the state.

## Slowing down saves gasoline, money, lives

By H.B. "Buck" Limehouse Jr.

**A**s most of you know, I have been stressing cost savings while at the same time I want our roads to be much, much safer.

Congestion and road rage play a large part in highway safety, but there are other things you can do in our state and your personal car to both relieve stress and save

money. I have found that when I started focusing on fuel economy (when gas went to \$4 per gallon) that I relaxed and was less tired when I made a trip around the state.

The way you drive can save between 20-25% in fuel efficiency. Such things as keeping your tires fully inflated helps overcome the rolling resistance of your tires. Of course, the primary way to save and be safe is watch your speed. The maximum

efficiency of your car is at approximately 45 mph with a large resultant decrease in economy for every 10 mph you go over 60 mph.

Other important tips: start slow and coast to a stop when it's safe to do so, pretend you have an egg under your accelerator when you take off and let off the gas, and try to use less brake when you see traffic slowing and/or stopping in front of you.



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

**Slowing down can relieve stress, save gasoline and make roads safer for everyone.**

## Commissioner Nuckles extends 'deepest thanks' to employees

*SCDOT employees offer prayers, cards to son of Commissioner injured in car crash*



Commissioner Sarah Nuckles

By Pete Poore

**G**ary Brack, the 37-year-old son of 5th District Commissioner Sarah B. Nuckles was critically injured in a highway crash on Feb. 15 near West Palm Beach, Fla.

Police believe he swerved to avoid hitting a person or an object on the highway, causing him to run off the road.

After being airlifted to the nearest trauma center, doctors determined that his injuries included the breaking of all his ribs, a broken breastbone, four broken bones in the back and a compound fracture of the wrist.

In addition, both lungs were punctured, and he suffered facial contusions. Doctors placed him on a ventilator and kept him sedated in an effort to reduce movement.

While visiting Gary on Tuesday, March 24, the ventilator was removed long enough for him to speak to his mother. Commissioner Nuckles said tears came to her eyes as her son said, in a very hoarse voice, "I love you."

Commissioner Nuckles received some great news on Monday, March 29. Her son's ventilator had been removed. He was conscious and could now speak on his own.

There was more good news

bordering on being miraculous. Tests revealed that Gary suffered no spinal cord, nor brain damage. He's still in a great deal of pain and has a long road of significant rehabilitation ahead of him.

Commissioner Nuckles said she was deeply moved by the outpouring of expressions of care, concern and prayers that have come from many at SCDOT. She had this message for all SCDOT employees:

"I have literally felt them, and our family has, and Gary's wife Jennifer too. It has been very hard on her as you might imagine. I have shared your cards with Gary and they have meant more

than you know. Prayer is instant, world-wide and understood in any language, much greater than I could ever imagine.

"I believe the Lord literally had his angels camped out around Gary. He has always been a big, strong guy, but his muscles have turned to mush after being hospitalized for well over a month. I'm sure he'll regain his strength through therapy, determination and prayer."

Nuckles added, "I believe something wonderful will come out of all this, because there is a reason he is alive. Thank you all! I covet your continued prayers, and praise the Lord always."



## Retro-Reflective Traffic Light Backplates

### New signal head backplates make traffic lights more visible

By Cody Crouch

**R**etro-reflective Traffic Light Backplates are a new safety initiative SCDOT is using to reduce traffic collisions.

The backplates are used across the state of South Carolina. Placement is determined by an intersections crash rate and how well lighted an area is primarily in more urban areas.

In addition to helping drivers locate the traffic lights these backplates also help red-green color blind citizens distinguish which color is lit, which in turn may reduce rear-end collisions.

The majority of funding for the Retro-reflective backplates is from their respective district's signal maintenance budget.



CODY CROUCH/THE CONNECTOR

Retro-reflective traffic light backplates are being used at the intersection of Forest Drive and Beltline Boulevard in Columbia. The reflective plates make traffic signals stand out from other light sources.

## Compressed Natural Gas

### With gas at a premium, SCDOT tries out alternative fuel vehicle



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Vanetta Jackson fills a specially modified state vehicle with compressed natural gas (CNG) at a filling station in Columbia. Jackson works in the District 1 Office and drives the alternative-fuel vehicle daily doing her job at SCDOT.



The vehicle uses both compressed natural gas and unleaded gasoline. The engine uses the CNG first and switches to gasoline when it runs out of CNG. The fuel door for the CNG is at the left rear of the vehicle and the fuel door for gasoline is on the right. The CNG tank is located in the trunk.



The nozzle to fill a CNG tank is different from a regular gasoline pump nozzle. Jackson said it's easy to pump CNG after you've done it once or twice.



# Fantasy Harbor, North Myrtle Beach Connector Bridges

## *Two new bridges to span Intracoastal Waterway in Horry County*

By Bob Kudelka

**T**wo new bridges will span the Intracoastal Waterway in Horry County by the end of the summer when the North Myrtle Beach Connector and Fantasy Harbour Bridge project are completed.

The North Myrtle Beach Connector is four-lane, limited control access facility from SC 90 to US 17 at Main Street in North Myrtle Beach, including crossing of the Intracoastal Waterway and an interchange with the Carolina Bays Parkway.

This \$85 million project will serve as a gateway to the City of North Myrtle Beach.

Phase I consists of the approach roadway grading and the placement of bridge fill material. Phase II includes concrete paving and the construction of the Intracoastal Waterway bridge and a bridge over Old Sanders Road.

Program Manager Mike Barbee said the North Myrtle Beach Connector was first studied along with the Carolina Bays Parkway to improve the area's transportation network.

"There has always been a need

to provide an additional crossing over the waterway in the North Myrtle Beach area," Barbee said. "It will definitely provide relief to the existing network."

Motorists along the busy US 17 in North Myrtle Beach have for years have crossed the waterway in Cherry Grove, the city's northern end, by using SC 9. There's also an adjacent swing bridge.

Once the Connector opens, it will link SC 90, which runs parallel to the waterway, to Main Street. And motorists who are in North Myrtle Beach will be able to use the Connector to get on the Carolina Bays Parkway and head south to Myrtle Beach and the South Strand.

"It should go a long way toward increasing mobility for the people of North Myrtle Beach," Barbee said.

The 1,000-foot-long bridge will include a multi-use pathway on the northern side. Pedestrians and bicyclists will be able to enjoy the views as they use the 10-foot-wide pathway.

Construction on the Connector began in summer 2007.

In late February, concrete pavement was in place on the

both sides of the waterway. Workers were busy erecting a sound barrier wall, as high as 16 feet, on the east side from the bridge.

Atop the bridge, crews were working on the deck with tasks such as post-tensioning on the girders. The girders are so large that they were brought in by barge, under Coast Guard approval for minor interruption of marine traffic.

The contractor built a pier into the middle of the waterway and a temporary trestle was used for girder construction.

"It's been a very successful project," said SCDOT Ken Hayes, Resident Construction Engineer for Marion County. "Everything is on schedule."

"All the girders are in and we've still got a majority of the bridge deck to do and there's a little bit of road work left," Hayes said. "The ramps at Highway 31 need to be finished, along with landscaping, irrigation and signage."

Hayes works out of the Marion County office, which often assists Horry County due to the many projects along the beach areas. Hayes said, "Everyone in our office has worked on this

project. Robby Bean is assigned as the lead inspector."

Hayes said the project is on schedule for a late summer opening. He said the North Myrtle Beach City Council approved naming the Connector the "Robert Edge Parkway" to honor the city's first mayor.

"It's a great project for me," said Hayes, who joined SCDOT two years ago. "I was excited when I found out this project was going to be in our office."

This project is unique with the design of post-tensioning girders in the bridge as well as other non-typical items such as concrete pavement and a noise wall."

The contractor is Cape Romain Contractors Inc.

About 12 miles south, crews were just as busy on the Fantasy Harbour project.

The bridge will cross the waterway and connect the Fantasy Harbour Interchange at US-17 Bypass and Harrelson Boulevard to the local roads, such as George Bishop Parkway, on the west side of the Intracoastal Waterway.

"This is a vital link in the overall metropolitan loop for the City of Myrtle Beach," Barbee said.

Phase I consists of the approach roadway grading and paving and placement of bridge fill material. Phase II includes construction of the Intracoastal Waterway bridge and a ramp bridge at US 17 Bypass.

It will be a five-lane, 1,800-foot-long bridge with a multiuse path.

Total cost of the project is \$46.5 million.

Construction began in September 2007.

"It's going well," said Travis Patrick, Resident Construction Engineer for Horry County. "We just finished all the structural steel beams a month ago and we're working on getting the deck forms in place and getting the rebar in. We're hoping to have our first deck pour in a week or two."

Challenging soil conditions led engineers to use 6-foot-diameter and 8-foot-diameter drilled shafts. The 37 drilled shafts are from 70 to 90 feet deep.

In both bridge projects, SCDOT inspectors play a large role. They are on site all the time, monitoring the concrete pours, testing reinforced steel and checking all bolts to make sure



ABOVE: The North Myrtle Beach Connector bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway will connect North Myrtle Beach to the Carolina Bays Parkway.



RIGHT: Willie Whipple of Freyssinet pulls cables that run through the girders of the bridge.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR





ABOVE: Crews construct a noise barrier wall along the North Myrtle Beach Connector project.



ABOVE: From left, Ken Hayes of Marion Construction, Bob Mobley of Wilbur Smith and Chris Cannon of Marion Construction discuss the project's progress.

they are properly tensioned.

“The primary focus from here on out is getting the deck finished,” said Patrick. “That’s our main critical path item is getting the deck poured. Then we pour the parapet walls, light pedestals, put up guardrail and tie into asphalt at both ends.”

Patrick said the multi-use path is specially designed with a detachable barrier “so if they want to add that as a lane in the future, we can take the wall out and have another lane for traffic.”

Patrick said other employees from the Horry Construction Office working on the project are Jon Mishoe, Derrick Tindal, James Hammond, Joseph Cooper, and Debra Casaer.

Contractor for the project is R.R. Dawson Bridge Company, LLC.

Both the North Myrtle Beach Connector and the Fantasy Harbour Bridge projects are part of Horry County’s original RIDE program. RIDE, which stands for Road Improvement Development Effort, was funded through a 1.5 percent hospitality tax enacted by Horry County in 1997. The State Infrastructure Bank provided the matching funds for the RIDE program.

The total program was approximately \$1.172 billion dollars in value and also constructed projects such as Conway Bypass, Carolina Bays Parkway, and Grissom Parkway. The SCDOT also made a contribution to the overall program and managed the projects on behalf of Horry County.

“Horry County’s program has been the most successful in the state and probably one of the most successful in the nation,” Barbee said.



Mike Barbee is the Program Manager of the North Myrtle Beach Connector and Fantasy Harbor projects.



LEFT: Horry Construction Engineer Travis Patrick checks the Fantasy Harbor Bridge construction project.

Both the North Myrtle Beach Connector and Fantasy Harbor Bridge projects include multi-use paths for bicycles and pedestrians.



Joseph Cooper, left, and James Hammond, right, of Horry Construction check the cross frames and bolts on the Fantasy Harbor Bridge.



# 2nd Annual Trip Page Classic

*Golf tournament raises \$21,000 for Citadel scholarship*



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

A team celebrates a great putt at the 2nd Annual Trip Page Classic. The forecast called for rain, but 120 participants were able finish 18 holes on March 14 without any rain at the Westcott Plantation in Summerville.



From left, Tommy Giggleman, Ronald Newton and Clay Bodiford came in first place with a score of 53. Bodiford is the Assistant Resident Construction Engineer at Charleston Bridge Construction.



Trip Page was an SCDOT employee in Charleston Maintenance. He died in an automobile accident in June 2007. The golf tournament was organized by his family, and raises money for a Citadel scholarship in his memory.

For more information on next year's tournament, visit [www.trippageclassic.com](http://www.trippageclassic.com) or call Christi Page at 843-469-2835



After the golf, players and family enjoyed a dinner, party and raffle at the club house. At left is Charleston Resident Maintenance Engineer Richard Turner and his family.



Many SCDOT employees and friends of Page's participated in the tournament. Above, Shaun Martin, Mark Casey, Chris Hernandez and John Paulus pose by the last hole at the end of the day.



Jordan Jackson, second right, is the first recipient of the Trip Page Scholarship at The Citadel. Jackson is a sophomore studying civil engineering. From left: Clay Bodiford, Christi Page (Trip's widow), Jackson and Frances Anderson (Trip's mother).



Page's three-year-old nephew entertained himself by playing with golf balls and enjoying the music during the party.



# “I miss my grandparents’ front porch”

By Susan Jones,  
Human Resources

**W**OW! How about this recession? I’ll bet by now Peter has been robbed several times in order to pay Paul. Wouldn’t want to be Peter or Paul right now. There has been a lot of talk as to why this happened and the finger pointing has been relentless. One thing I have come to realize in all of this mess is this; I have more than I thought I did and don’t need half of what I have.

