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1997 annual report

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STATE DOCUMENTS

SCDOT

South Carolina Department of Transportation

SCDOT Cited Once Again as Most Efficient in the Nation

For the third consecutive year, SCDOT was recognized as the most cost efficient manager of highway systems in the United States. An independent study issued by the University of North Carolina - Charlotte found that South Carolina topped the list of states that are most cost effective in operating road systems. When compared with other state departments of transportation SCDOT had the lowest ratio of employees per mile, the lowest revenues per mile and the least expenditure per mile on highway maintenance.

SCDOT Dedicates Sandy Island Mitigation Bank

SCDOT preserved 17,600 acres of pristine wetlands along the South Carolina coast through a partnership establishing the Sandy Island Mitigation Bank. The bank allows SCDOT to offset the impact to wetlands of future transportation projects. It will also allow SCDOT to save time and money on future projects. The project is unique in that it involves partners from the public and private sectors who drafted a plan that would benefit the entire state through preservation. The land will be managed by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources and The Nature Conservancy, an international conservation organization that owns the largest private system of nature sanctuaries in the world. The Sandy Island project has been called the most significant conservation project in the history of the state by leading environmental conservationists.

Hurricane Preparation

The department's maintenance and traffic signal crews were prepared for the worst during the year's hurricane season. Fortunately for South Carolina, Hurricanes Bertha and Fran only brushed the state's coast, and all road clearing and signal repairs were performed quickly and efficiently.

Cut The Trash

SCDOT has long been committed to a cleaner South Carolina, evidence provided by its nationally recognized Adopt-A-Highway program. May 1997 marked the beginning of the department's yearlong "Cut The Trash" media campaign. Newspaper ads, billboards and radio public service announcements worked together to raise public awareness of the growing problem of litter in our state.

County Project Booklets

In order for SCDOT customers (which include members of the General Assembly) to grasp a snapshot of transportation projects by county, a set of booklets has been developed. "1998 Major Highway Project County Booklets" list all projects built in each county for the past ten years (July 1, 1987 – June 30, 1997) and includes the costs and type of each project. The list is broken down into projects SCDOT constructed using "C" funds, and projects constructed using State and Federal funds. The booklets also list projects, which have been completed, and projects that were currently under construction as of July 1, 1997. The third section of the booklets lists projects proposed in the SCDOT's 1998 Program and projects that are planned by District Engineering Administrators, based on projected revenues.

Current South Carolina Transportation Commission Members

Commission Chairman
H.B. Buck Limehouse
Appointed by the Governor

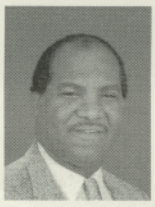
First Vice Chairman
Fifth Congressional District
Bobby T. Jones

Second Vice Chairman
Third Congressional District
W.M. "Mat" Self

First Congressional District
Arnold S. Goodstein

Second Congressional District
John N. Hardee

Fourth Congressional District
F. Hugh Atkins



Sixth Congressional District
Joseph H. Jefferson

Executive Director
Elizabeth S. Mabry

South Carolina Department of Transportation

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Columbia, SC 29202-0191
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First Place Honors for "The Connector"

The South Carolina Press Association recognized "The Connector," SCDOT's quarterly employee newsletter, as Best Newspaper Publication Associate/Individual division. The paper is mailed to SCDOT employees, retirees and others who request it.

SCDOT manages and maintains more than 41,000 miles of highways, the fifth largest highway system in the nation.

SHEP Earns Transportation Achievement Award

The South Carolina section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers presented its Outstanding Transportation Achievement Award for 1996 to SCDOT and the Central Midlands Regional Planning Council for the implementation of an incident management program. The program, operating in both Columbia and Spartanburg in Fiscal Year 1997, is designed to provide prompt assistance to disabled vehicles, thereby reducing interference with traffic flow and the likelihood of secondary incidents.

This year, the Federal Highway Administration's Excellence in Design competition recognized SCDOT's wildflower program with an "Award of Excellence" in the Environmental Protection and Enhancements category.

Carolina AGC Names I-26/Piney Grove Road Interchange Best Highway

The Carolinas Associated General Contractors of America, the largest chapter of AGC has awarded Rea Construction Company of Columbia the prestigious Pinnacle award for this *"very complex project, executed smoothly in a high volume traffic area, with no major traffic accidents, with 80,000 cars passing daily."*

STTAR Program Begins

The brightest and best employees of the Department have begun an innovative program designed to train them for leadership positions within SCDOT. Strategic Training for Transportation Agency Representatives (STTAR) involves twelve employees who are now undergoing intensive training to learn how the agency functions from the ground up.

