

Target Zero: *How many traffic deaths are acceptable?*

By Bob Kudelka

SCDOT joined the South Carolina Department of Public Safety (SCDPS) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to announce the launch of a 24-member Target Zero Enforcement Team to reduce traffic deaths.

SCDOT is providing funding for a new 24-trooper unit to focus on proactive enforcement on roadway corridors that are high-risk for traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

Acting Secretary of Transportation **Christy Hall** said SCDOT worked with SCDPS and FHWA to identify locations where fatal collisions are occurring. Most are caused by driving under the influence, not wearing seatbelts and speeding, Hall said.

"Our goal is zero deaths, but unfortunately over 800 motorists die each year on our roads," Hall said at a news conference in Columbia. "This is unacceptable and unnecessary."

To inform motorists, SCDOT's overhead roadway message signs will periodically show fatality counts throughout the year.

"This announcement represents another exciting step forward in eliminating deaths on our roadways," said SCDPS Director Leroy Smith. "We believe that the loss of one life on our highways is unacceptable. We want every driver, every family in our state to take the pledge to make Target Zero their personal goal."

SCDOT Commissioner John N. Hardee, of the 2nd Congressional District, informed people of the new Target Zero website, www.sctargetzeroplan.org, which shows Target Zero corridors and includes a pledge to reduce fatalities.

The web site also features the state's Strategic Highway Safety plan, which was recently completed by representatives from SCDPS, SCDOT, FHWA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"Remember, you, the motorist public, have a stake in South

Carolina reaching its goal of zero deaths," Hardee said.

Commission Chairman Jim Rozier and 1st Congressional District Commissioner Mike Wooten joined similar news conferences held in Charleston and Myrtle Beach. FHWA South Carolina Division Administrator Emily O. Lawton attended the Columbia news conference.

The 16 corridors of focus are:

- I-26 in Lexington, Berkeley and Charleston counties;
- U.S. 1 and S.C. 48 in Richland County;
- U.S. 301 in Orangeburg County;
- U.S. 17 in Charleston County;
- Three segments of U.S. 17 in Horry County;
- U.S. 501 in Horry County;
- S-62 in Berkeley County;
- U.S. 25, U.S. 276 and I-385 in Greenville County;
- U.S. 28 in Anderson County

The Target Zero message is also currently being spread through billboard and regional television campaigns.



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Acting Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall announces that SCDOT is providing funding for a 24-member Target Zero Enforcement Team.

For more information on Target Zero, the Target Zero team or the state's Strategic Highway Safety plan, visit www.sctargetzeroplan.org.

Richland Maintenance employee struck, killed on the job

By Pete Poore

SCDOT lost **Paul L. Fee**, 56, in February of 2015. Fee was a Trades Specialist III and a member of the team in Richland Maintenance. He was assigned to the Blythewood Section Crew. He was the Crew Leader for Hot Mix Asphalt Patching Operations. Fee had been an SCDOT employee since 2007.

On Friday evening, Feb. 27, Fee and his crew were performing pothole patching operations in a temporary work zone on Farrow Road in Columbia. Shortly before 8:30 p.m., a pick-up truck drove into the work zone, striking Fee. The driver of the pick-up fled the scene on foot.

Fee was taken to a Columbia-area hospital in critical condition. He died early Saturday morning.

Late Saturday afternoon on February 28, Ray Pickett, 59, turned himself in at the Richland County Sheriff's Department. Pickett was charged with hit and run resulting in death.

Paul Fee left behind his widow, Betty Fee; three children, Paul Fee, LaTonya Fee Cook, O'tria Cook; and four grandchild-



Paul Fee

dren.

The SCDOT Commission, at its monthly meeting on May 21, 2015, adopted a resolution in memory of the fallen Maintenance employee, and to express appreciation for



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

On June 18, 2015, the SCDOT Commission presented a resolution to the family of Paul Fee, an SCDOT employee from Richland Maintenance who was killed while on the job. From left, Commissioner Mike Wooten, LaTonya Fee Cook (daughter), Betty Fee (wife), O'tria Fee (daughter) and Commission Chairman Jim Rozier.

his service to the South Carolina Department of Transportation. The resolution was presented to the Fee family and friends at the June 18 Commission meeting.

Fee's passing is a somber reminder of the dangers SCDOT employees face each day while working on the roads and bridges in the state.