How many times have we heard our parents and grandparents talk about the good ole days, when life had a much slower pace, people not only spoke to each other but truly invested in spending quality time with their families, friends and neighbors? I remember as a little girl sitting on a swing, on my grandparent’s front porch, for long periods of time. Their house was located on Highway 1 in Bethune, and I can still recall those big trucks going by, some blowing their horn and people walking by and stopping to chat with Mr. Cramer and Mrs. Edna for awhile. Everything seemed to be in slow motion especially compared to now. Loving others and living within your means was the true key to happiness. What in the world has happened?

So here it is, 2009 and we are experiencing what many are calling difficult times, or is it? Is it difficult or different? Well depending on whom you are and your outlook on life the answer may vary. If you are the kind of person who wakes up in the morning and says, “hello world, what can you do for me, today,” then these are difficult times. If you wake up and say, “hello world, what can I do for you today” then the times are just a little different. I guess the first thing one needs to do is figure out who they really are and what all this means to you and your family. So, go grab a mirror, look long and hard then be completely honest and ask, “In which category do I fit?” You may want to go so far as to asking others, what they see in you.

It is my hope that after some serious soul searching you have come to realize that maybe the “big picture” in all this mess is

not “debt and destruction” but the positive changes these times can lead us to. You have more control over this than you think, you just have to “monitor and adjust” (a little educational jargon) the way you live day to day. Even before I became a single mom, I was pretty frugal but now that I have a son whose stomach seems to be a bottomless pit, I have started dedicating a little time each week to seeking out resources that I can tap into and ways to save and or spend my money wisely. I have been amazed at what’s available and how having a different mindset can have a maximum impact.

One of the first changes I made was this past holiday when I decided not to send

out Christmas cards. After looking at my list of people who I would send cards out to, I decided that, the time it took me to take the picture in to the photo store, pick out a boarder, address the envelopes, pay for the cards and purchase stamps, I would be in the hole about \$135.00. That’s a hole I certainly did not want to dig. So far, no one has suffered because they did not receive a Christmas card from Elliott, Wallace (our dog) and me.

In the yellow box below, I have included some information and web sites that range from medical assistance, outreach programs, coupons, support groups, discounts and other resources that I hope you find helpful.

There are many

facilities, statewide that offer support to those with limited or no health insurance. Programs are also available based on individual’s income. Information concerning benefits and services for children are also available. I have been able to use several resources for my son, so I can tell you first hand that help is out there. The three state agencies listed, are good starting points so I encourage you to take the time to search their websites. Please know these are just a few and with a little time and effort I feel confident that you will locate other resources that will benefit you and your family.

I hope you have found this information helpful. If you have any questions about services that

you may qualify for and need help getting started please do not hesitate to contact our Human Resource office and we will be more than glad to assist you. By the way, don’t forget to clip those coupons out of the Sunday paper. You may also want to team up with a friend or another family to buy items in bulk. With a little effort and proper planning you will be well on your way to cutting costs, paying down debt and saving.

Well, that’s it for now. I’m taking my son to Camden to spend the weekend with his grandparents, you see, they have this swing on their front porch...



## Susan Jones shares ways to stretch your dollars during tough financial times

**Need Assistance?  
Check with these organizations.**

- South Carolina Department of Social Services
- South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs
- South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- Welvista (1-800-763-0059)
- Richland Care (803-296-2220)
- The Free Medical Clinic (803-765-1503)  
1875 Harden Street, Columbia SC)
- The Dream Center Clinic (843-225-1115) Charleston, SC
- <http://www.healthierus.gov/>
- <http://www.freeclear.com/landing/>
- Angel Food Network (See box at far right for information.)

**More ways to help  
you stretch your  
dollars:**

Here are a few coupon Web sites that Jean Chatzky highlighted in her article, “Save up to \$1000.00! Best Coupon Deals” on December 8, 2008. She is a TODAY-Show.com contributor:

- [CouponMom.com](http://CouponMom.com)
- [Promotioncode.org](http://Promotioncode.org)
- [Coupons.com](http://Coupons.com)
- [Bradsdeals.com](http://Bradsdeals.com)

**Angel  
Food  
Network**

Here is an example of a monthly deal offered through the Angel Food Network. The regular box contains a good variety and enough food to feed a family of four for a week.

For \$30 you get:

- 1.5 lb rib eye steaks (4 x 6 oz.)
- 3 lb. split chicken breast
- 1.5 lb. country fried steak patties (6 x 4 oz.)
- 1 lb. package 80/20 ground beef
- 1 lb. fully cooked meatballs
- 1 lb. mild Italian sausage
- 12 oz. deli sliced ham
- 1 lb. California blend coffee
- 1 lb. green beans
- 20 oz. shoestring fries
- 1 lb. pasta
- 28 oz. marinara sauce
- 21 oz. condensed soup (makes 5 servings)
- 1 lb. pinto beans
- 32 oz. 2% shelf stable milk
- dozen eggs
- dessert

All for \$30.00

Each month, the Angel Food network offers a similar package. Visit [www.angelfoodministries.com](http://www.angelfoodministries.com) to find the location and contact person near you.



# Use a mouse to get to this warehouse

By Bob Kudelka

**A**n Assets Management “Virtual Warehouse” has been established for Headquarters employees as a way to fill their needs for furniture or office supplies by just a few clicks of the computer mouse.

This warehouse has no dust or cobwebs, just a web site.

Headquarters employees who visit the Virtual Warehouse web site can either post an item they need or something they no longer need.

“We have a desperate need of lateral file cabinets,” writes Payroll Manager Dennis Cline on one of the first posts to the site, which launched in late February. “Are there any available within the agency?”

The idea behind the virtual warehouse is to save money, said Carl Chase, Director of Assets Management.

“It’s a central clearinghouse,” Chase said. “We ask that if people are looking to buy something new, they look at this method first. It also saves us from having to use warehouse space, which is very costly.

“It seems like a simple way to do

business.”

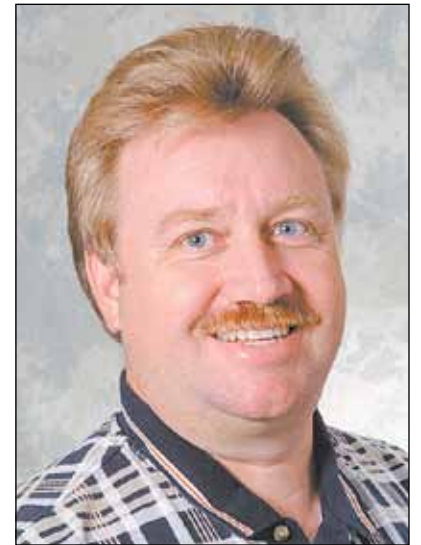
Simple is the key word in navigating the user-friendly site, designed by James Green, Senior Applications Analyst, of IT Services.

“Welcome to our Virtual Warehouse for surplus property, equipment, and supplies,” the site reads. “This site is designed to encourage SCDOT employees to advertise surplus items. Requests for advertised surplus items are reviewed and awarded by SCDOT Asset Management.”

Users are given easy instructions on how to either post a “Wanted Announcement” for something they need or a

“Warehouse Items” for something they have but don’t need any more.

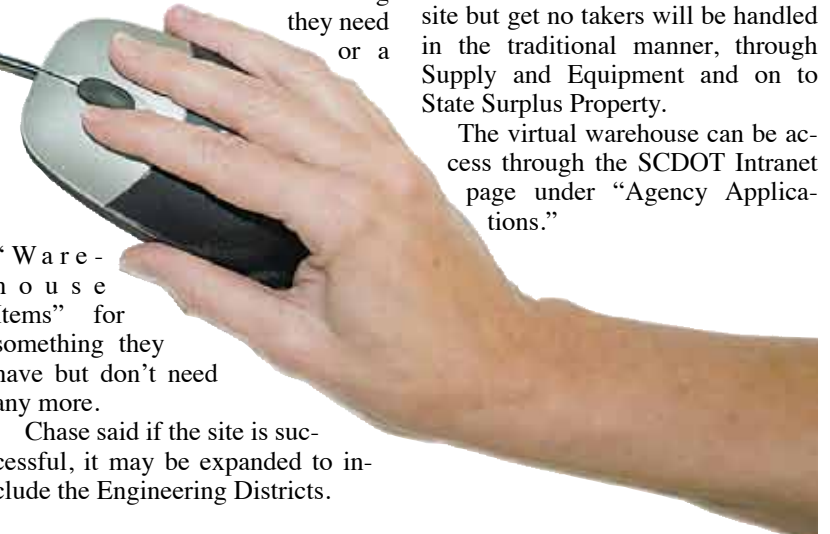
Chase said if the site is successful, it may be expanded to include the Engineering Districts.



James Green designed the program that will help manage surplus property.

Items that are advertised on the site but get no takers will be handled in the traditional manner, through Supply and Equipment and on to State Surplus Property.

The virtual warehouse can be accessed through the SCDOT Intranet page under “Agency Applications.”



The direct link is:

<http://workgroup.sharepoint.dot.state.sc.us/AssetManagement/default.aspx>.



## National Red Dress Day

SCDOT Employees wore red on Feb. 6 to inspire women to take action to protect their heart health. The National Red Dress Day is a day of action to show support for women and heart disease awareness.



American Heart Association   
Learn and Live

ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR



# Dillon County native Ben Bernanke honored with I-95 interchange dedication

By Bob Kudelka

A dedication ceremony for the "Ben Bernanke Interchange" was held March 7 in Dillon to honor the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the United States Federal Reserve System.

Acting on a concurrent resolution from the General Assembly, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) Commission approved a resolution on Feb. 21 to name Exit 190 along Interstate Highway 95 in Dillon County the "Ben Bernanke Interchange."

"Dr. Ben S. Bernanke grew up in Dillon County, acquiring knowledge and developing integrity and personal skills in rural South Carolina...this solid foundation is the building block upon which Dr. Bernanke has established an impressive career as an economist," the resolution noted.

Speakers at the ceremony in addition to Bernanke included Dillon Mayor Todd Davis; Cullen Bryant, former of the Chairman Dillon County Chamber of Com-

merce; Congressman John Spratt, Fifth Congressional District; Senator Dick Elliott; Senator Kent Williams; South Carolina Court of Appeals Judge James E. Lockemy; SCDOT Commissioner Sarah B. Nuckles, 5th Congressional District; former Commissioner Bobby T. Jones; State Representative Jackie Hayes; and Mitchell Gough, Chairman of the Dillon County Chamber of Commerce.

Rev. Richie Hicks, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Dillon, gave the invocation and Kevin Thomas, Chamber of Commerce board member, gave the benediction.

Bernanke spoke of his family ties to Dillon, which began in the 1940s when his grandparents bought a drug store on Main Street and moved from New York. His father and brother later bought the store and ran it for many years.

"I remember working in the store as a boy, or, as Uncle Mort likes to remind me, avoiding work by hiding out by the comic-book rack," Bernanke said.

Bernanke attended East Elementary, J.V. Martin Junior High,

and Dillon High School, where he played saxophone in the marching band.

"As a teenager, like many teenagers, I itched to get away from the small town in which I grew up," Bernanke said. "I got my wish when I left Dillon to attend Harvard University."

On Feb. 1, 2006, Bernanke was sworn in as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the United States Federal Reserve System, appointed by President George W. Bush to succeed Alan Greenspan. He also serves as Chairman of the Federal Open Market Committee, the system's principal monetary policymaking body.

Bernanke said until recently he did not realize that interchanges were named after people.

"But, as I thought about it, I realized that it is indeed a high honor for someone whose job is focused on supporting the economy. Efficient transportation is crucial to economic development."

Bernanke thanked the Chamber of Commerce for asking the state to name the interchange in his honor.

"But even more than the honor itself, I am touched by what it represents--the prayers, good wishes, and support of the people of my home state and hometown," Bernanke said. "I cannot express how much those good wishes mean to me. I think of them often during my work in Washington and travels on behalf of the Federal Reserve, and I will be reminded of them, very tangibly, whenever I return to Dillon."

He was previously Chairman of the United States President's Council of Economic Advisers from 2005 to 2006, and a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve since 2002; and has also served the Federal Reserve System as a visiting scholar at the Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia (1987-1990), Boston (1989-1990), and New York (1990-1991, 1994-1996); and a member of the Academic Advisory Panel at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York (1990-2002).

He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from Harvard University (summa cum laude) and a Ph.D. in economics



Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke

from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and is married and has two children.

"Dillon County and South Carolina are proud to have Dr. Bernanke as a native son, and would like all who travel Interstate Highway 95 to know that he is from our State," the resolution noted.

Sept. 1, 2006, was declared "Ben Bernanke Day" throughout the state, and the Chairman was presented the South Carolina "Order of the Palmetto" by Gov. Sanford at an event hosted by the City of Dillon.

## Amanda Woodrum selected for Jim Cagney Memorial Scholarship

By Rob Thompson



Amanda Woodrum

Amanda Woodrum, of Orangeburg has been selected as the recipient of this year's annual Jim Cagney Memorial Scholarship.

Woodrum received \$2,500 for her studies in Civil Engineering at Clemson University.

In an essay, Woodrum explained the importance of her major in today's society. She included a brief description of her long and short term goals in order to qualify for the scholarship.