Team Med Receives Pathfinder Award

The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials has recognized SCDOT's TeamMed program through its Pathfinder Award for Quality. TeamMed is a partnership between SCDOT and nursing and health programs across the state. Results have been that 49 SCDOT work sites were offered voluntary health screenings and the opportunity to update or begin immunizations for a variety of illnesses.

Team Totes Gets AASHTO Quality Award

Another Pathfinder Award was given to Team Totes in recognition of their innovations in replacing the 55-gallon drums traditionally used for storing highway paint with stainless steel, rectangular "totes" that can hold up to 350 gallons of paint and can be easily stacked for storage.

SCDOT Wins Keep America Beautiful Award

SCDOT's efforts to keep South Carolina clean and beautiful won first place honors in the Keep America Beautiful of South Carolina awards competition. The award was presented in the "Litter Prevention Category" for the agency's Adopt-A-Highway program.

the future of SCDOT

The South Carolina Department of Transportation will face enormous challenges in the future. The needs are many, diversified and at times overwhelming. Future transportation needs are expected to grow at a faster rate than sources of funding for the improvements.

In fiscal year 1997, there were more than 500 active construction projects underway by SCDOT. The agency plans and manages these projects.

The new bridge over the Reedy River on Log Shoals Road in Greenville County was one of the first design-build bridge projects to be completed. The new method replaces bridges quicker and at a lower cost than traditional methods.

Regardless of the overwhelming needs, the leadership and staff of SCDOT are poised and ready to meet the challenges of the agency's mission in providing South Carolina the best possible transportation systems and services for the safe, efficient movement of people and goods and stewardship of the state's environment and natural beauty. SCDOT manages a nearly 42,000 mile highway system which includes more than 8,100 bridges, more than 800 miles of Interstates, more than 9,000 miles of Primary roads and more than 31,000 miles of Secondary roads. The Department has risen to the challenge while cutting costs, saving time, money, equipment, and other resources.

The agency works closely with local planning organizations in setting priorities and outlining specific needs for communities across our state. Widening, resurfacing and other improvement represent the bulk of our state's needs for the next decade.

SCDOT has identified critical transportation projects of statewide significance which will need to be funded in the near future to meet projected economic development and traffic growth rates. SCDOT looks to the S.C. General Assembly and Congress for increased financial support for these projects. In the meantime, SCDOT continues to operate efficiently and effectively with available funds. Unique and innovative partnerships will continue to be formed to turn problems into opportunities and transportation necessities into realities.

MPO and COG Bonding Programs

In 1997 the SCDOT Commission approved the use of the agency's highway bonding authority to accelerate construction projects throughout the state. Funding for the Federal construction program is currently allocated, by population, to the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) for the urban areas and to the Councils of Governments (COG) for the rural areas. To take advantage of the opportunity to accelerate construction under the Commission's action, the MPO or COG may enter into an agreement with SCDOT and pledge to use up to one-half of its current allocation of funding for the purpose of paying debt service on bonds issued by SCDOT. The agreement would also specify which highway projects would be included in the program, the time schedule of constructing the selected projects and the debt service outlay projected until the bonds are repaid.

Mass Transit Five Year Plan

During the next five years, the Division of Mass Transit's major plans are to develop the following activities:

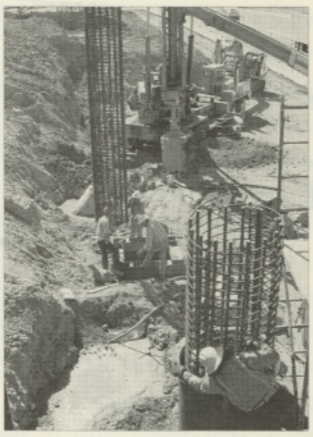
- Determine which abandoned passenger rail corridors require preserving for future revitalization when it becomes necessary for resumption of intercity passenger rail service
- Develop a statewide coordinated transit system among transportation providers
- Develop a statewide transit training program for employees of transit systems
- Implement an electronic grant-making system for use by grantees in concert with Federal Transit Administration guidelines
- Improve automation capabilities of transit system operators statewide for cost effective operations

SCDOT
South Carolina Department of Transportation

Major Projects

The ***Congaree Vista Streetscape*** project from the Congaree River Bridge to Assembly Street has added new excitement to downtown Columbia. Construction on the $6.7 million project, is complete pending acceptance of the work. The project included relocation of overhead utilities to underground, upgrading the storm drainage system, new widened sidewalks and street lights, landscaped medians, new street furniture and resurfacing of Gervais Street.

