

The Connector

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SC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SUMMER 2006

SCDOT celebrates 50th anniversary of Interstate Highway System

By Bob Kudelka

SCDOT commemorated the 50th Anniversary of the Interstate System on June 2 in Columbia with a celebration and news conference.

Speakers included Executive Director Elizabeth S. Mabry; Bob Thomas, of the Federal Highway Administration; Adjutant General Stan Spears; South Carolina State Representative Ronny Townsend; South Carolina Secretary of Commerce Joe E. Taylor; South Carolina Department of Public Safety Director Jim Schweitzer; and Marion Edmonds of the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism. Kristen Lominack, Director of State Governmental Affairs, presided.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act on June 29, 1956, creating the Highway Trust Fund. Since that time, interstates have become our social and commercial lifeline.

The news conference was held in front of SCDOT Headquarters, where sponsors created a festival-like atmosphere by providing exhibits including a movie theater showing a video on the interstate system, a coloring area with balloons for children and refreshments. A group of retired



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Various police cars and highway equipment lined Park Street in front of SCDOT as part of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Interstate Highway System. Included in the vehicle display was a 1956 Ford, a car from the era of the beginning of the Interstate Highway system.

highway workers who helped build the interstate system over the past decades attended.

Park Street was transformed into a parking lot for an assortment of vehicles, representing users of the interstate.

Taking up a large portion of

the block was the Aspen Aerial, a 62,000-pound "bridge snooper" vehicle used by SCDOT. The machinery's long arm can extend from atop bridges to allow employees in a two-person bucket to inspect beams, caps and piers underneath bridge decks.

Other vehicles on display included law enforcement cruisers and emergency vehicles, an 18-wheeler, a military Humvee, a 2006 Ford Mustang GT and a 1956 Ford Fairlane.

Inside the Dutch Star, a 43-foot-long, \$315,000 motor home,

John Rawl spoke of what the interstate system has meant to him.

See 50th Anniversary on page 12

Preferred route for I-73 announced

By Bob Kudelka

SCDOT reached a major milestone in the development of Interstate 73 in May with the announcement of the preferred alternative route for the southern

portion of the highway and the signing of the draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Project Manager Mitchell Metts said the preferred alternative – chosen from eight out of an original 141 possible routes – has the least impact to wetlands; the fewest farms impacted; the lowest cost; and the least impact to cultural resources.

The announcement was made during the news conference at the Columbia Convention Center where guests included US Congressman Henry Brown; Commissioner John N. Hardee; Commissioner Bobby T. Jones; Commissioner Marvin Stevenson; former Commissioners Gary Loftus and L. Morgan Martin; several state legislators; representatives of resources agencies; and interested citizens.

Brown said I-73 will not only benefit tourism but will improve job opportunities for people in rural areas.

"It's a win-win for everybody," Brown said.

State Highway Engineer Tony Chapman and FHWA Division Administrator Bob Lee signed the draft EIS. A final EIS and Record of Decision are scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2007.

"To get to where we are today, during the past 18 months we've been involved with 15 different state and federal agencies to balance concerns to come up with one corridor," Lee said.

Executive Director Elizabeth S. Mabry noted the historical context of the milestone. She said that 50 years ago, President Eisenhower had a vision of nationwide interstate system. His vision became a reality, and in South Carolina 28 counties are touched by 844 miles of interstate, she said.

"Ironically, there is no interstate con-



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Mitchell Metts announces the preferred alternative for the Southern Project of I-73 in South Carolina. The announcement was part of a joint SCDOT/FHWA news conference in Columbia on May 30.

nection to the Grand Strand, and the Grand Strand is the heartbeat of tourism and tourism is the heartbeat of the economy in South Carolina," Mabry said.

Lee said of the top four driving destinations in the country, Myrtle Beach is different from Orlando, Fla., Anaheim, Calif., and Las Vegas, Nev. because it does not have an interstate.

"We aim to fix that," Lee said.