Here is an excerpt from Woodrum's essay:

*"I never truly paid attention to how much impact engineers have on today's world until this summer when I worked for SCDOT in Bamberg Construction. This opportunity truly opened my eyes to how much thought and work is put into every detail.*

*As a result, I am better able to relate real world experiences with the classroom math, engineering and economics that I am now taking. I can identify the importance of what I am learning. I see so many students going through their schoolwork and having no idea how it will relate to what they will do in the real world.*

*I feel very confident that I made the right decision in my field of study, and that my education will enable me to successfully meet future challenges."*

The scholarship is given annually to a child or grandchild of an SCDOT employee.

Woodrum is the daughter of District 7 Engineering Administrator Jo Ann Woodrum.

The money is raised through an annual golf tournament held in honor of the late Jim Cagney, who was District 1 Engineering Administrator from 2001 to 2005. He passed away from cancer on Feb. 26, 2005.

Last year's tournament, the Third Annual Jim Cagney Memorial Tournament, was a huge success.

Cathy Cagney, Jim's widow, thanks all the SCDOT employees that participated and RPM Engineering for sponsoring the event. She also encourages more students to apply for the scholarship. Only seven applicants applied last year.

The fourth annual event will be held on Oct 19 at the Lexington County Country Club.

The Jim Cagney Memorial also contributed to Camp Comfort Zone in Richmond, VA. This camp is a bereavement camp for children who have lost parents.

The Fourth Annual Jim Cagney Memorial Golf Tournament will be held on October 19, 2009, at the Lexington County Country Club. For more information, please contact: Cathy Cagney at ccagney@sc.rr.com or 803-996-9235

Applications for the Jim Cagney Memorial Scholarship will be available in August.



## Security guard by night, cake baker by day

# Maxine's craft is in the mix

By Rob Thompson

**L**ike a script pulled right out of a Hollywood movie, Maxine Craft leads a double life. And they are as different as night and day.

### Night

Craft works for Defender Security and on most afternoons, you'll find her in uniform at the security desk at SCDOT headquarters.

Most of the time, her security work at SCDOT is uneventful. Working the 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. shift, she keeps logs and tracks visitors when SCDOT is open, and makes rounds through the building after hours.

"People tell me they feel safer with me here," Maxine says.

Craft has been in the security business 12 years. Before coming to SCDOT four years ago, she worked at Michelin. Prior to that, she worked at Gaston Copper Recycling.

One night when she was working at Gaston, she helped catch a bad guy. She was alerted to a guy stealing some copper, so she wouldn't open the gate until the police were there to nab him as he left.

### Day

By day, you'll find a different Maxine Craft -- a 79-year-old grandmother and great-grandmother who trades her security uniform for an apron.

"If I'm not working, I'm in the kitchen," Craft said. "My hobby is baking."

She's been baking cakes for 50 years. Four years ago, she decided to supplement her income with her cake baking talents. She and her sister, Zellie Mack, take orders from people and make a variety of cakes.

While she jokingly claims to be the better baker, she admits that they each have their own specialties.

"If I get a request for a 10-15 layer chocolate cake, she makes those. She makes the carrot cakes if I have more than I can do. But she doesn't like to make a red velvet. That's my favorite to make."

Craft's favorites are: Red Velvet, Nut Pound Cake, Pineapple Layer, Italian Cream, German Chocolate, Pound, Maple Pound, Chocolate Pound, Sour Cream Pound, Banana Nut Bread and Chewy Squares.

Asked about any baking secrets, she shared two: She

always uses Adluh flour, and only bakes one cake at a time. "It wouldn't work cooking different cakes together."

She's become quite well-known for her baking. Word of mouth keeps her busy. During holidays and special occasions, she has baked 10 to 14 cakes in a week.

John Watson of Road Data Services said, "I've had the pleasure of tasting her pound cake and her nut pound cake. Her pound cake is the best I've tasted since my grandmother's. I'm hoping to try her other cakes!"

She sells a good number of cakes, and she's also very generous with cake gifts.

"You'd be surprised at the number I give away. That's just me," Craft said.

A few months ago, she baked a cake for a co-worker's neighbor.

"I didn't know the people, but she told me about him having cancer, and I just felt in my heart that I just wanted to do something."

Her kindness is as famous as her cakes.

"Maxine is the kindest, most gentle-hearted person," Watson said. "She is always doing things for other people. Cooking for

others is but one of the ways her generosity shows. You can be guaranteed if she has been blessed with something, she will pass that blessing on to those around her."

Craft was born in Woodford, and has lived in Swansea 46 years. She has three sons, four grandchildren and one great-grandson. She's a member of King Grove Baptist Church.

In her spare time, she likes to go to the mountains with her sister.

On Sunday's she's watching NASCAR and rooting for Dale Earnhardt Jr.

"His dad was my favorite, but after he passed away, I started pulling

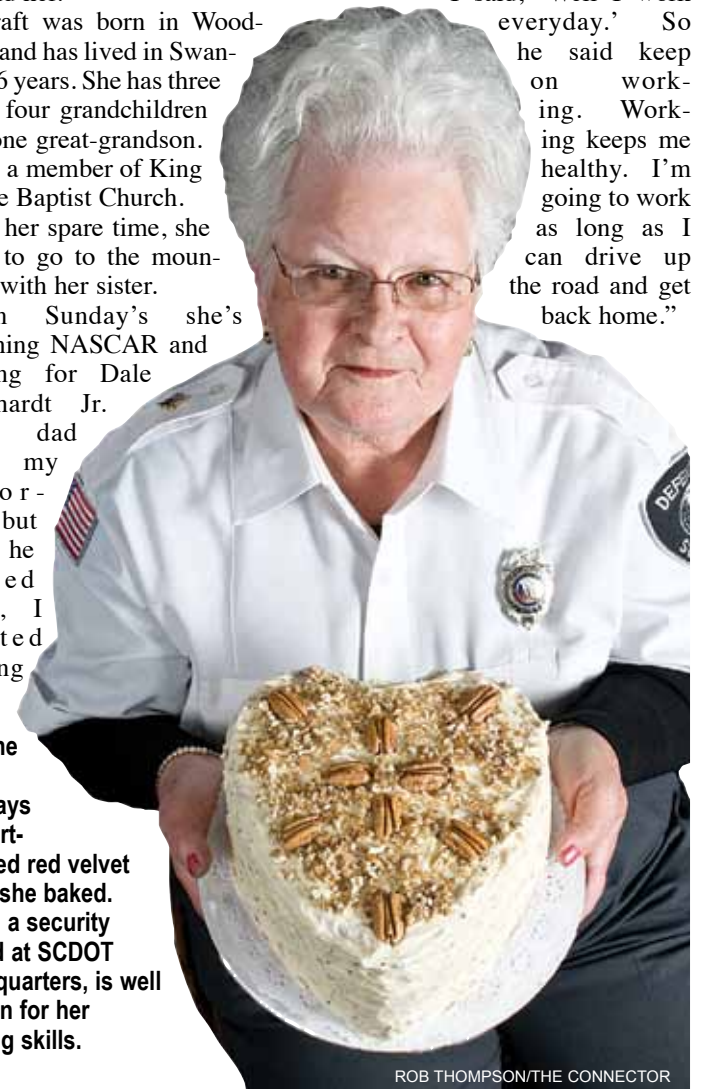
for Junior."

She plans on working here "as long as ya'll let me work here."

"The doctor said, 'whatever you're doing, keep it up.' And I said, 'Well I work everyday.' So he said keep on working. Working keeps me healthy. I'm going to work as long as I can drive up the road and get back home."

everyday.' So he said keep on working. Working keeps me healthy. I'm going to work as long as I can drive up the road and get back home."

**Maxine Craft displays a heart-shaped red velvet cake she baked. Craft, a security guard at SCDOT headquarters, is well known for her baking skills.**



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

## AASHTO honors SCDOT employees for 25 years of service



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

SCDOT Director of Preconstruction Robert Pratt presents employees with American Association of State Highway Transportation Official (AASHTO) service awards during a staff meeting on March 16. From left are: Robert Pratt, Wayne Corley, Charles Smoak, Preston Helms, Scott Davenport, Terry Koon and Ed Eargle.

**AASHTO 25 Year Service Awards** were also presented to:

Thad Brunson

Mark DeZurik

Jim Feda

Billy Mattison

Lee Neighbors

Mark Nesbit

Mike Sanders

Dennis Townsend



# The Flower Man Making a garden bed

By Ernest Jones

Whether you're making a new garden bed or renovating an old one, the first step is making the site the best it can be for the plants you want to grow.

Most home gardeners rarely begin with an ideal site for their gardens. Instead they pick the best place available and then modify it.

Getting a bed ready for planting may be an easy process or a time-consuming one. You may need to cut away and remove sod or clear the area of brush and vines. You may want to consider adding a fence or a hedge to provide an attractive background and to act as a windbreak. Almost certainly you need to improve the soil.

By the time you've cleared the new bed of grass or weeds, and you've worked the soil enough to remove the roots and rhizomes, you'll have started to get a feel for what type of soil you o u

have.

Whether it's predominantly clay and/or loam, it will be improved by digging or tilling and adding a generous amount of organic material.

It's a good idea to get a soil test and learn more about the texture and structure of your soil before you till and plant.

Gardeners who would like to become good gardeners can begin by learning as much as possible about their soil. Although you can garden successfully without knowing whether the soil is acid or alkaline, and how much potassium or phosphorous is present, you will be more successful if you have these facts and know how to use them.

Soil tests are an easy way to gather such useful information.

In a sense, soil tests are like highway road signs. They help point your soil improvement and fertilization programs in the right direction.

Basically, soil tests reveal two things. They determine the acidity or alkalinity of the soil on the ph scale, and they indicate fertility by

estimating how much of the major plant nutrients your soil contains. Before you start to dig, take a moment to test for soil moisture. Grab a handful of soil, clench it in your fist. If it forms a hard, wet ball, that doesn't crumble easily, your soil is too wet to work.

Working wet soil destroys its structure, so wait a few days and try again.

On the other hand, hard, dry soil is difficult to dig. You'll make the job easier if you thoroughly moisten the bed with water and wait a day or two before digging.

The easiest way to prepare a new bed is to use a rotary tiller to break up the soil and work in organic matter. However, tillers can pack wet soil and destroy its structure. Be especially careful that your soil is dry enough to work before tilling.

To hand dig a bed, bring out our spare garden fork and a grading rake. Starting at this end, mark a strip across the new bed and dig a trench about the depth of a spade's blade.

Toss the soil from the trench into a wheelbarrow.

Use your garden fork to loosen the subsoil at the bottom of the trench. Then, place a layer of compost, leaf mold, or other organic material at the bottom of the trench. Begin to dig an adjacent

trench, tossing the soil from strip B into empty strip A.

Thoroughly mix the soil and the compost with the fork and then repeat the process, strip by strip. For the entire length of the garden, once you reach the end, use the soil from the first strip to fill in the final trench.

After you are finished digging, pull out and remove any rocks, roots, or other debris that has worked into the surface.

Native topsoils differ tremendously throughout the country, and soil conditions can vary greatly from garden to garden.

A gardener in Iowa may have several feet of loam, while one in Connecticut may have to sift each shovelful through a mesh screen, losing about 50 percent of the soil's volume to rock debris. A Californian may be dealing with adobe soil; a gardener in the Southeast may have impoverished red clay. Both may literally need pick axes to break the surface of these compact materials.

Coastal gardeners often have extremely sandy soils that do not hold water or nutrients. Gardeners in new housing developments may dig down only to find that all topsoil has been carted away, leaving them with nothing but clay subsoil.

If you've removed nearly as much rock as you have soil, or if you had nearly all clay to begin with, bringing in purchased topsoil may be the answer.

In some cases, raised beds filled with purchased loam may be the best alternative. Whatever soil type or situation necessary to create a healthy garden bed, you'll need to amend the soil with plenty of organic matter – both

at planting time and regularly thereafter. Organic matters in he soil will improve the structure, drainage and soil micro-organism populations.

## UNDERSTAND PH

Sometimes, no matter how much care and attention is given to a plant, it doesn't grow. If the plant just will not thrive for no apparent reason, it may be that there is something wrong with the soil.

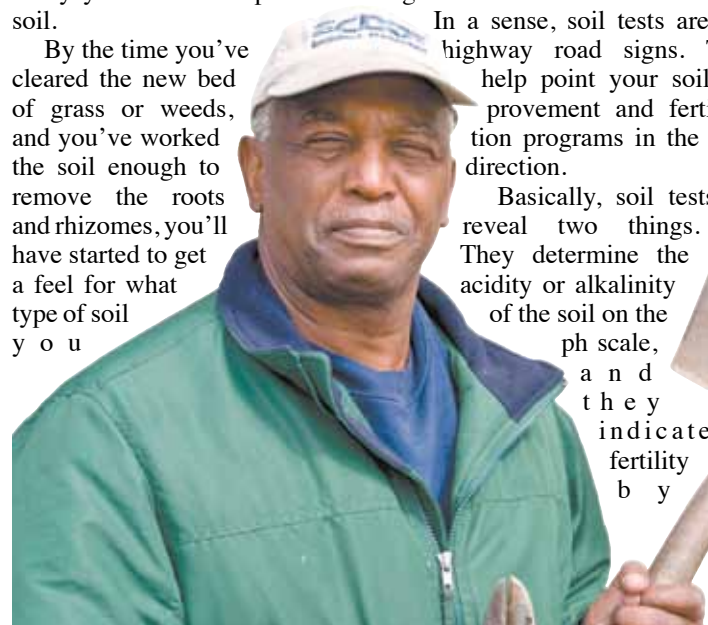
Ph is particularly important to gardeners because it is an important factor, governing plant growth. It not only determines the chemical availability of vital nutrients to plants, but also what plants will grow well in a given soil.

