

First class graduates from Cross Training Program

By Bob Kudelka

Sandra Riley was perfectly content in her job as an engineer in the Sumter Construction Office.

But after participating in the Department's Engineering Cross Training Program, she finds herself with a new position - Contracts Manager at Richland Maintenance.

"I'm glad I did it," said Riley, an 11-year SCDOT veteran who completed the program this spring. "It was a great experience. I got to see a side I never thought I would do a lot in; I really began to like Maintenance and I enjoyed the people."

Riley recommends that engineers be offered the opportunity to take advantage and participate in the Engineering Cross Training Program.

"I was real comfortable where I was," Riley said. "But you can get complacent and you don't realize what else is out there. I would advise people to take the opportunity so they can see what goes on in other offices."

The purpose of the program is to broaden the engineering experience for selected engineers and ensure a number of professionally trained personnel who can effectively assume future mid-to high-level management responsibilities.

"This effort will no doubt pay great dividends in the future to the Department and its employees," said Acting State Highway Engineer Tony Chapman.

Participants are determined by DEAs and Directors, who submit nominees to the cross training committee.

The committee includes Clem Wat-

son, Assistant to State Administrator for Engineering Design; Mark Lester, Program Development West Engineer; and Lee Neighbors, District 2 Construction Engineer.

Watson said it's not a typical training program.

"It's a roll-up-your-sleeves and 'get dirty' training verses an overview you might get experience with other types of training," Watson said.

Engineers are rotated to other areas for cross training including Construction, Maintenance, Traffic Engineering, Preconstruction and Mechanical Engineering. Typically the selected engineer leaves his or her position, which is temporarily filled by someone else in the program.

Each engineer spends a period of time in the new position before being rotated to another engineering field.

The program is not set in stone as far as how long a person will spend in one area, Watson said. For instance, a relative newcomer to construction engineering may spend more time there while someone with more experience might spend more time in a less familiar area.

The program varies and can be 18 to 24 months long.

"It's not a cookie cutter program," Watson said. "It's a dynamic program with flexibility given to allow Districts to devote time for each applicant to develop in a different area."

Watson said the results have been positive.

"I've been real pleased with how it's gone so far," Watson said. "The Districts have been real receptive and have made the program work. They deserve most of the credit for the success of the



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Front row, from left: Darlene Broughton, Sherri Wahdan, Lorena Boger, Alan Smith, Art Hartzog, Ryan Miller. Middle row, from left: Sandra Riley, Bobby Crider, Henry Pickering. Back row: Jason Johnston, Stephen C. Rivers, Frederick Wewers, David Kinard, Richard Turner, Jamie Johnston, Terance Brooks.

program. There have been a couple of people promoted out of the program due to the experience they've gained in other areas of engineering."

Recent graduates of the program are Darlene Broughton, Traffic Engineering; Sherri Wahdan, Lorena Boger and Sandra Riley, District 1; Luke Gibson and Jamie Johnston, District 2; Alan Smith, Art Hartzog, Frederick Wewers and Ryan Miller, District 3; Stephen C. Rivers and Jason Johnston, District 4; Richard Turner, Terance Brooks and David Kinard, District 6; Henry Pickering, Bobby Crider and Coleman Holladay, District 7.

Riley first spent six months working

in the District 1 Traffic Engineering Office before she moved to Maintenance.

At Richland Maintenance, Riley worked on small contracts for projects including curb and gutter installation, mowing, sidewalk repair, road striping and guardrail repair. After six months, she was offered a permanent job.

Now, her desk is packed with encroachment permits as she works closely with foremen and geotechnicians to review each request submitted by businesses and homeowners.

"I know I'm going to satisfy someone in some way by getting their permit out," she said. "I just enjoy the challenge."

Amber Alert partnership works well, fast

Dick Jenkins, Safety and Systems Engineer, spoke at a news conference May 25 at the State House concerning the success of the Amber Alert program. Representative H.B. "Chip" Limehouse, District 110, was among the speakers.

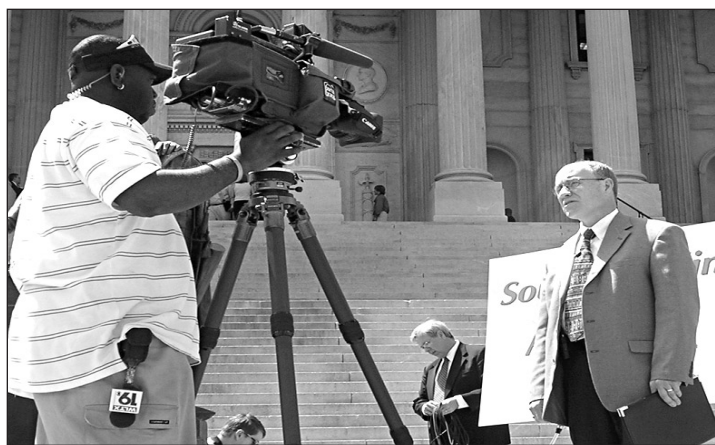
Amber Alert is a partnership of many agencies and broadcasting companies to alert the public in cases of child abduction.

Jenkins said SCDOT has 70 changeable message signs statewide and that the

Department has reduced the time to activate all signs to about 30 minutes, compared to over an hour when the program began.

Through an Amber Alert Grant, SCDOT has procured software and hardware to achieve this reduction.

"We are the first in the nation to use this technology, and I think we can get it down to a total time of 15 minutes with this initiative in the near future," Jenkins said. "I am not aware of any other state being able to do this."



BOB KUDEKA/THE CONNECTOR

Dick Jenkins speaks to the media after a May 25 news conference at the State House concerning the success of the Amber Alert program.

Adopt-A-Highway Group of the Year



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Representatives from the Gaffney High School AFJROTC accept the Cherokee County Adopt-A-Highway Group of the Year award during the 2005 Adopt-A-Highway Awards Ceremony in Columbia. The group also received the top award in the state as the Outstanding State Group of the Year. From left are: Front Row: Lt. Col. Morris Miller, Sharon Belue, Sarah Belue, Crystal Painter, Jacob Swofford and Michelle English. Back Row: Acting SCDOT State Highway Engineer Tony Chapman, Rashaun Hall, SCDOT District 4 Engineering Administrator Stan Bland, Trayshawn Humphries, Bobby Wease, SCDOT Executive Director Elizabeth S. Mabry and CMSgt. Randall Byars.

SmartRide:

It's smart, free through July 1

The SmartRide commuter service was free to the public beginning June 6 through July 1 as a promotional effort to increase ridership.

SmartRide is the result of a partnership of SCDOT, Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority and Central Midlands Regional Transportation Authority.

SmartRide began in the Midlands on June 7, 2004, from the City of Newberry with stops in Little Mountain and Chapin then on to Columbia with additional service from Camden with a stop outside of Lugoff on to Columbia. Many commuters from these communities currently enjoy this reliable and convenient service.

This free promotional was planned only for the month of June. However, July commuters can purchase weekly ride passes by calling the SmartRide RIA partners listed below.

Santee Wateree RTA offers commuter service originating from Camden with a stop in Lugoff to the Columbia metro area. Central Midlands RTA offers commuter service from Newberry with stops in Little Mountain and Chapin and then on to Columbia. Specific times and locations are available at www.scdot.org.

For more information on the service, the public may call:

- Newberry Route: Central Midlands RTA - (803) 255-7133;
- Camden Route: Santee Wateree RTA - (803) 934-0396;
- SCDOT - (803) 737-0831