Metts said the Project Team chose a route from the 1,500-square mile study area for the Southern project beginning Interstate 95 in Dillon County and heading to Myrtle Beach through Marion and Horry counties. I-73 will incorporate 23

miles of existing SC Highway 22 to save "a tremendous amount of money," he said.

The draft EIS contains a complete evaluation of 141 lines drawn as possible routes over the past 18 months.

Patrick Tyndall, FHWA Project Manager, called the project "unprecedented in scope and magnitude."

"From a financial standpoint...this is the largest public works project ever done

See I-73 on page 2



DIRECTIONS

By Elizabeth S. Mabry
Executive Director

SCDOT has consistently been one of the most efficient state DOTs in the nation. We put as many of our dollars into building and maintaining highways and bridges as we can, while holding our administrative costs down. All of you, as employees of SCDOT, have done many good things for the people of South Carolina during the last decade.

You may be familiar with our "27 in 7" construction program. Under this program SCDOT used bond revenues to build in 7 years

what would have normally taken 27 years to be completed. By accomplishing this work early, SCDOT has saved the taxpayers over three billion dollars in construction costs.

That program is now coming to an end. We had hoped to keep the momentum going, but we simply don't have the funding. South Carolina has reached a crisis point that we have been predicting for nearly nine years, as fuel prices and construction costs have skyrocketed and the funding for highways is not growing.

However, the people of South Carolina do not want to see a reduction in services. They expect

good highways that make traveling safer with less congestion, and roads that provide a good infrastructure for economic development, which leads to more jobs and better-paying jobs. Progress in our state cannot continue without additional revenue.

Our state gas tax is 16 cents per gallon. It has not changed since 1987. A 1987 gas tax of 16 cents is worth only seven cents in 2006 due to years of inflation.

I have proposed a plan to submit to the Legislature, which would increase our revenues gradually over the next ten years. The SCDOT Commission has approved seeking additional funds. You can find the details in a separate story on (page 11). You'll also see another story about how industry contractors and consult-

ing engineering firms are wholeheartedly supporting the SCDOT Vision.

The highway construction community, which includes SCDOT's Commission and employees, and the firms in the private sector who help us design, build and maintain our highway system, all realize that good highways are critical to economic development in South Carolina. All of us can work together to get this message to the Legislature. It is important that they take action in the 2007 Legislative Session.

You have proven that you can do a lot without much in the way of resources, and the Commission and I appreciate everything you do.



Elizabeth S. Mabry

SEE article on page 11

I-73 from page 1

in South Carolina," Tyndall said. It's larger than the Cooper River Bridges Replacement Project in Charleston and the Lake Murray Dam project in Lexington County.

Across the country, "you can literally count on one hand the number of highway projects that we're doing today of this magnitude," Tyndall said.

Tyndall said he was adding up the number of state and federal laws that must be followed in developing an interstate highway and stopped when he reached 50.

"This is complex and difficult," Tyndall said. "There is no wizard who sits behind a green curtain at DOT and just picks where roads are going to go."

Early on, Mabry and Lee made personal visits to agency heads concerning I-73. This executive level of coordination resulted in creation of the Agency Coordination Team (ACT).

ACT, made up of 15 state and federal agencies, met 19 times over the past months with an average meeting time of 4 hours.

Leaders also realized an extensive public involvement plan was needed. The Project Team developed an I-73 web site, www.I73inSC.com; visited churches and schools; gave surveys to 5th graders to take home to their

parents and held various public information meetings.

"We rode on the back of pickup trucks, sat on tailgates, front porches and drank lemonade," Tyndall said. "This is what public involvement is all about."

Tyndall recalled being summoned to a meeting at a house and finding that the furniture had been moved out of the living room. About 20 neighbors were sitting in the back of the room and the wall had a map with pushpins and yarn showing an alternative route.

"We listened and actually took the map back to the office and figured out ways to improve the alignment near that community," Tyndall said.

Another time, the Project Team attended a "spirited" meeting in Anyor that set a new SCDOT attendance record for public meetings at 620.

"We went back to the drawing board after that meeting and made improvements," Tyndall said.