For example, in very alkaline soil, iron and other vital minerals such as boron, copper, manganese, and zinc are chemically tied up and plants can't absorb them. As a result, acid-loving plants such as azaleas, which need plenty of iron for growth, won't grow well.

The ph scale ranges from 1.0 to 14.0. Neutral, a ph of 7.0, is in the center of the scale. Readings below 7.0 are acidic. Those above are alkaline.

Acidic soil is sometimes referred to as sour; alkaline soil is either limey or sweet.

A ph level that is slightly acid to neutral – between 6.0 and 7.0 – is fine for most flower and vegetable gardens, because at that level the essential plant nutrients are most readily available. Most plants will tolerate a fairly wide ph range, especially if the soil is rich in organic matter.



Ernest Jones is in charge of the landscaping and vegetation at SCDOT Headquarters in Columbia.



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

## Fall Protection Demonstration



Kent Earle demonstrates how to wear a harness properly when working on projects where falls are possible. He explains that certain clips are not allowed on projects because they can fail. If you have questions about fall protection contact your district safety representative.

LEFT: Earle, a territory manager with Capital Safety, does a fall protection demonstration for SCDOT employees at SCDOT headquarters on Nov. 19. At right is Industrial Safety Coordinator Robert Wiggs.



# Where eagles dare, SCDOT engineers take care

By Bob Kudelka

Working on the US 17 widening project in the ACE Basin has led to close encounters with some interesting wildlife: alligators, a nesting bald eagle and even a few monkeys.

And while special precautions and innovations are made to protect the environment and the area's wildlife, the project is still on schedule and just over 50 percent completed, said Project Manager Chris Hernandez.

"I don't think the project could go any better," he said. "I don't think we could handpick a better team from either side. I hate to jinx ourselves, but it's been almost flawless."

An 8-mile stretch of US 17 is being widened from Gardens Corner in Beaufort County over the Combahee River to the four-lane roadway at Lightsey Plantation in Colleton County.

Hernandez attributes the project's success and rigorous protection of the environment to teamwork with not only the contractor, but the many agencies that have a role in the project taking place in this unique area of South Carolina. These include the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, the OCRM, Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife, and the SC Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

"The coordination with the other agencies has been amazing," Hernandez said. "It's been quite a team effort."

Working in the ACE Basin, one of the largest undeveloped estuaries on the East Coast, has proved to be anything but dull.

In the past few months, an alligator had to be relocated after it got a little too close to workers. Not long after that, a couple of monkeys were captured after escaping from a nearby monkey farm in Yemassee.

In December, workers discovered a bald eagle nest "about the size of a Volkswagen Beetle" high in the trees east of US 17.

Special care has been taken not to disturb the nest of the federally



MARK CALDWELL/US FISH AND WILDLIFE

Eagles are making a nest near the ACE Basin Parkway project.



RICK LARSEN/HDR

An alligator got a little too close for comfort along the project. Here, workers with help from the Department of Natural Resources help relocate an alligator.

protected species, Hernandez said.

"Once they occupy the nest, technically you cannot work within a 660-foot radius," Hernandez said. "We have marked the area with 'quiet zone' signs placed because the biggest thing is being quiet and not disrupting the nesting eagles."

Less noise is one benefit of specially designed side dump trucks being used for the widening project.

ect.

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

stick track hoe and bulldozer takes care of the rest.

In addition to putting less stress on the soil, these trucks are much quieter than traditional dump trucks.

"It's a double win," Hernandez said. "It eliminates the mud wave potential and it's quiet, so it doesn't bother the eagles. There are no tailgates slamming or air

brakes squealing."

The ACE Basin constitutes the most important nesting area of bald eagles in the state, with 40 percent of nesting eagles living within its boundaries, according to DNR.

Past counts by DNR have shown nesting bald eagles numbering 114 in 27 counties in South Carolina. Bald eagles mate for life. In South Carolina, eggs are laid in

late December to early January. Male and female bald eagles take turns incubating the eggs that are laid in clutches of one to three.

Hernandez said the nest is monitored daily from afar.

"The biggest concern is a two week window when the chicks are born," he said.

Construction on phase III, consisting of a new interchange at Gardens Corner, was to begin in March.

The two-directional roundabout, with a flyover of US 17 over US 21, will replace a T-intersection that has been plagued by collisions.

The new interchange will safer and aid in hurricane evacuations, Hernandez said.

"This interchange is unique in SC with the flyover and two directional ramps," he said. "For a major interchange like this, it will be the first in South Carolina. It will be a free flowing interchange and nobody will have to come to a stop. It will greatly increase sight distances and sight visibility."

Designers spent months working to save about two dozen "very significant," live oaks with diameter of 30 inches or larger, he said.

"We had a public announcement of the interchange in October and it was taken very well by the public," Hernandez said. "They had comments about the trees and were very pleased with what we were



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Project Manager Chris Hernandez discusses the US 17 interchange with US 21 in Gardens Corner. The large oaks at right will not be removed.

doing. They were very excited to see what was coming. They know the road's been dangerous for a so long and they all concurred this would eliminate collisions by not having to stop."

Other highlights of the widening project include a 2-mile multipurpose path that opened. Joggers, bicyclists and walkers have enjoyed the path, which has a nice

tree canopy for shade. In addition to exercise, that path connects a Piggly Wiggly grocery store to the community for those who want to skip using a car.

By the end of December, all of the Phase I bridge deck spans were completed and it was possible for

work vehicles to drive across both bridges. With the concrete spans in place, crews focused on the approximately 3-foot-tall parapet walls.

A 9-inch cement-treated aggregate base and prime coat have been placed on the new northbound

lanes between Piggly Wiggly and Big Estate Road.

Several areas between the Combahee River and Big Estate Road have had their embankments reinforced with cement prior to placing the aggregate base course.



Construction workers near the area are required to keep the work zone area quiet due to the nesting eagles.



Side dump trucks are able to drop loads of dirt directly from the shoulder of the road. This prevents 'mud waves' in the marsh caused when heavy equipment travels on softer soil near the marsh.



Away from the quiet zone, construction workers pave the concrete base layer of roadway using a high-density paver.



# Transportation Association of South Carolina

*Annual event challenges, honors states' mass transit drivers, mechanics*



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Drivers competed in four different categories: Van, Cut-A-Way, 35-foot and 40-foot Bus. ABOVE: A driver attempts to back into a space without hitting any cones while judges score their driving skills.



Marion Carman, right, collects scores from Sandy Jennings during the Mass Transit Rodeo on Feb. 7.



Mechanics competed by finding flaws on a bus rigged with maintenance defects.



John Ritner and Carolyn Wolfe add up contestants' scores from each of the different rodeo events.

## Rodeo Winners



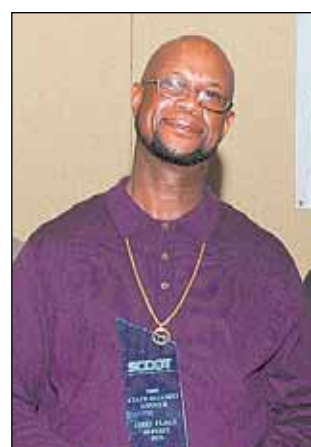
Odel Johnson  
TriCounty Links  
1st Place  
Van Category



Greg Hutchinson  
Coast RTA  
1st Place  
Cut-A-Way Category



Grover Curry  
PDRTA  
1st Place  
35-foot Bus Category



Carrie Hargrove  
Veolia - CMRTA  
1st Place  
40-foot Bus Category



Louis Dorsey, Brutus Jones, Jason Scott  
Williamsburg RTA  
1st Place  
Mechanics Category



# Special Awards at the TASC Conference

Senator Larry Grooms was the guest speaker at the Feb. 9 luncheon honoring Mass Transit providers across the state.



## Mass Transit Awards



Deputy Director for Mass Transit Glennith Johnson, center, presents Mitzi Javers, left, and Michelle Ransom, right, of Central Midlands Regional Transportation Authority with the Urban Transit Provider of the Year Award.



**Ann August**  
Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority  
Rural Transit Provider of the Year Award



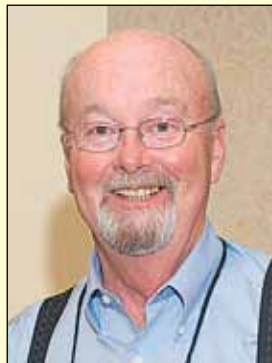
**Frank Johnson**  
Generations Unlimited  
Most Improved Rural Transit Provider Award



**Mike Horne, left, and Mike Brown**  
Greenville Transit  
Most Improved Urban Transit Provider Award



Deputy Director for Mass Transit Glennith Johnson, right, presents the family of the Late William Stanley Bryant with the Unsung Hero Award.



**Joe Embler**  
Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority  
Director's Award



**Becky McDade**  
McCormick County Senior Centers  
Special Service Award and Director's Award



**Mary Gleason, left, and Clark Nesbitt**  
Anderson County Disabilities and Special Needs Board  
Paratransit Provider of the Year Award

## Transportation Association of South Carolina Awards



Transportation Association of South Carolina (TASC) President Marc Keenan, left, presents the Past President's Award to Lynn Stockman of the Newberry Council on Aging.



**Ginger Stevens**  
Charleston Regional Transit Authority  
TASC President's Award



**Dana Spurgeon**  
National Bus Sales  
Friends of Transit Award



**Lavern Glover**  
SCDOT  
TASC President's Award



## Deborah Durden gets judgeship

**D**eborah Brooks Durden received her B.A. from Columbia College in 1983 and her law degree from the University of South Carolina Law School in 1991.

Prior to her appointment to the court, she served as Assistant Chief Counsel for South Carolina Department of Transportation in the Legal Office since 1998. Her responsibility in representing the Department was litigating civil and contested cases, and promulgating agency regulations. She has also served as Governmental

Liaison for SCDOT, which involved representing SCDOT's interests at the South Carolina General Assembly. She is a graduate of the 2004 STTAR class.

Durden was elected as Judge of the South Carolina Administrative Law Court on Wednesday, February 11, 2009. She was named to fill the seat vacated by the election of John Geathers to the Court of Appeals.

She serves as a Girl Scout leader and is a member of Tr-enholm Road United Methodist Church.



Judge Deborah B. Durden

## Service Awards



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Ray Vaughan, Charles Smoak and Wayne Corley were honored for their years of service during a staff meeting in Preconstruction. Vaughan and Corley have 30 years of service and received a certificates and pins. Smoak received a congratulatory letter from Commission Chairman F. Hugh Atkins and SC Secretary of Transportation H.B. 'Buck' Limehouse Jr.



Machael Peterson

**M**achael M. Peterson, of Columbia, has been named Local Public Agency Administrator, and will be responsible for co-

## Machael Peterson named Local Public Agency Administrator

ordinating the administration and development of all projects administered by Local Public Agencies (LPA) including determining LPA's ability to manage a project; leading the development of LPA participation agreements, and monitoring project closeout.

This is a new position created as a result of FHWA national review of LPA programs.

A native of Hartsville, Peterson joined SCDOT as a Bridge Design Engineering Assistant in 1993.

She is a 2001 graduate of the

SCDOT STARR Program, and until her recent promotion, she was Assistant Program Manager of the Preconstruction – Regional Production Group 3.

She is a graduate of Hartsville High School; a 1992 graduate of South Carolina State University and also attended the University of South Carolina. She is married to Kenneth N. Peterson and they have three children: Kenneth, Michaela Gabrielle and Christian Nicole Peterson.

Peterson is a member of First Northeast Baptist Church.

## Promotions

**John A. Ritner Jr.**, of Columbia, from Auditor IV to Economic Dev. Manager III, Mass Transit.

**Hongfen Li**, of Columbia, from Engineer/Associate Engineer I to Engineer/Associate Engineer II, Pre-Construction Support.

**Jonathan R. Chasteen**, of Greenville, from Engineer/Associate Engineer II to Engineer/Associate Engineer III, Regional Production Group 4 – Upstate.

**Johnny L. Garris**, of Lake View, from Associate Geodetic Technician to Engineer/Associate Engineer II, Materials & Research.

**Ronald M. Miller**, of Gray Court, from Engineer/Associate Engineer I to Engineer/Associate Engineer II, Materials & Research.

**David W. Hoard**, of Lexington, from Assistant Geodetic Technician to Engr./Geodetic Technician III, Materials & Research.

**James A. Johannemann**, of Summerville, from Engineer/Associate Engineer III to Engineer/Associate Engineer IV, Maintenance.

**Edward M. Belken Jr.**, of Summerville, from Associate Geodetic Technician to Engineer/Associate Engineer I, Dorchester

Surveys.