Interstate traffic in the upstate will benefit greatly from the improvements in progress on ***I-85 from White Horse Road to Mauldin Road in Greenville.*** The work involves widening the Interstate to six lanes, reconstruction of several interchanges, and a new crossing of I-85 for Pleasantburg Drive. Widening of I-85 at the I-85 interchange was recently completed. When the current work is completed, I-85 will be six lanes from U.S. 29 in Anderson County to Pelham Road in Greenville County, a distance of 20 miles.



Since January 1, 1997, construction has been ongoing on ***U.S. 52 from just north of St. Stephen to Kingstree, a distance of approximately 23.7 miles.*** The project involves widening the existing two-lane roadway to four lanes, separated by a flush paved median. It also involves the replacement of 12 bridges and construction of a new bridge The sections from north of St. Stephen to Road S-6 and from S.C. 375 to U.S. 521 are scheduled for completion in 1998. The section from Road S-6 to S.C. 37 is scheduled for completion by the end of 1999. And the section from U.S. 521 to Kingstree is scheduled for completion in the year 2000.

Projects are underway to multilane section of both ***U.S. 378 and U.S. 1 in Lexington County.*** The U.S. 378 project extends the recently completed five-lane section from U.S. 1 to past Road S-24 (Priceville Road.) The section from Beachwood Road to Priceville Road was let to contract in December 1997, and is expected to be completed by Summer 2000 under an $11.8 million contract. The U.S. 1 project will extend five-lane widening from file miles to Priceville Road. The project was let in December 1997. Construction activities were recently begun and are expected to be complete by the end of 1999 under a $4.4 million contract.

SCDOT has recently let to contract Phase I of the ***Mark Clark Expressway*** interchange at U.S. 17 (Savannah Highway) and S.C. 7 (Sam Rittenburg). The interchange will alleviate congestion in this heavily traveled area in Charleston, with completion expected in late 1999. The interchange includes a loop entrance ramp from U.S. 17 to access northbound Mark Clark Expressway, a northbound bridge over U.S. 17, a northbound bridge over S.C. 7 and a northbound ramp from U.S. 17, including a bridge over S.C. 7.

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Funding Facts

- South Carolina is a "donor state." It has sent over $1 billion of federal gas taxes to other states since 1957. For Fiscal Years 1992-96, South Carolina only got back about 70 cents for every dollar it sent to Washington, D.C., in federal gas taxes.
- SCDOT is funded primarily by taxes paid on motor fuel in South Carolina.
- In 1996/97, SCDOT received $303 million from the 16¢ per gallon state tax on motor fuel and $299 million was made available by the Federal Highway Administration from the 18¢ per gallon state tax on motor fuel.
- Of total funds available, SCDOT expended:
  $183 million on maintenance
  $408 million for engineering and construction
  $ 11 million for mass transit

Transportation Construction Projects

In addition to much needed interstate rehabilitation which included resurfacing, concrete repair and bridge replacements, the following is an example of significant projects funded by SCDOT in fiscal year 1997:

County	Route	Type of Construction
Beaufort	U.S. 21	Widen to three, four and five lanes and replace a bridge
Berkeley	U.S. 52	Widen to five lanes and replace six bridges
Berkeley	North Rhett Avenue	Widen to five lanes and four-lane divided highway
Charleston	Mark Clark Expressway	Construct a loop interchange at US 17 and SC 7 and build three overpasses
Florence	I-95 and S-83	Build new interchange
Georgetown	U.S. 521	Widen to four-lane divided highway
Greenville	S.C. 291	Improve intersection at East North Street
Greenwood/Newberry	S.C. 34	Replace bridge over Saluda River
Laurens	I-385	Renovate Rest Area
Lexington	U.S. 1	Widen to five lanes
Lexington	U.S. 378	Widen to five lanes
Orangeburg	U.S. 178	Widen to five lanes
Richland	I-26 and S.C. 60	Improve the interchange
Spartanburg	Drayton Avenue	Build two new bridges and widen five lanes

Enhancement Projects

During 1997, eleven federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) Enhancement Projects were administered by SCDOT. These projects were administered and constructed by various City and County entities.

Applicant	Description
Berkeley County	Sidewalk at Sangaree School
Berkeley County Water and Sanitation Authority	Landscaping at a Solid Waste Site
City of Aiken	Landscaping at I-20/US Route 1 Interchange
City of Beaufort	Charles Street Enhancement Project
City of Charleston	Restoration of the Camden Depot (Historic structure)
City of Gaffney	Downtown Park Beautification
City of Hartsville	Downtown Redevelopment Project
Georgetown County	Sidewalk from Boat Landing to a County Parking Lot
Town of McCormick	Restoration & Landscaping of Dorn Mill (Historic structure)
Town of Mount Pleasant	Landscaping on US Route 17 ByPass
Town of Summerton	Landscaping Interchange on I-95 at Exit 108