Protecting farms that had been in families for generations was a key concern.

"We heard from a ton of farmers," Metts said.

Metts said the final eight alternatives out of the original 141 were each pretty good routes.

The Preferred Alternative was selected over the other routes because it would have the least wetland impacts (384 acres), in both acreage and wetland value, the least impact to farmland



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

SCDOT and FHWA officials announce the recommended preferred alternative for the Southern Project of I-73 in South Carolina at a news conference May 30. Some of the dignitaries at the announcement included, from left, Senator Hugh Leatherman, U.S. Congressman Henry Brown, SCDOT Executive Director Elizabeth S. Mabry, Senator Yancey McGill and Federal Highway Administration SC Division Administrator Bob Lee.

(1,708 acres), the least impact to potential historic resources, and had the lowest relative cost.

Often times in highway development, the least expensive route is usually not the route with the least wetland impact, but fortunately that is the case with the preferred route, Metts said.

Metts said the preferred route was not set in concrete as a series of public hearings was announced to receive feedback from the public. Engineers will begin a detailed field survey of the preferred route.

"We'll continue to take input and we'll continue to improve the route as we get better information," Metts said.

Still, the announcement was a key step in making I-73 a reality.

"What has been fuzzy for the past year and a half is now coming to focus," Tyndall said.

Because funding for the tolled highway remains uncertain, Metts announced that a Request for Proposals will be put out to develop a public/private partnership.

"We're looking to the private sector to see what ideas they may have to finance, construct and even maintain I-73," Metts said. "We're not sure what we're going to get at the end of the day, but we're going to start that conversation early."

The alignment of the Preferred Alternative would begin at the southernmost interchange with I-95, and from there would extend southeast on the western side of Latta where it would have an interchange with U.S. Route 501,

Agency Coordination Team (ACT)

SC Department of Archives and History
SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
Office of Ocean and Coastal
Resource Management
SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism
SC Department of Natural Resources
SC Emergency Management Division
SC Department of Commerce
SC Department of Transportation
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Coast Guard
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Environmental Protection Agency
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
(National Marine Fisheries)
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Federal Highway Administration

I-73 By the Numbers

60,000 - Number of hours spent by the Project Team
57,350 - Number of visits to www.I73inSC.com
1,973 - Number of citizens attending SCDOT meetings
1,499 - Number of written comments received
141 - Number of potential corridors evaluated
15 - Number of state and federal cooperating agencies

would cross to the east immediately north of Temperance Hill, then extends southeast where it would interchange with S.C. Route 41A. It would continue southeast and would have an interchange with U.S. Route 76 on the western side of Mullins. Once south of Mullins it would angle slightly east and cross the Little Pee Dee River at the existing S.C. Route 917 crossing. It would have an interchange with S-308, then continue southeast on

new alignment to an interchange with SC Route 22 near Bakers Chapel, about two miles west of the S.C. Route 701/S.C. Route 22 interchange. The interchange with S.C. Route 22 would be designed so that the traffic movement from I-73 to S.C. Route 22 would be the predominant movement through the interchange. It then would follow S.C. Route 22 to its terminus with U.S. Route 17 near Briarcliffe Acres.

The Connector

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Elizabeth S. Mabry is Executive Director of the S.C. Department of Transportation.



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Lone AAH volunteer honored for dedication

By Bob Kudelka

SCDOT Commissioner Bobby T. Jones was driving down a road near Lake Wateree in Kershaw County one day and noticed a lone woman by herself picking up trash from the roadside.

Jones was surprised to see the same woman there two weekends later, again alone and picking up trash.

"I thought it was just a good deed but I saw her again two Saturdays later," Jones said. "I thought that was great."

He pulled over and got out to thank her for keeping the road clean.

It turns out that Paula Daugherty is very dedicated when it comes to her involvement in the SCDOT Adopt-A-Highway program.

By herself, Daugherty has picked up nearly 2 tons of trash and debris since 2005, according to Billy Nowlen, SCDOT Right of Way Foreman for Kershaw Maintenance.

