



# THE CONNECTOR

e-EDITION

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

OCTOBER 2024

## **Secretary Powell talks Hurricane Response**

In his October 2024 employee address, Secretary of Transportation Justin Powell talks about SCDOT's response to Hurricane Helene.



[Click here to watch the video.](#)



## Team SCDOT places 3rd at Regional RoadEO



Congratulations to Team SCDOT!!

Some of our top equipment operators from across the state traveled to Raleigh, North Carolina to compete in the Southeastern Regional RoadEO where they took home 3rd place, trailing just 7 points behind North Carolina who placed 2nd.

For the first half of competition day, several participants were faced with the challenge of doing their practice run in heavy, steady rain and high winds. This unexpected obstacle forced them to adjust their previously practiced strategies and improvise on the fly, putting their skills to the test.

At SCDOT, the RoadEO Committee implements a regional “bye” for competitors that finish in the top half of their event. This year 10 of our 14 team members earned a bye by virtue, which will advance them straight to the State Competition next year (2025). With high marks to beat out half of their competition, the following have been awarded the regional bye:

- John Davis (Lowboy)
- Jeremy Shrewsberry (Tandem)
- Dock Bowick (Tandem)
- Collin Newton (Single Axle)
- Brandon Varnadore (Single Axle)
- Micah Schlagenhauf (Tractor Mower)

- Jeremy Ethers (Backhoe)
- Tommy Johnson (Backhoe)
- William Darnell (Skid Steer)
- Paul Baker (Skid Steer)

The RoadEO is an annual training and safety conference for heavy equipment operators.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)

---

## **Director of Public Engagement wins Vanguard Award at TransComm**

**KELLY MOORE**

South Carolina



(Photo provided by Georgia DOT - Photographer Sarah S. Cunio)

Congratulations to SCDOT Director of Public Engagement Kelly Moore for winning the 2024 Vanguard Award at TransComm.

Kelly was presented with the Vanguard Award on September 24 at the TransComm conference in Atlanta. The Vanguard Award is presented to a communications professional who demonstrates innovation, creativity and strategic results.

Secretary of Transportation Justin Powell said, "I have had the pleasure of working with Kelly for nearly a decade. She is truly a shining light in the Transportation Communications and I am thankful and proud of the work she and her team have done in the Office of Public Engagement."

---

## Prioritizing Community Service



Caleb Jones looks through the lens of surveying equipment in his National Guard uniform.

For Transportation Engineering Tech Caleb Jones, service is all but another seven-letter word.

It started in September 2015, when Caleb joined SCDOT at the Lexington Maintenance office. Less than a month later, the 1000-year flood took place, putting Caleb and his colleagues at the forefront of the storm to clear the roads.

"We did everything we could to ensure people stayed safe," Caleb said.

As hurricanes and tropical storms impacted the state year after year, Caleb worked at the crossover of I-26 and I-77, helping families move further away from the coastline. In the winter, he would go to the Upstate to help clear the roads of ice and snow.

Eventually, Caleb moved from Lexington Maintenance to Newberry Construction. His position now required him to complete tasks like asphalt inspection, earthwork, and testing and sampling. His further involvement on the construction side meant less of an opportunity to work natural disasters in the ways he was used to.

Inspired by his role at SCDOT and his aspirations to continue to serve his fellow South Carolinians in any way possible, he joined the South Carolina Army National Guard in 2022.

**“I joined because I wanted to be able to serve my community,” he said. “Once I switched over to construction, I wasn’t involved in those types of things in the capacity that I was before, that’s a large part of what led me to decide to join the National Guard.”**

Every year, Caleb attends a two-week training session in the summer and sets aside one weekend a month to tend to his National Guard duties. He is a Sergeant, and similar to his position at SCDOT, he is a Technical Engineering Specialist.

“We supervise and execute construction site development,” says Caleb. “There are some things that fall out of my scope of work here at SCDOT, but much of my training and responsibilities are directly related and, in many cases are identical.”

The National Guard exposes Caleb to many different things. At SCDOT, his work usually consists of being in the field. With the National Guard, he could be in the materials lab one day and then drafting plans the next.

**“It helps me see the bigger picture and to experience the other side of a job that I’m typically not a part of,” he said.**

The National Guard also allows Caleb to advance both his military and SCDOT career. He can pursue certifications and enroll in educational programs provided by the Army to expand his training in other disciplines.

When Tropical Storm Debby impacted parts of South Carolina in August, Caleb and his fellow soldiers were deployed to North Charleston and operated as a debris cleanup crew.

**“I enjoyed being once again a part of the efforts to keep South Carolinians safe,” he said. “I enjoyed the comradery and pride of service to our State and Nation.”**

---

## **SHEP operators remain committed to helping clear the roads**

The South Carolina Department of Transportation’s State Highway Emergency Program (SHEP) offers critical roadside assistance to motorists experiencing vehicle issues.

SHEP provides support to emergency responders during incidents, ensuring that help is always close at hand.

During severe weather, specially-trained SHEP crews are there to assist stranded motorists, remove road debris, and take on challenging tasks to ensure the roads remain safe for all drivers. Their swift and efficient response helps keep the motoring public safe and traffic moving smoothly, even in the toughest conditions.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)



---

**Reflective beads sprayed over road paint to help with visibility**



In a heavy rain storm or in the late evening hours when visibility is low, the roads in our state have a glow that helps safely guide travelers. The glow is thanks to road paint that uses reflective glass beads.

Reflective glass beads are small pieces of glass cut into a sand-like texture that can be combined with paint. The beads have retro-reflectivity, which means they reflect light back to their source, such as car headlights.

The reflective beads are most commonly used in road markings, traffic signs, pavement markers, reflective paint, and airport runways.