**Daryl L. Hardwick**, of Dillon, from Right-Of-Way Agent III to Program Manager I, Right Of Way – Florence.

**Larry J. Lucas Jr.**, of Prosperity, from Assistant Geodetic Technician to Engineer/Associate Engineer I, Traffic Engineering.

**Christopher D. Fellows**, of Greenwood, from Trades Specialist III to Trades Specialist IV, Greenwood Maintenance.

**Ryan O. Dannelly**, of Simpsonville, from Engineer/Associate Engineer II to Engineer/Associate Engineer III, Greenville Maintenance.

**Steven C. Henderson**, of Easley, from Engineer/Associate Engineer II to Engineer/Associate Engineer III, Pickens Maintenance.

**Sonya K. Gilliard-James**, of North Charleston from Assistant Geodetic Technician to Engr./Geodetic Technician III, Bridge Inspection.

**Joseph G. Gainey**, of Barnwell, from Mechanic III to Trades Specialist V, Barnwell Maintenance.

**Ronnie D. McGee**, of Elloree, from Trades Specialist III to Trades Specialist V, Holly Hill Maintenance.

## Johannemann named Assistant State Maintenance Engineer

**J**ames A. Johannemann, of Summerville, has been named Assistant State Maintenance Engineer. He will manage the QMT and MAP team, assist the sign shops and resolve highway related issues.

Johannemann was promoted from the position of Assistant District 6 Maintenance Engineer. He joined SCDOT in 1995 as engineering geodetic technician II and was promoted to resident maintenance engineer in Colleton County in 2006.

A native of Ringwood, NJ, he is a 2003 graduate of The Citadel. He is married to the former Marie Betancort McAden of Havana, Cuba. They have two daughters, Emma, 19, and Hannah, 14.



James A. Johannemann

Johannemann enjoys hiking, biking and sea kayaking.



# Retirements

**Theresa P. Turner**, of Westminster, administrative specialist at Oconee Construction, retired Nov. 4, after 10 years of service.

**Doris B. Moore**, of Easley, trades specialist IV at Upper Sign Shop, retired Nov. 4, after 19 years of service.

**Lisa M. Merkey**, of Smoaks, trades specialist II at Bamberg Maintenance, retired Nov. 21, after nine years of service.

**James L. Bell**, of Mt. Carmel, trades specialist II at McCormick Maintenance, retired Nov. 21, after 35 years of state service.

**Ferman Jay**, of Columbia, trades specialist II at Richland Maintenance, retired Nov. 24, after 10 years of service.

**Wilson White**, of Vance, trades specialist II at Holly Hill Maintenance, retired Nov. 28, after 21 years of service.

**James E. Bryant**, of Elgin, administrative specialist at Equipment Service Depot, retired Nov. 30, after 10 years of service.

**William J. Price**, of Gilbert, trades specialist IV at Lexington Maintenance, retired Nov. 30, after 33 years of state service.

**Walter M. Edwards**, of Gray Court, trades specialist II at Laurens Maintenance, retired Dec. 1, after 10 years of service.

**Van D. Walters**, of Branchville, engineer/associate engineer, District 7 Bridge Inspection, retired Dec. 1, after 30 years of service.

**Robert E. Reeves**, of Sumter, engineer/associate engineer at Sumter Construction, retired Dec. 3, after 25 years of service.

**Doc Sanders Jr.**, of Norris, mechanic III at Pickens Maintenance, retired Dec. 5, after 30 years of service.

**Archie L. Raines**, of Pickens, trades specialist IV at Pickens Maintenance, retired Dec. 5, after 19 years of service.

**Claude H. Searles**, of McCormick, trades specialist II at McCormick Maintenance, retired Dec. 11, after 12 years of service.

**Thomas G. Breland**, of Holly Hill, trades specialist V at Holly Hill Maintenance, retired Dec. 12, after 32 years of service.

**Donald M. Liester**, of Columbia, program manager I, office of the Director of Rights

of Way, retired Dec. 16, after 19 years of service.

**Dorothy A. Hite**, of Cayce, administrative assistant in Federal Aid and Cash Management, retired Dec. 29, after 34 years of service.

**Glenn D. Rodgers**, of Bishopville, trades specialist V at Lee Maintenance, retired Dec. 30, after 34 years of service.

**Conwill B. Parks**, of Johnston, engineer/associate engineer at Saluda Construction, retired Dec. 30, after 35 years of service.

**James A. Bobo**, of Abbeville, trades specialist II at Abbeville Maintenance, retired Dec. 31, after 10 years of service.

**Ricky B. Hughes**, of Longs, engineer/associate engineer at Horry 1 Maintenance, retired Dec. 31, after 31 years of service.

**Robert L. Attaway**, of Rock Hill, trades specialist II at York Maintenance, retired Dec. 31, after 11 years of service.

**Cecil E. Peake**, of Elgin, trades specialist IV at Central Sign Shop, retired Dec. 31, after 14 years of service.

**Timmy Jefferson**, of North, trades specialist III at Lexington Maintenance, retired Dec. 31, after 31 years of state service.

**Luther Dagin**, of Beaufort, mechanic III at Beaufort Maintenance, retired Dec. 31, after 28 years of service.

**William L. Wise**, of Newberry, trades specialist IV at Newberry Maintenance, retired Dec. 31, after 34 years of service.

**Daniel E. Fleming**, of Iva, trades specialist V at Abbeville Maintenance, retired Dec. 31, after 33 years of service.

**Sally R. Weeks**, of Hilda, administrative assistant at Barnwell Maintenance, retired Jan. 1, after 20 years of service.

**Joe N. Rice**, of Barnwell, trades specialist II at Allendale Maintenance, retired Jan. 1, after 13 years of service.

**Curtis L. Sanders Jr.**, of Lexington, engineer/associate engineer, Regional Production Group 2 – Pee Dee, retired Jan. 2, after six years of service.

**Patricia M. Hughes**, of Bamberg, assistant geodetic technician at Bamberg Construction, retired Jan. 2, after eight years of service.

**Cynthia Farr-Stockman**, of Little Mountain, engineer/associate engineer in Pre-Construct-

tion Support, retired Jan. 8, after 28 years of service.

**Carsenia Roberts**, of Bennettsville, trades specialist IV at Marlboro Maintenance, retired Jan. 9, after 32 years of service.

**William Green**, of Columbia, trades specialist IV at Richland Maintenance, retired Jan. 16, after 24 years of service.

**Willie R. Garrett**, of Richland, trades specialist IV at Jasper Maintenance, retired Jan. 16, after 36 years of service.

**Moses P. Nelson**, of Salters, trades specialist II at Williamsburg Maintenance, retired Jan. 16, after 15 years of service.

**Deborah T. Rice**, of Florence, program manager I, Right of Way, Florence District, retired Jan. 16, after 29 years of state service.

**Richard S. Bryant**, of Greenville, trades specialist III at Greenville Maintenance, retired Jan. 22, after 23 years of service.

**Carl C. Kemmerlin**, of Cope, mechanic III at Orangeburg Maintenance, retired Jan. 23, after 23 years of service.

**Freddie Walker**, of Trenton, trades specialist II at Aiken Maintenance, retired Jan. 29, after 13 years of service.

**Sam O. Dotts**, of Salters, trades specialist III at Williamsburg Maintenance, retired Jan. 30, after 14 years of service.

**Luther J. Watson**, of Bennettsville, mechanic III at Marlboro Maintenance, retired Jan. 30, after 31 years of service.

**Charles E. Fralix**, of North Charleston, associate geodetic technician at District 6 Office, retired Jan. 30, after 12 years of service.

**Bennie C. Gravley**, of Greenwood, trades specialist III at Abbeville Maintenance, retired Jan. 30, after eight years of service.

**Danny L. Crisp**, of Mountain Home, trades specialist IV at Greenville Maintenance, retired Feb. 3, after 28 years of service.

**Daniel A. Carver**, of Greenville, trades specialist III at Greenville Maintenance, retired Feb. 10, after 17 years of service.

**Marshall Y. Simpson**, of Belton, right-of-way agent II in Greenville District Right of Way, retired Feb. 16, after 16 years of service.

## Former employee, founder of Burton Center announces retirement

**J.** Felton Burton, Founder and Executive Director of Burton Center, has announced his plans to retire on June 30, 2009.

"Burton Center has always been and will always be one of the most important parts of my life and my family's life. This is not a good-bye, but a transition into a new life. I will continue to advocate for people with special needs, consult with the board, the staff, and our families," said Burton.

"As I retire from my administrative responsibilities and reflect back over my career, I know that Debbie and Burton Center were all in God's plan. I am so grateful for the support we have received over the years.

I have had the good fortune of working with a lot of great people and I have developed many life long relationships. I consider everyone at Burton Center my family and the ministry we have here will continue to grow and prosper in the future," Burton said.

Burton, a native of Anderson, and his wife Doris became active in efforts to establish programs for the mentally handicapped when their oldest daughter, Debbie, was born

with Down's syndrome in 1952.

Burton retired from the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation in 1982 after 30 years of service. He has devoted the last 27 years exclusively to his work for people with disabilities and special needs.

Burton Center for Disabilities and Special Needs is an innovative community-based program which started in 1971 to serve people with mental retardation. Today, Burton Center provides services for 1,200 people with disabilities, which includes autism, intellectual disabilities, head injuries, spinal cord injuries and related disabilities in Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Lexington, Saluda, and McCormick counties and employs over 450 staff members.

"Because of Mr. Burton's dedication and perseverance, thousands of lives have been changed. He has been and continues to be an outstanding leader in developing services for people with special needs throughout South Carolina. The Board has named Mr. Burton Executive Director Emeritus," said Lynn Rust, Chairperson of the Burton Center Disabilities and Special Needs Board.

## Deaths



Jeannie Johnson

**Gloria Jean "Jeannie" Johnson**, 59, of Swansea, SCDOT retiree, died Feb. 4.

**Bobby Gerald**, long-time mayor of Marion, and former member of the SC Highways and Public Transportation Commission, died March. 22.



Dean Hammond

**Dean Crain Hammond**, 84, of Columbia, retired Assistant Director of Traffic and Planning, died Jan. 2.

**Nelle Fletcher Matthews**, 77, of Little Mountain, SCDOT retiree, died Jan. 10.



# Engineering News

## Quality Management

*Team monitors SCDOT construction, maintenance*

In 2000, a project failure raised concerns about the quality of South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) construction projects. SCDOT's "27 in 7" program was underway at this time also.

This special bonding program allowed for twenty-seven years of construction work to be performed in seven years. In February 2001, the Construction Division of SCDOT created a Quality Management Team (QMT) in an effort to monitor the administration and construction of road and bridge construction projects.

The main objective of the QMT is to perform Quality Management Reviews (QMR) to ensure that projects are being constructed in accordance with the contract, special provisions, plans and standard specifications.

This is accomplished through field reviews of the projects and auditing the project records at the field level. A checklist was developed and used to score the projects and ensure that all applicable aspects of the project are reviewed and that each project is rated in a uniform fashion.

The Maintenance Division of SCDOT was also concerned about the quality of management of maintenance operations. There was an obvious varying degree of performance and organization throughout the state.

Occasionally, internal or external audit findings would raise environmental or procedural concerns. As a result, the Maintenance Division of SCDOT also created a QMT to develop a QMR program in Maintenance.

The primary goal of this program is to identify opportunities for improvement, share ideas that work well for others, and ensure an acceptable level of service is being provided to our customers.

The Maintenance QMR consists of a checklist that focuses on quality assurance of three separate areas of maintenance. There is an office portion that focuses on record keeping, documentation, organization, and planning. The shop yard portion of the review focuses on environmen-

tal compliance, housekeeping, inventory control, and safety related items. The road portion of the review evaluates the quality of performance of work request workorders, sign maintenance, work crew composition, equipment compliment, and documentation of work. The checklist is published and inspections are scheduled well in advance. The QMT from the Director of Maintenance office visits the county and performs the QMR. Currently, the checklist is revised and the QMRs are performed in each county every two years.

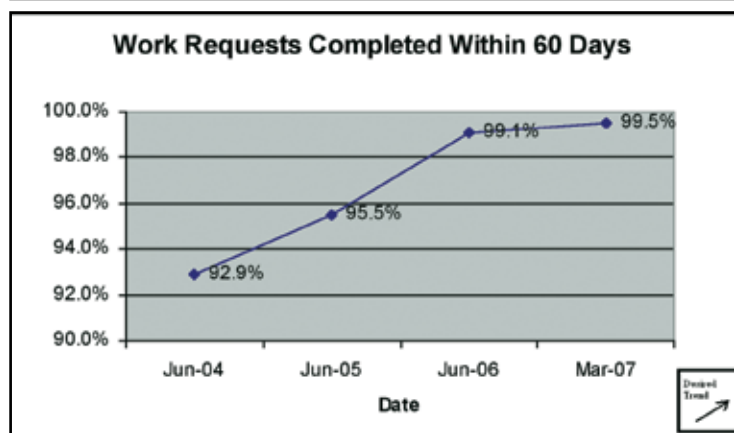
QMRs are graded as "Excellent", "Good", "Needs Improvement", or "Unacceptable". A county or project receiving a "Needs Improvement" or "Unacceptable" rating requires an improvement plan from the County Engineer detailing the corrective actions to be taken. A follow-up review is also required to verify that the deficiencies have been corrected.