"I think it's amazing," Nowlen said.

Daugherty named her one-person AAH Group to honor a friend who died five years ago. As the AAH sign on Carl Horton Road signifies, Daugherty's labor is done in "Memory of Alex Horton."

"He was just a very good man, a very down to earth person and very giving," Daugherty said. "He loved his land and loved his streets, and it's my way of giving back to him and his wife for being the type of people that they are."

Jones, impressed by the woman's selflessness, presented her with a plaque during the May SCDOT Commission meeting in Columbia.

"I appreciate what she does and I'm sure the citizens do, too," Jones said. "She's a charming lady. I know the department is very appreciative."

Alex Horton, a lifelong Kershaw County resident and 38-year veteran of Georgia Pacific, died May 1, 2001. His father, Carl, built one of the first houses on Lake Wateree, in 1941.

Ina Horton, wife of Alex Horton, said Daugherty asked her last year if she could adopt the road in Alex's memory.

"It just makes me feel so good," Ina Horton said. "She's doing a wonderful job."

Daugherty adopted 2.5 miles of Carl Horton Road and 1.6 miles of SC Highway 97.

During 2006 through mid-July, Daugherty had collected 114 bags weighing 1,710 pounds. In addition to the usual cans and small paper and plastic debris, she's also picked up tires, wood and pipe.

Nowlen, who lives in the area, recently spotted her lugging a large truck bedliner from a gully.

"It's a tremendous service," Nowlen said. "Litter is something we deal with every day. I view it not only as unsightly but also dangerous as well. A little plastic bag can fly up and catch on someone's windshield. I've seen that happen and somebody loses control of the car trying to reach out and get it off the car."

For Daugherty, the idea of picking up trash began with a single lampshade she noticed on the side of the road.

"I drove past that thing for a good three months and I thought, 'Somebody ought to at least pick that thing up.' It didn't look like anybody else is going to do it, so I'm going to do it."

Picking up one lampshade in 2005 evolved into spending every other weekend picking up trash.

Daugherty does this in addition to her job at Blue Cross/Blue Shield of South Carolina during the week and a job as a receptionist at the Colonial Inn on Sundays.

On a typical weekend, Daugherty spends up to 2 hours working on Carl Horton Road. She usually does this after getting off work on Fridays. Then on Saturday, she'll spend from 5 to 9 hours on SC 97.

Daugherty, who has three sons and seven grandchildren, said she hasn't asked for help and prefers to do the job by herself.

"I enjoy doing what I do," Daugherty said. "It's kind of my time."

SCDOT appreciates the work of all South Carolina Adopt-A-Highway volunteers, who last year collected more than 1.6 million pounds of trash from the state's roadsides, said Tina Hembree, Adopt-A-Highway coordinator at SCDOT.



KATI HOLLAND/PROJECT DEVELOPMENT WEST



Commissioner Bobby T. Jones recognizes Paula Daugherty for her work in adopting a section of highway in Kershaw County. Daugherty regularly picks up trash in memory of a friend, Alex Horton. Jones recognized her at the May meeting of the SCDOT Commission. Shown from left, SCDOT Executive Director Elizabeth S. Mabry, Tony Magwood, Deputy State Highway Engineer John Walsh, Commissioner Bobby T. Jones, Paula Daugherty, Ina Horton (widow of Alex Horton), Kershaw Maintenance Right of Way Foreman Billy Nowlen and SCDOT Commissioner Robert W. Harrell Sr.

Want to see this issue in color?
www.scdot-transfer.org/scdotphotos/THECONNECTOR.pdf

New I-85 interchange improves access



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Dignitaries from SCDOT, FHWA and United Contractors open the new Brockman-McClimon Interchange after a brief, on-site ceremony July 31.

By Bob Kudelka

Two months ahead of schedule, SCDOT Executive Director Elizabeth S. Mabry and partners in the public and private sectors opened the Brockman-McClimon Road Interchange in July as part of the I-85 Access Improvements Project.