Another strength of these beads is their durability. Reflective glass beads can be effective for years after being applied. They resist wear and tear and can withstand harsh weather conditions, like temperature fluctuations and storms.

These beads were recently installed along SC 97 in Chester County and will be there to help drivers for years to come.



## Blink Bonnie Update

Crews are working to replace the Blink Bonnie Road bridge in Fairfield County. Resident Construction Engineer Mike Moss explains how the project is progressing and what it takes to start a bridge project like Blink Bonnie.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)



**Progress Update: Crews continue work to transform SC 160 and I-77 Interchange in York County**



SCDOT crews are hard at work transforming the interchange at SC 160 and I-77 in York County. The project will transform the current diamond interchange into an offset-direction interchange, the first in South Carolina. Engineers have designed the new interchange to reduce left-turn conflicts on SC 160, improve intersection spacing, and reduce congestion.



A directional interchange will lift SC 160 over I-77 using a new bridge, with entrance loops on each side of the bridge to allow access to I-77.

Construction on this new interchange began in March and has been full steam ahead since the groundbreaking. The project will create a unique interchange and widen over one mile of SC 160 through the interchange from US 21 to Pleasant Road.

Resident Construction Engineer Jared Bragg oversees the interchange project and says construction crews are making progress.

“It is coming along great. We are still in phase one, but we are looking to move into phases two and three in December,” Bragg explained.

The interchange reconfiguration at SC 160 consists of six different construction phases.

During Phase 1 crews will shift traffic to make room for bridge construction, creating a temporary entrance ramp for cars traveling Northbound and an exit ramp for cars moving Southbound.

Phases 2 and 3 will include early bridge construction, lane shifts, and median adjustments.

Bragg believes the interchange reconfiguration will be an improvement for all drivers passing through York County.

“Due to controlled access and less signalization, I hope it allows traffic to flow more efficiently and safely,” Bragg said.

The new directional interchange is expected to be finished by Winter of 2027.



---

## **Upstate maintenance workers prepare for working in snow and ice using simulator**



While winter weather isn't here just yet, crews in the Upstate are already preparing for what the colder months may bring. At the District 3 headquarters in Greenville, crews participated in a snow plow simulation training to refresh and expand their knowledge on how to clear snow and ice out of the roadway in the event of a storm.

In two-hour sessions, team members learned how to operate a snow plow while factoring in different conditions

and scenarios around them. Throughout several modules, they learned what to look out for when operating a snow plow in the day and night, sharing the road with others including pedestrians and first responders, and how to look out for and respond to other variables to keep plowing operations safe.

**“Our hope is that the training exposes employees who are new to the agency, or may not be as familiar with driving and working during snowy and icy conditions to help them build their confidence and knowledge to their jobs safely,” Assistant District Maintenance Engineer Chris Madden said.**

The instructor for the class also reminded crews to manage their fatigue and to prioritize their overall well-being. Staying alert, anticipating hazards, and being aware of routes and changing weather conditions are all very important aspects to effective snow plow operations.

Whether or not snowy and icy roads are in the cards for the colder months ahead, SCDOT remains ready to respond to all conditions and prioritizes clear and safe roads year-round.

---

## **Safety Spotlight: Roundabouts**



The SCDOT Traffic Safety Office is approaching 50 roundabouts throughout the state. Those roundabouts that have been in use have seen a 79% reduction in crashes resulting in injuries and a 66% reduction in the total number of crashes.



---

## Employee Updates

October 2024

[New Employees](#)

[Retirements](#)

[Promotions](#)

[In Memoriam](#)

## We're Looking for More Folks Like You

Know someone who would make a good team member at SCDOT?

Share this link to Search All SCDOT Jobs:

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/sc/scdot>

SCDOT

**WE ARE  
HIRING**

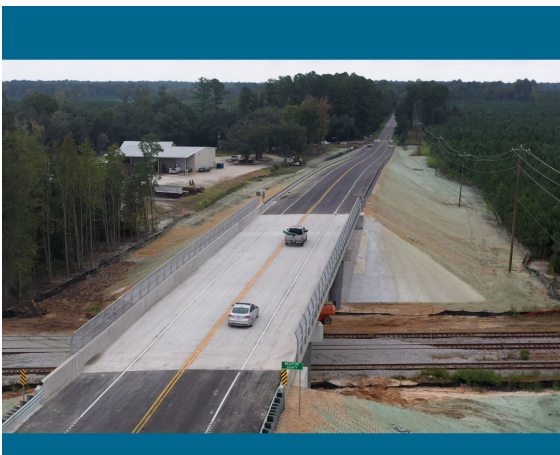
---

DISTRICT 1

**THROWBACK**



This aerial snapshot (top) from 1956 takes a look back at the Harden Street Extension in Columbia. The photo below is of the same area taken in September 2024.



**Pictured:** SCDOT completed a bridge replacement project on the US 21 bridge over CSX Railroad in Yemassee ahead of schedule on September 13. [Click here to read more.](#)

[SCDOT continues recovery operations, prepares for large scale debris pickup mission](#)

[SCDOT seeks comment on updated Public Involvement Policy](#)

[Phased Traffic Shift Scheduled as SCDOT Opens New Ramp at Colonial Life Boulevard](#)

DEPARTMENT NEWS



SCDOT Requests Public Comment on the  
2024-2033 Statewide Transportation  
Improvement Program to Include Bridge  
Replacement Projects in the Pee Dee  
Region

Help us share the news. [Subscribe to the e-Edition of the Connector.](#)



Share This Email



Share This Email



Share This Email

Office of Public Engagement  
[media@scdot.org](mailto:media@scdot.org)  
(803) 737-1270

THE  CONNECTOR 