The QMRs are recognized and supported by SCDOT's se-


nior management. Counties that receive an "Excellent" rating are recognized at a SCDOT senior staff meeting and presented with certificates for excellence. This high level support adds value to the program and raises its stature.

The benefits that the QMRs have provided can be measured both directly and indirectly. In the construction program through 2006, over 430 projects have been reviewed. During this time, the average scores have risen six percentage points. The number of failing projects has also dropped from 14 in 2001 to 2 in 2006. Paperwork has also been standardized so that all offices are using the same forms and following the same submittal processes.

The benefits of the maintenance QMR have also been obvious throughout the state. There have been 99 reviews performed since the quality management program began in 2002. Environmental compliance, housekeeping, documentation, record keeping, planning, and organization have all drastically improved.



Got news?

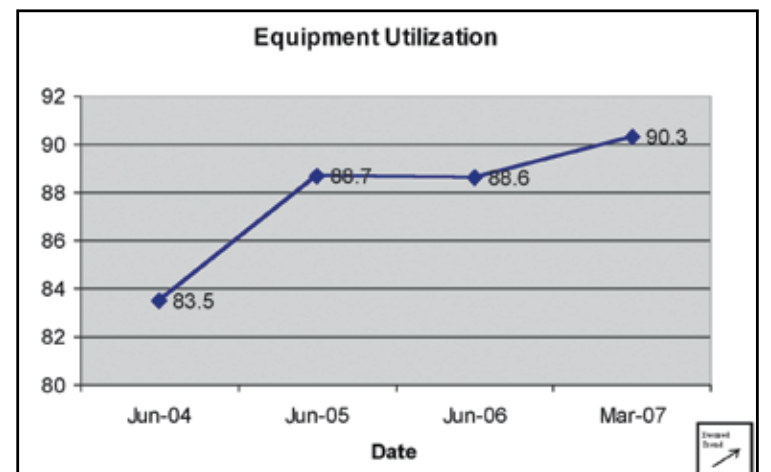
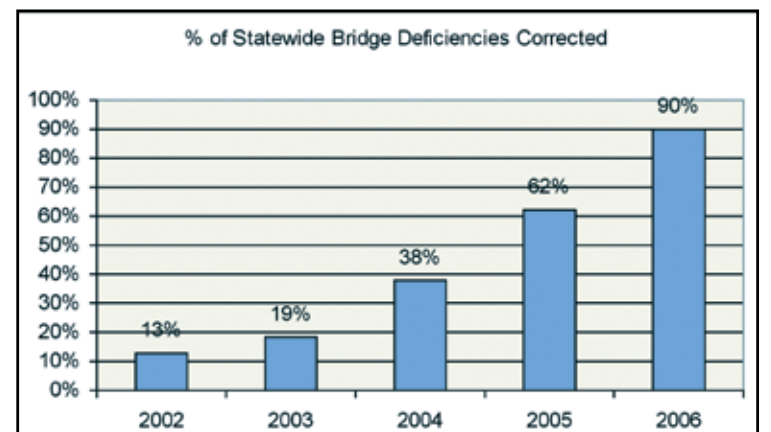


Contact Andy Leaphart at: 803-737-1994 or email him at [Leaphart@scdot.org](mailto:Leaphart@scdot.org)

**Andy Leaphart**

In addition to the overall improvements, there have been measurable benefits as well. There are several charts displayed in the appendix that illustrates measurable improvements. For example, sign inventory and management was recently added to the

maintenance QMR. Since this item was added, our statewide stock has been reduce by 20% at a savings of over half a million dollars. SCDOT is very proud of these programs and the improvements that benefit the taxpayers of South Carolina.





# 38th Annual Highway Conference

## Clemson Conference – March 25-26, 2009

By Todd Steagall

Engineers and contractors gathered for the 38th Annual Highway Conference at Clemson University's Madren Center to hear presentations concerning various projects, processes, safety issues, new policies and updates concerning the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Speakers included representatives from State and Federal Agencies as well as private entities.

An update on the status of the Palmetto Parkway Project in Aiken was presented by Claude Ipock of SCDOT and Jim Ewart of U.S. Constructors/United Contracting. An overview of SCDOT Headquarters role in the Design Build process was given by Leland Colvin of SCDOT. This included the status of the US 17 ACE Basin project in Beaufort, the District Four Design Build Bridge Project (20 bridges) and the 5th Street Bridge in Aiken. Kenny Pietz of HDR and Greg Cook of US Group Inc. discussed the status and challenges of the I-26 / Aviation Boulevard/ Remount Road interchange in Charleston.

A discussion of the requirements for environmental permits, the storm water pollution preven-



**Justin Cliatt**  
US 25 Tyregrip Project

tion program and other environmental issues was led by Sean Connolly of SCDOT. Participants included Steve Brumagin of the US Army Corps of Engineers, Shannon Hicks and Mark Griffin of SCDHEC and Mark Caldwell of US Fish and Wildlife. Banks Construction, along with SCDOT, provided a lessons learned portion of the program that was very beneficial to all attendees.

Emerging technologies such as the use of Roller Compacted Concrete on construction projects was presented by Andy Johnson and John Paulus of SCDOT. Brad Putman of Clemson University discussed warm mix asphalt technology. Chad Hawkins gave an



**Sean Connolly**  
Permitting Requirements

update to the Hot Mix Asphalt testing process changes.

Safety issues were also presented to the group. Mike Sawyer of SCDOT provided an overview of the Safety Improvement Team's (SIT) role on construction projects and Brett Harrelson discussed the direction of the new Safety Program. New safety products were also shown to the group. Profile rumble strips were shown by Nick Boozer of SCDOT. Richard Baker of Ennis Paint demonstrated the benefits of Tyregrip on US 25 in Greenville County.

The future of Public-Private partnerships for SCDOT projects was discussed by Linda McDonald of SCDOT. Herb Cooper of the Local Public Agency (LPA) Administrator's Office outlined the current status of the revised procedures for LPA agreements. The importance of CPM schedules and the current policies concerning their use on construction projects was covered by Patti Gambill of SCDOT.

Steve Ikerd of FHWA presented valuable information on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the reporting involved. The conference was concluded with an informative



**Nick Boozer**  
Rumble Strips



**Claude Ipock**  
Palmetto Parkway Project



**Mike Sawyer**  
SIT Team

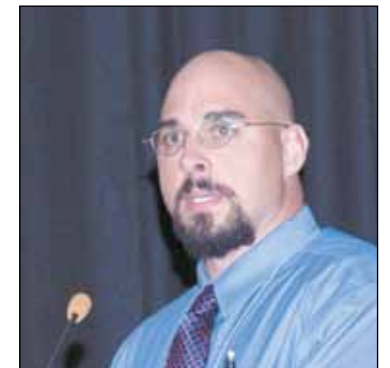


**Brett Harrelson**  
New Safety Initiatives

and entertaining update on the status of SiteXchange and the Extranet by Brian Parnell of SCDOT.



**Danny Shealy**  
Conference Co-Chair



**John Paulus**  
Roller Compacted Concrete

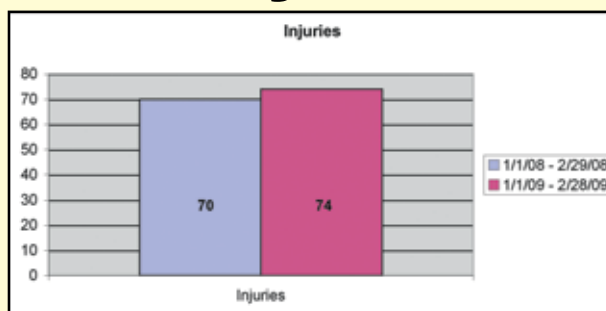
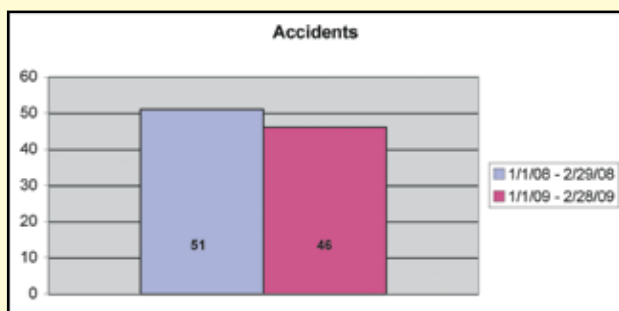


**Andy Johnson**  
Roller Compacted Concrete

The conference was well received by both SCDOT and outside participants, with over 300 registered attendees. The topics presented were both enjoyable and informative, and providing attendees with eleven hours of training.



## Lost Workdays January - February 2009





# District 1 News

*Aiken, Kershaw, Lee, Lexington, Richland and Sumter counties*

*District Engineer: Thad Brunson (803) 737-6660  
FAX (803) 737-6401*

## Meet Sumter Maintenance

### Got news?

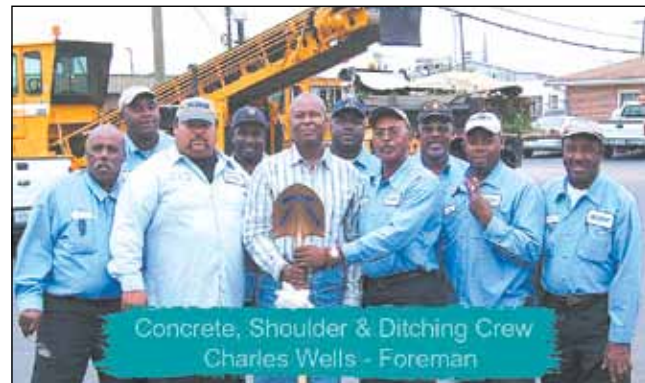
Contact Teresa Harley at: 803-737-6715 or email her at HarleyTL@scdot.org



Teresa Harley



Shoulder & Ditching Crew  
Alphonso Chestnut - Foreman



Concrete, Shoulder & Ditching Crew  
Charles Wells - Foreman



Equipment Shop Crew  
Tommy Brown - Foreman



Mowing Crew  
James Wells - Foreman



Engineering / Administrative Staff  
Tammy Hodge - RME



Bridge Crew  
Hayward Wilson - Foreman



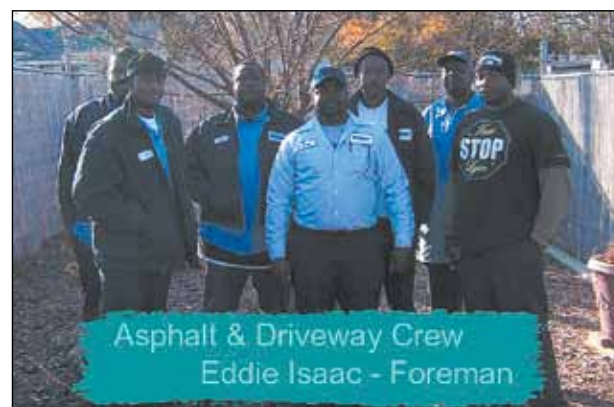
Drainage / First Response Crew  
Nate Peterson - Foreman



Sign Crew  
Chris Geter - Foreman



Asphalt Crew  
Ronnie Benenhaley - Foreman



Asphalt & Driveway Crew  
Eddie Isaac - Foreman

## Meet Jeffrey Wilkes

Jeffrey Wilkes started with SCDOT in March as Assistant Resident Construction Engineer for Sumter, Kershaw and Lee County.

He is a 2002 graduate of University of South Carolina. Upon graduation, he began his engineering career at Coastal Caisson Corp. of Odessa, Fla., a deep foundation contractor.

During his five year tenure at CCC, he was project manager over projects in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Later he worked with GS2 Engineering & Environmental Consultants Inc. as geotechnical professional and Special Inspector for various projects in the Pee Dee area.



Wilkes is from Scranton and enjoys spending time with his family and friends. He is a director with a local youth group and his hobbies include farming and hunting.