In addition to the Brockman-McClimon Interchange, improvements were made to the existing interchange for the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport. A continuous auxiliary lane was built on I-85 to connect the two interchanges.

Brockman-McClimon Road was widened, and portions of it were relocated to ease congestion and access to areas around I-85.

"This project is more than just an access road - it is about economic development," Mabry said. "I'm here to tell you that all transportation projects are about economic development. That is how you gain people coming to your state. That is how you gain businesses, that is how you thrive, is to have a good transportation system and this is one excellent example."

Commissioner F. Hugh Atkins said: "I think this project is a clear example of what happens when different government agencies cooperate and partner with private enterprise to bring good jobs and safe travel to all our citizens in South Carolina. I congratulate Betty Mabry and all our SCDOT employees for a job well done."

Representing Gov. Mark Sanford, C.H. Maguire, chief of staff at the SC Department of Commerce, summed up the teamwork and coordination by saying, "This is a huge deal."

Four partners pooled their resources for this the I-85 Access Improvements Project: The SC Department of Commerce; SCDOT; the Greenville Spartanburg International Airport and FHWA.

Mabry thanked state legislators for their efforts in making sure state funds were available. South Carolina Representatives Joseph G. Mahaffey and Lewis R. Vaughn attended the ceremony.

emony.

"We envisioned finishing it in about October of 2006," Mabry said. "Here we stand on the last day of July, two months early. That is due to the commitment of the principle parties and Team United."

A goal of the interchange is to make both residential and commercial traffic flow more smoothly. It is also expected to improve traffic for nearby BMW Manufacturing and the airport.

"We want to do many more of these projects across South Carolina," Mabry said. Unfortunately, the funding is short. We are hoping and praying that we can get additional funds so we can bring more services and more projects to our state, ones that are so sorely needed."

FHWA Division Administrator Bob Lee thanked the DOT Planning and Environmental staff for developing environmental documents and obtaining the required permits; DOT Traffic and Engineering staff for preliminary design so FHWA could approve the interchange reports; the innovative project team led by Christy Hall and Mark Lester for pulling the RFP together and the financing agreement together to deliver project on time and on budget; and Jim Triplett of Team United.

"On behalf of Federal Highway Administration, we're proud to work so closely with the DOT to deliver these kinds of projects as we have in the past," Lee said.

Mabry gave special thanks to Project Engineer Ryan Miller, as well as the Greenville-Spartanburg Airport and area residents who worked with employees and the contractors.

Miller said the design build project had its share of challenges, from summer rains in 2005 to dry weather this past summer. The project included six bridges - four over I-85.

"We couldn't have asked for a better group," Miller said.

Triplett also lauded the teamwork.

"This is the kind of work that we love best... put us to the test and tell us what you want done and let us have at it," he said.

2006 STTAR Scholarship Recipients

Zachary D. Brunson	University of South Carolina
Latosha L. Carmichael	Coker College
Calhoun J. Cornwell	South Carolina State University
Madison B. Foster	Clemson University
Derek J. Frick	Clemson University
Devyn D. Gillette	Winston-Salem State
Courtney E. Holden	University of South Carolina
Patrick E. Holstad	University of South Carolina
Chase B. Martin	Coastal Carolina University
Courtney A. Porter	Lander University
Sharon M. Rawls	Wofford College
Judy A. Ryggs	Bob Jones University
Anita P. Smalls	Clemson University
Salena S. Smalls	South Carolina State University
Kimberly S. Truax	Ambassador Baptist College

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Davis & Floyd, Inc.	MA Engineering Consultants, Inc.	Woolpert LLP
Day Wilburn Associates, Inc.	Mike Daniel & Associates, PA	
Flatiron Constructors, Inc.	Photo Science, Inc.	

Walking a mile in their shoes...



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

David Thompson, right, and Sid Bacchus spread straw around a 'colorful space' at the corner of Hook St. and Jarvis Klapman Boulevard in West Columbia. Thompson was showing Bacchus some of the daily work done by maintenance crews.