# District 2 News

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

*District Engineer: Phillip M. Brooks (864) 227-6971  
FAX (864) 227-6567*

## Employee's son recovers from accident *Surgery to re-attach hand received national attention*

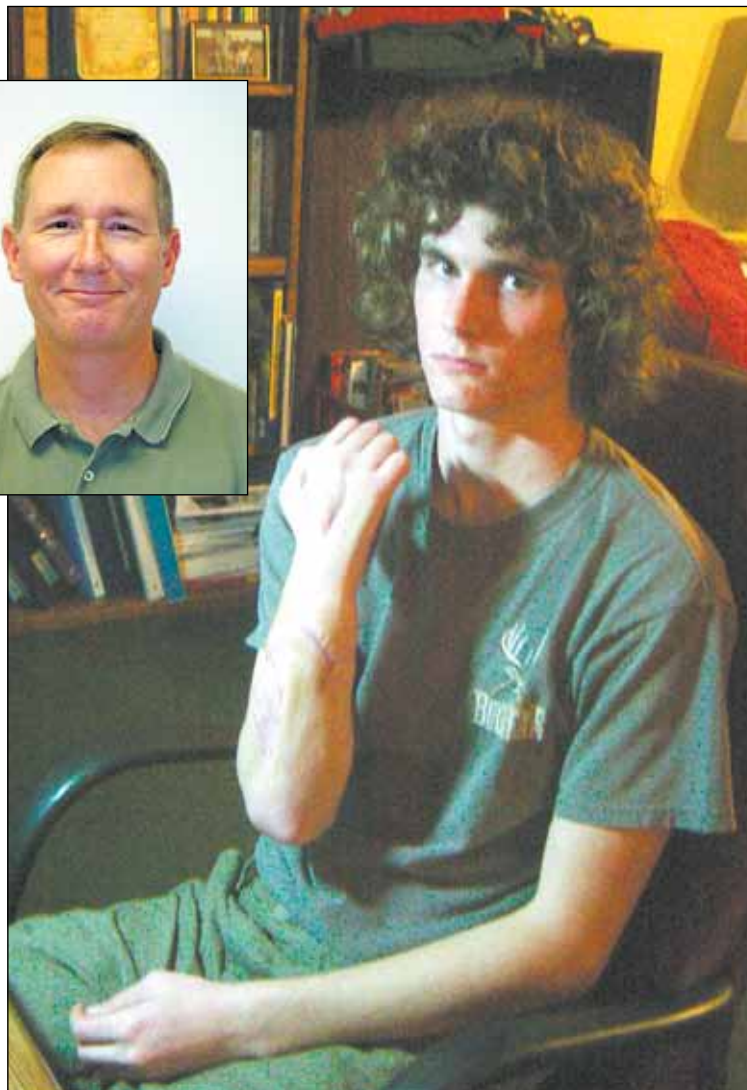
**O**n October 12, 2008, David Coleman, son of District 2 Mechanical Engineer Steve Coleman, suffered a terrible accident in which his right hand was severed a few inches above the wrist as a result of a zip line accident on the Saluda River.

What happened next was nothing short of a miracle and, through God's grace, allowed David to retain his hand.

When David emerged from the cold river, he realized his right hand was missing. He dog paddled to shore as well as he could. Friends Taylor Hanayik and Brad Williams were there on shore to help him. Taylor put his t-shirt over the wound and used a belt as a tourniquet to slow blood loss. In the meantime, Brad dove into the water to retrieve the hand after it was spotted on the bottom of the clear river by a passing fisherman in a boat. The fisherman kindly provided a cooler with ice for transport of the hand to the hospital.

Cell phones were used to call 911 and David's parents. An ambulance rushed David and the cooler to Palmetto Health Richland. After doctors determined the hand was in good enough shape for re-attachment, they quickly lined up a medical helicopter for a flight to the Duke University Medical Center in Durham, NC.

After 26 hours of surgery, 61 units of blood, and 3 days of drug-induced sleep, David awoke to his mother's relieved smile. He was also thrilled to see his hand back on his arm. With the advantages of a young, athletic patient and world-renowned surgeon Dr. Howard Levinson, the operation worked so well that David was able to move his fingers three



**David Coleman, son of District 2 Mechanical Engineer Steve Coleman (inset), had surgery to reattach his right hand. The surgery and his story were featured on Inside Edition and many papers throughout South Carolina.**

days after awakening. Doctors tell him he should expect to regain 75% of the use of his hand. David, however, expects he can do better than 75%.

At the present time, David is doing very well. Both forearm bones have been permanently set. There is discussion among the surgeons to do a muscle trans-

plant to replace a dead muscle at the base of David's thumb. The result would afford him greater range of motion than what he currently is experiencing. Nerve sensation to the hand is about 25%. The nerves are always the last to heal and may take a year or more to completely heal. David will continue with his physi-

### Got news?

Contact Dwayne Scott at  
864-227-6222  
or email him at  
ScottDE@scdot.org.



**Dwayne Scott**



**The accident occurred when Coleman was using a zip line to cross the Saluda River.**



**Coleman is continuing physical therapy three times per week.**

cal therapy three times per week at the Moore Clinic. He has made great strides since he began and I would expect nothing less in the future. He has also returned to school and is catching up on his studies.

David and his family wish to sincerely thank Duke University

Medical Center, Palmetto Health Richland, the Moore Clinic, and the doctors, surgeons, and nurses who were involved in this ordeal. We would also like to thank family, friends, and concerned individuals for all the prayers and support through contributions, meals, and a host of other things.



# District 3 News

*Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg counties*

*District Engineer: Steve Gwinn (864) 241-1010  
FAX (864) 241-1115*

## Got news?

Please contact  
Joyce Gardner  
at 864-241-1010  
or by emailing her  
at GardnerJR@  
scdot.org



Joyce Gardner

## Snow blankets upstate



JOYCE GARDNER/DISTRICT 3

On March 1 and 2, SCDOT's upstate region began 24-hour operations for snowfall. Crews worked through the night facing snow from 4 to 6 inches on roadways. A special 'Thank You!' to all the workers who were called to work during this time in District 3.



Clyde Fields, of Anderson Maintenance, left on March 5 to serve overseas. He will be stationed at Fort Jackson for training until May. After that he will be deployed to Afghanistan for 18 months. Above, co-workers pose with him before he left for Fort Jackson.

## Employees leave for military duty



Clyde Fields



Rodney McNease of Spartanburg Maintenance left on March 5 with the Army Reserve to serve overseas. He is stationed at Fort Jackson until May. At that time, he will deploy to Iraq.



# District 4 News

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

*District Engineer: Stan Bland  
(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

## Meet Lancaster Maintenance



Driveway Crew, left to right: Terry Adams, Vernell McCann, Troy Mingo, Bennie Cauten, Joel Powers and John Gaither.



Pothole Patch Crew, left to right: Hiawatha Robinson, Edward Blackmon, William Tucker, Eddie Frierson, Charles Harris and Don Ballard.



LEFT: Right of Way Vegetation Crew, left to right: Steve Wright, Calvin Riggins, Ronnie Bass and David Johnson.



Work Request Crew, left to right: Don McCorkle, Randy McIlwain, Eddie Haggins, James Powers, Eddie Young.



LEFT: Sign Crew, left to right: Larry Hodge, Donald Powers and Erskin Clifton



LEFT: Full Depth Patch Crew, left to right: Terry McIlwain, Annie Wright, James W. Powers, Rufus Champion, Todd Cooper and Terrell Mingo.



Kershaw Section Shed Ditching Crew, left to right: Lewis Massey, Greg Dingler, Gene Anthony, Jerry Poston, John Winfield.

RIGHT: Lancaster Shop, left to right: Scott Faulkenberry, Larry Barlow and George Wilson.





# District 5 News

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

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

## Meet some of Florence Maintenance

**F**lorence County has the largest number of employees of all the counties in the district. It is also the site of the District office, District Signal Shop and an Incident Responder team that patrols I-95.

Below are members of four of the crews in the county:



**Maintenance Crew:** Back row: Eddie Thomas, Devell Eaddy, Demetrius Blanks, Allen Harrison, Chuckley Gurley. Front row: Willie Davis, Billy Ghee (Foreman), Pamela Johnson, Frankie Graham. Not Pictured: Bradley Sellers.



**Florence Repair Shop:** Back row: James Godbolt, Joe Turner, Shop Foreman Terry Singletary, Archie Ford. Front row: Justin Hudson Reggie Poston, Dominique Graham. Not Pictured: Sam Miles, Dee Matthews, Richard Robinson.

### Got news?

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



**Michael Miller**



**Sign Crew:** Back row: Tammy McKnight (Foreman), Earl McFadden, Yashen Damon, Leviale Brown. Front row: Fredrick Mullis, Jacqueline McAllister, Craig Rakestraw.



**Mowing Crew:** Back row: Alford Comfort Jr., Gregory McBride, Anthony McAllister, Middle row: Juan Rosado, William Burgess, Ernest Brown, Ronnie Cameron Front row: Matthew Scott, Foreman Jackie Timmons.



# District 6 News

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

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

## Meet Colleton Maintenance

Colleton County is the spotlight for District Six in this issue of The Connector. Colleton County is a beautiful area of our district with an abundance of farmland and horses. On the day of the photo shoot, spring was popping all around us with dogwoods and azaleas blooming and lots of sunshine. It is a family-friendly, close-knit community.

The Colleton Maintenance unit is made up of 78 employees, and they maintain almost 1,100 road miles in our state.

One of the most exciting things happening in Colleton right now is the new mainline paver that will be used in all the counties of District 6. Training on this piece of equipment has been completed, and they are ready to roll!

### Got news?

Contact Janet Hendrix at :  
843-740-1667 ext. 128 or by emailing her at HendrixJL@scdot.org



**Janet Hendrix**



**Auto Shop:** Silas Craven, Susie Davis, Randy Fender, Arnold Bazzle, Sheila Morris, Wayne Eaves, Larry Montjoy, Brantley Still (Not Pictured Harold Ennis)



**RME Ray Molinaroli**



**Driveway and Pipe Crew:** Bud Long, Ashley Givens, Robert Bryant, Jerry Kinard, Tommy Rembert, Darrell Ellison



**Paving Crew:** Gregg Smith, Bo Shecut



**LEFT: Vegetation Crew:** Henry North, Fernando Jenkins, LaShonda Singleton, Herbert Brown, Mike Fender



**Hot Crew:** Mark McMillon, Myreon Wright, Clarence Moore, Tony Gant, Leo Washington



**Paving Crew:** Thomas Bond, Hilton Ritter



**Encroachment Inspector Lynda McLaine**



**Patching Crew:** Billy Grant, Curtis Freeman, Quan Buckner



**Lanier Ulmer**



**LEFT: Ditching/Drainage Crew:** Joey Gaskins, Vernon Steward, Mickey O'Quinn



**Vegetation Crew:** Louis Jenkins, Ronneal Haynes



**Patching Crew:** Ernest Sanders, Jacky Williams, Richard Singleton (Not Pictured David Pollard, Kenny Fryar)



**Ditching/Drainage Crew:** Ray Bulles, Charles Fishburne, Willie Francis, Antawn Griffin (Not Pictured George Williams, Mickey Sams, Tammy Reynolds)



**Office Staff:** Charles Byrd-ARME, Albertha Koger-Sr. Admin, Kathy Drawdy-OSHA officer, Chuck Murdaugh-RMF, Michelle Benton-Inspector, (Not Pictured Aimee Spires-Inspector)



**Paving Crew:** Terance Cochran, Brent Nelson, Ralph Solomon, Sonya Grant, Todd Arnold (Not Pictured Tommy Davis, Matt Nettles)



# District 7 News

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

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

## Employees take safety, customer service training

**O**ur Business Plan Goal is to provide personalized customer service training for District Seven employees. The key to good customer service is to "treat the customer the way YOU would like to be treated!"

- Establish relationships with customers
- Welcome customers by greeting them personally
- Help your customers
- Give contact names and numbers
- Deliver what you say you will deliver
- Give your undivided attention
- Go the extra mile by offering solutions - earn loyal customers
- Ask "Is there anything else I can do for you?"
- Thank your Customers and ask Customers to contact SCDOT again
- Strive to make good first and last impressions

**Allendale and Hampton Maintenance employees participate in "Actions and Attitudes" Customer Service training at USC Salkahatchie.**



**Allendale and Hampton Maintenance employees participate in the AAA Carolinas "Four-Hour Driver Improvement" classes held at USC Salkahatchie campus in Allendale. The classes will be conducted district-wide through July.**



## Meet Joseph 'Tripp' Stokes III

**Name:** Joseph "Tripp" Stokes III  
**Title:** Geodetic Technician  
**Location:** Bamberg Construction  
**Service:** 8 years

**T**ripp Stokes has worked at Bamberg Construction as an Assistant Geodetic Technician for 8 years.

In 2008, he received his Asphalt Roadway Technician

certification and has worked on several asphalt resurfacing projects.

Stokes enjoys hunting and fishing in his spare time and he is an avid Gamecock fan.



## Got news?

Contact Deborah Berry at:  
803-531-6850 or  
by emailing her at  
BerryDS@scdot.org



Deborah Berry



PHOTO PROVIDED BY SHEA WOODWARD/TRMC

## 2008 Annual Blood Assurance Award Gala

Shea Woodward, Blood Assurance Coordinator for The Regional Medical Center (TRMC) of Orangeburg and Calhoun counties, presents Casey Van Faussien with the Highest Level of Employee Participation Award at the Annual Blood Assurance Gala held March 10. Van Faussien accepted the award on behalf of Bamberg Maintenance and Construction. Bamberg Maintenance hosted onsite blood drives and 45 Maintenance and Construction employees participated by donating 90 units of blood in 2008. Orangeburg Maintenance, Construction, District Office and Credit Union employees also participated by donating 91 units of blood during blood drives in 2008.



# VIEWPOINTS

## Highway funding creates jobs

By H.B. 'Buck' Limehouse Jr.  
Secretary of Transportation

The need for federal highway stimulus funds has been thought about, discussed and debated since the fall of last year. Now those funds are here and SCDOT is on the brink of using those dollars as they were intended when the Economic Recovery & Reinvestment Act was signed into law in February.