Job shadowing gives STTARs chance to appreciate daily maintenance operations

By Bob Kudelka

On a hot, muggy June morning, Barbara Jeffcoat, Maintenance Foreman for the West Columbia Section Shed, had some advice for the newest member of her work crew.

"Wear long sleeves and safety shoes, use sunscreen, take plenty of breaks, and use the buddy system - we have some diabetics out here," she said.

And don't wear light-colored clothing for the types of jobs they were about to do, she said.

"We don't do cleaning bills out here," Jeffcoat said.

Jeffcoat's newest crew member was Sid Bacchus, an Assistant Program Manager who normally spends his days working on development of new highway projects.

For three days in late June, however, Bacchus and his fellow STTARs (Strategic Training for

Transportation Agency Representatives) took part in a job shadow program. The 2006 class was the first to experience the job shadow program.

"The idea behind the job shadow program was to provide the STTARs an opportunity to find out what maintenance workers and foremen do out in the field," said Susan Jones, Program Manager for Leadership Development. "It also would give the maintenance personnel the opportunity to teach STTARs, as well as learn about the STTAR program."

"For the most part, we wanted the STTARs to have a real appreciation for what our maintenance workforce does," Jones said.

The STTAR class teamed up with maintenance foremen in Lexington and Richland counties to participate in daily jobs such as fixing potholes or erecting signs.

"We like to see they get a good birds eye view from those who

"It definitely gives you a better perspective... To see what happens on their end is really beneficial to me."

-- Mark Nolt
District 1 Traffic Engineer

are down in the trenches," said Drew Holden, Assistant Resident Maintenance Engineer for the West Columbia Section Shed.

As Holden spoke, STTAR Mark Nolt was literally down in the trenches - about 15 feet below in a ditch at Ermine Road off US 1.

Nolt, District 1 Traffic Engineer, was helping Holden's employees use a Jet Vac machine to



Billy Pearson, a 29-year veteran with SCDOT from the West Columbia Section Shed, shows Mark Nolt how the Jet Vac is used to unclog a drainage pipe along U.S. 1 in Lexington County.

loosen up mud and silt and unclog the ditch and drainpipe.

"Lexington Maintenance helps me out with work orders all the time," Nolt said during a break. "When they found out I was coming over here, a lot of them said, 'I've got a job for you.' But they've been pretty kind so far."

Nolt and other STTARs said the job shadow program was a valuable experience.

"It definitely gives you a better perspective," he said. "I do ask for their help a lot and they do help me out a great deal. To see what happens on their end is really beneficial for me."

Bacchus, whose first day was spent landscaping, said, "I'm with a great group of guys who don't mind sharing a bit of knowledge with me. I'm fortunate to get out

here and see a different side of the DOT."