Highway stimulus funds are the best example of how this federal program is supposed to work. Here in South Carolina as well as the other states, highway funding will create jobs.

The \$463 million our state has available approximately doubles what our normal federal funding is for one year. The Act requires us to commit a portion of this funding to a number of projects within a 120 day period. Our SCDOT Commission has wisely cho-



H.B. 'Buck' Limehouse Jr.

sen to adhere to our agency's "Fix it First" policy for the use of the "short term dollars."

Soon after the Act was signed, the Commission quickly approved using up to \$200 million dollars for the 120-day "shovel-ready" projects. That action has allowed our staff to move forward on projects that will resurface roads, replace bridges, fund maintenance on our interstates and safety & traffic improvement projects.

All of this work will create new jobs for our contractors and the businesses that support them. SCDOT is playing a major role in getting people back to work in a state that ranks high in the nation in unemployment.

The work that we are about to do with federal stimulus funds has significant benefits beyond job-creation. Obviously the stimulus-funded projects will make roads and bridges better and safer for the public, and our citizens will see their tax dollars being put to good use in a short period of time.

Another key point is that all of our citizens will share in the stimulus funding. Our engineers have road resurfacing lists planned for all 46 counties.

There is still yet another positive result from the Recovery & Reinvestment Act. The stimulus funds will get

many projects started in 2009. That means that many more projects that are not receiving federal stimulus funds will move up on the priority lists, which will shorten the waiting time to get them underway. So projects that are not funded by stimulus money will still benefit in that manner.

SCDOT is on track to get this stimulus money out on the roads and bridges as the Act intends it to be used. Our engineers have had project lists established since last fall which have been constantly updated so that we would be ready to go as soon as the funds became available.

I congratulate our Commission for having the foresight to give our staff the green light to move forward on the 120-day projects. The Commission took this action literally two days after the bill was enacted.

This summer will bring about a great many improvements to our highway system because SCDOT was prepared to use and maximize the federal stimulus funds. Wherever the work is being done in 2009, we're not only making our highways better, but we are creating jobs and contributing to the economic recovery of our state and our nation.

## A letter we liked

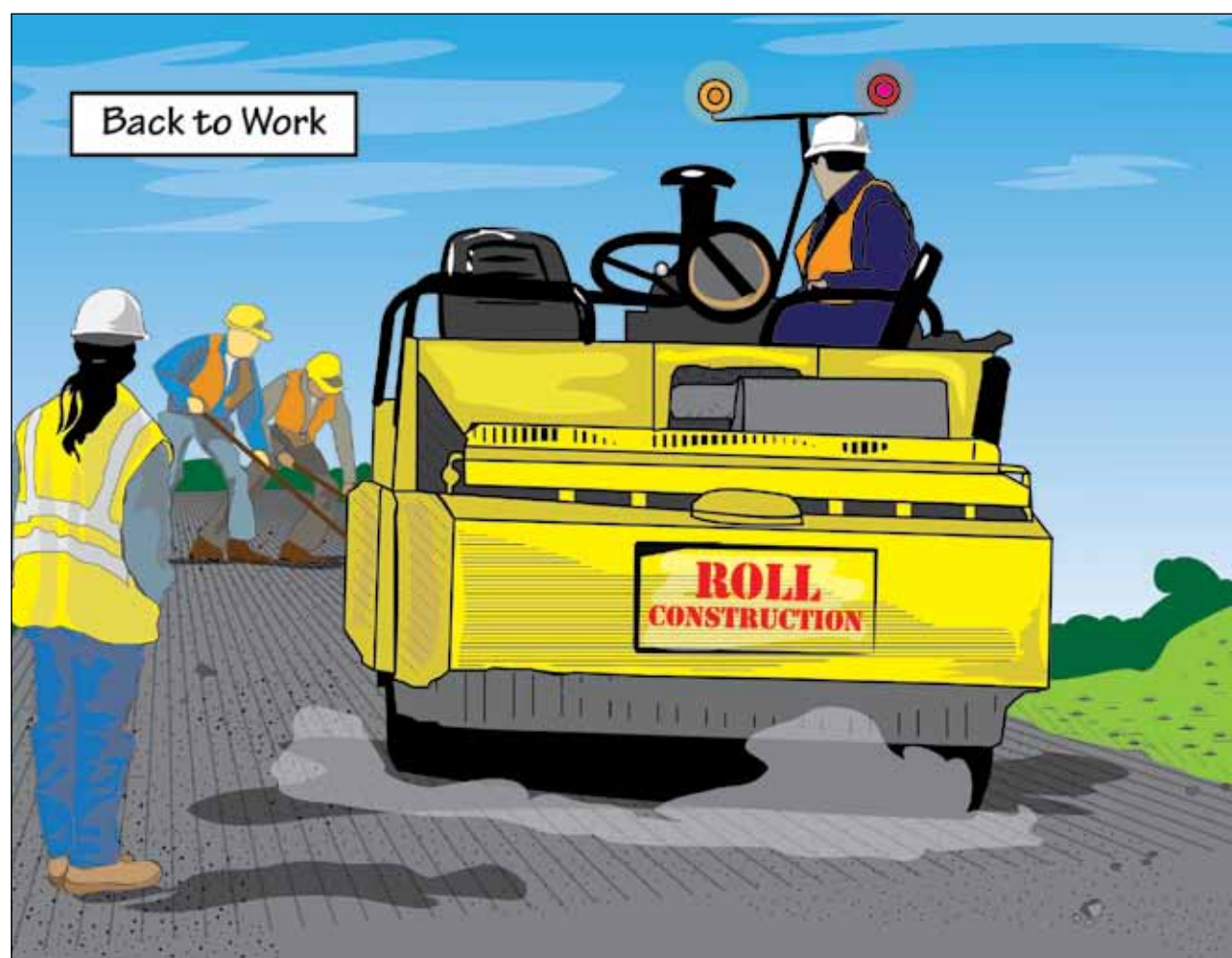
To Martha Monjo  
RE: DBE Program

We met briefly at the Construction Law Seminar in Greenville last month. I did not get a chance to let you know how much I recognize and appreciate the support SCDOT provides to minority owned businesses. Our company, Commercial Fabricators Inc., is currently certified with the NCDOT, GADOT and MDDOT. In addition, we are also certified participants in DBE/MBE programs in 11 other states. By far, the seminars, training, information and support the South Carolina DOT Business Development Center provides is superior to other organizations we hold certifications with. I would also like to mention that Curtis Sims always goes above and beyond the call of duty to help keep us informed of bid opportunities that may match our capabilities. I truly appreciate his efforts even though most of the time we must decline bidding due to our heavy work backlog.

Thank you so much for all you do, the work of the SCDOT Business Development Center have not gone unnoticed.

Sincerely,

Nancy R. Elliott  
Purchasing/MBE Coordinator  
Commercial Fabricators, Inc.  
A Native American Owned Company



ZOE COOK/SCDOT COMMUNICATIONS



## SCDOT launches Fraud and Ethics Hotline

**1-800-551-3915**

**S**CDOT launched a Fraud & Ethics Hotline that allows anyone to report potentially fraudulent activity occurring at the agency. Callers can speak with a member of the Office of the Chief Internal Auditor during

normal working hours or leave a message about their concerns at **1-800-551-3915**.

Callers are NOT required to identify themselves. Should anyone choose to leave their name, it will be kept confidential to the

fullest extent allowed by the law.

Secretary Limehouse told employees in a statement released in January 2009 that "Each of us at SCDOT has been entrusted by the citizens of South Carolina to provide safe and effective

transportation systems. We are expected to perform our duties in an honest and efficient manner. Our individual reputations and the Department's reputation are built on this trust."

Any reports of fraud or unethical activity will be reviewed by the Chief Internal Auditor. Retaliation against employees who in good faith report suspected fraud, unethical conduct or violations of the law or regulations will not be tolerated.

Secretary Limehouse added, "The Department has seen an

increase in the trust and respect that the citizens and legislature have towards SCDOT and its employees. I expect your honest and diligent effort to help me continuously improve our reputation."

Information may be provided in writing. Written information may be sent to:

**Fraud and Ethics Hotline  
PO Box 8687  
Columbia SC 29202**

## THE CONNECTOR

### A New Connector

With this edition, we present a major re-design of our quarterly employee newspaper, The Connector. For the first time, we are publishing in full-color, with standard tabloid-size pages, and a crisp new masthead. It is a modern, trimmed-down design that we believe will reflect the new direction our agency is taking in serving the transportation needs of South Carolina.

Our intent is to deliver a product that is more readable, more pleasing to the eye, and more convenient to use than anything we have done before. It is being mailed to employees' homes in hopes that every member of the family will have access to the information it offers, and that they will read it and become more familiar with the work our employees do.

The Connector also will be mailed to individuals who request it, including retirees, elected officials, contractors and interested citizens. If you are among these, and no longer wish to receive the publication, please return to us the form published on page 2 and we will remove your name from our mailing list.

This is only the second major redesign The Connector has undergone since it was introduced in 1987. Until 1993, the publication was issued bi-monthly, and was supported with advertising.

Over the years, The Connector has won numerous awards from the SC Division, Public Relations Society of America; the Carolinas Association of Business Communicators; the South Carolina Press Association, and AASHTO.

**Editor: Stan Shealy**

**Photography / Layout Editor: Rob Thompson**

**Editorial Board: Pete Poore, Bob Kudelka, Jane Mayberry, Bonnie Cramer, Tasha Crumpton, Peter Tarpley, Zoe Cook and Cody Crouch.**

The Connector, an employee newspaper of the South Carolina Department of Transportation, is published quarterly. All news items may be reproduced with credit to The Connector or the source. News, photos and information to appear in The Connector should be submitted to Stan Shealy, Office of Communications, S.C. Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 191, Columbia, SC 29202, no less than three weeks prior to date of publication. Copy should include the name and phone number of the source or person submitting the article. For inquiries regarding news copy, telephone 737-1270. All materials submitted become the property of SCDOT unless their return is stipulated. The Connector is distributed free by mail to employees and to others upon request.

H.B. "Buck" Limehouse Jr. is the South Carolina Secretary of Transportation.

## Commission adopts no tolerance policy on fraud

**A**t its meeting on March 19, 2009, the SCDOT Commission adopted the following resolution regarding fraudulent and unethical conduct by employees and Commissioners of the Department.

This resolution is designed to support the Fraud Risk Management Program being implemented by Department management. While recognizing that the vast majority of agency employees are honest and work hard to maintain the reputation of the agency, this resolution clearly establishes the expectation that every employee and Commissioner continue to maintain the highest level of professional and ethical standards in carrying out the mission of the agency.

### RESOLUTION OF SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REGARDING FRAUDULENT AND UNETHICAL CONDUCT POLICY

Good governance principles demand that the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) Commission ensure overall high ethical behavior in the organization. Vigilant handling of fraud and ethics violations within an organization sends clear signals to the public, governor and legislators, and other stakeholders about the Commission's and management's attitude toward fraud and ethics risks and about the organization's fraud risk tolerance.

SCDOT, through the Secretary of Transportation, has issued Department Directive 6, "Fraudulent and Unethical Conduct Policy", which establishes and requires standards of conduct for all SCDOT employees and provides a means for reporting violations of the standards. The Office of the Chief Internal Auditor, which reports directly to the Commission, is responsible for receiving reports of fraudulent or unethical conduct from SCDOT employees or outsiders and investigating the matters reported.

This Commission expects every employee and

Commission members of SCDOT to maintain the highest level of professional and ethical standards in carrying out the mission of the agency.

Fraudulent conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Any dishonest or fraudulent act.
- Misappropriation of funds, supplies, or other assets.
- Impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions.
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of SCDOT activities.
- Disclosing confidential and proprietary information to outside parties.
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or persons providing services/materials to the Department, except for items excepted by state ethics laws.
- Destruction, removal, or inappropriate use of records, furniture, fixtures, and equipment.
- Any similar or related conduct.

Unethical conduct is defined as conduct that violates the state ethics laws or Section 57-1-40 of the SC Code of Laws, as amended.

The Commission hereby instructs its Chief Internal Auditor to administer his or her responsibilities in a professional manner and to periodically review the effectiveness of the SCDOT's fraud detection and prevention systems.

The Commission expects any employee who observes what they believe is fraudulent or unethical conduct to report it to the Office of the Chief Internal Auditor. To the extent allowed by law, the Commission will support protecting the reporting employee from retribution for disclosing any violations reported in good faith.

The Commission joins all employees in building the trust vested in it by the public and the Legislature.

## Employees required to take ethics training

**S**tate Law now requires all SCDOT employees to attend a two-hour training session in ethics every other year. All employees must attend Ethics training by June 30, 2009.

Each District has assigned employees within their District to conduct Ethics training. Head-

quarters also assigned employees to conduct Ethics training. In most instances headquarters employees located out in field offices will attend the training offered by the District in which they are located.

Ethics training for the Districts will be scheduled by each Dis-

trict. Ethics training for Headquarters will be scheduled by the HR Development (Training) Office.

*If you have any questions regarding training, call Linda Snead at 803-737-1344 or Chris Zeigler at 803-737-0675.*