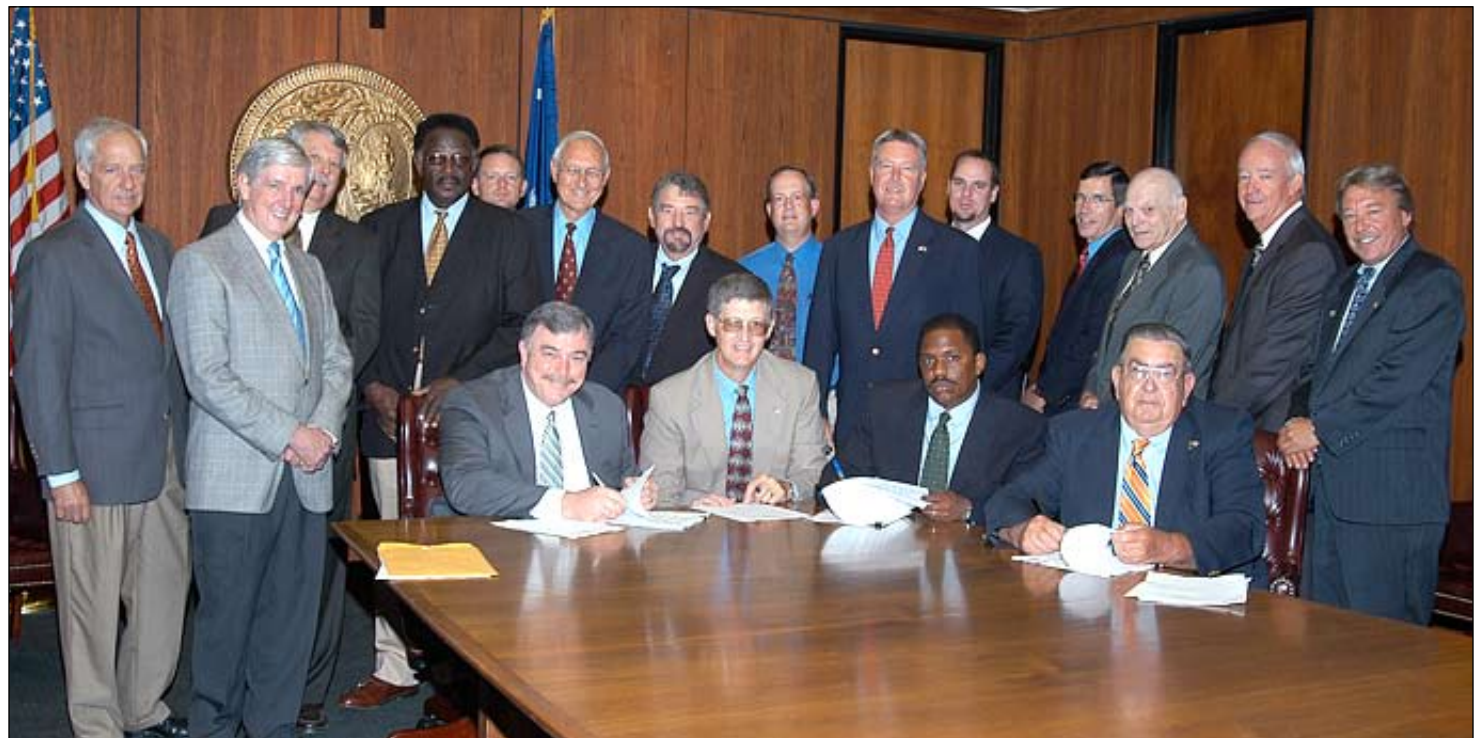
Kelly Jo Swygert, Program Coordinator in the Director of Maintenance Office, spent her time clearing limbs with Lexington Maintenance right of way foreman William Price and crew supervisor Roy Jenkins.

"Every time I visit a field office I am always impressed and was again with this crew just to see their determination and dedication and positive attitudes, even though it was 95 degrees and no quick access to restroom facilities," Swygert said. "Everyone gave 110 percent and never complained and delivered a professional job. We're spoiled here back at Headquarters in an air conditioned office and easy access to the bathroom."

Dorchester County Sales Tax Authority, SCDOT sign agreement

Representatives from the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), Dorchester County Sales Tax Authority and Dorchester County signed an intergovernmental agreement Thursday for roadway projects in Dorchester County. The agreement will enable the Sales Tax Authority to use the local money generated by the sales tax program to fund transportation improvements on state maintained roadways.

Revenue from the sales tax is projected to provide \$125 million for transportation improvements in the county over the next 25 years. The Dorchester County Tax Authority has hired the engineering firm of Davis & Floyd Engineering to manage this program.



Signing the agreement are, seated from left: SCDOT State Highway Engineer Tony Chapman, SCDOT Director of Finance and Administration Morgan Denny, Dorchester County Administrator Jason Ward, and Dorchester County One-Cent Sales Tax Authority representative Marshall Murdaugh. Watching the signing ceremony are, standing from left: Donnie Dukes, SCDOT Commissioner Robert W. Harrell Sr., Robert Clark, SCDOT Commissioner Marvin Stevenson, Tony Fallaw, Emmett Davis, Albert Heatley, Steve Ikerd, Mark Bilgrim, David Kinard, Robert Pratt, Wallace Ackerman, Jerry Timmons, and Federal Highway Administration SC Division Administrator Bob Lee.