

SCDOT'S 10-Year Plan is Ahead of Schedule in Year #1

The four major categories in the 10-Year Plan have either met or exceeded Targets for Year #1

South Carolina Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall has announced that the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) has experienced a record-breaking year in the first year of the agency's 10-Year Plan to Rebuild SC's Roads & Bridges. Year #1 officially ends on July 1, 2018. For the first time in the agency's history, the total amount of road work underway on the state's highways has exceeded **\$3 Billion** which is three times normal levels.

Hall noted that the 10-Year Plan is the first significant effort to repair South Carolina's highway system after three decades of neglect. Hall said, "We are now one year into a strategic 10-year repair and reconstruction program designed to start the long journey to improve and repair our 42,000-mile highway system that includes just over 8,400 bridges with new and sustainable funding that we have not had for 30 years."

Hall reports that SCDOT has not varied in its priorities and has implemented the plan in accordance with the strategic items identified prior to the gas tax increase: Rural Road Safety, Paving, Bridge Replacements and Interstate Widening. "The projects selected for these programs were based on an analytical, not political process, where SCDOT engineers ranked projects based on objective and quantifiable factors," Hall said. The 10-year program utilizes all of the state and federal resources dedicated to SCDOT for its use on prioritized projects, including the recently passed gas tax increase that the SC Legislature directed to the Infrastructure Maintenance Trust Fund, which is to be used exclusively by SCDOT for the repairs, maintenance and improvements to the existing highway system.

Noting that South Carolina ranks number one in the nation in highway fatality rates, Hall pointed to the Rural Road Safety Program. The 10-year target is to provide customized improvements on 1,000 miles of rural roads at a rate of **100** miles per year. However, SCDOT has already awarded contracts in this category totaling **187** miles of safety improvements.

The Pavement Resurfacing Program is the second of the four programs that have exceeded expectations. The 10-Year goal has four targets:

- Interstate Highways – 92% Good after 10 years. 70% are rated Good in Year #1.
- Major Roads – 53% Good after 10 years. 27% are rated Good in Year #1.
- Farm to Market Roads – 40% Good after 10 years. 20% Good in Year #1
- Neighborhood Streets – 25% Good after 10 years. 16% rated Good in Year #1.

The overall goal of the Pavement Program is to improve the quality of SC's roads by up to 3% per year. SCDOT has awarded contracts totaling 2200 miles over the past year alone which is more than a doubling of the paving program. The 10-year plan calls for essentially another doubling of the paving program as the gas tax increase is fully phased-in. Based on the annual pavement assessment, SCDOT has achieved up to a **5%** pavement improvement in Year #1.

The 10-Year Plan Bridge Program calls for a dramatic increase in funding for replacing Load-Restricted and Structurally Deficient bridges on SC's major corridors. Three years ago (2015) the funding level for this target was \$80 million. The new Bridge Program provides \$150-180 million annually to begin to address the state's critical bridge needs of the 2016 baseline of 750 structurally deficient bridges statewide.

- The 10-year target for this Program is the replacement of 465 bridges.
- In Year #1, **51** bridges are under construction.
- This Program is on schedule.

The fourth major program in the 10-Year Plan is the Interstate Widening program. The Plan designates a minimum of \$5 billion investment in this category over the course of 10 years. Hall reported that \$1 billion in projects is already underway on the I-85 corridor and within the next 12-18 months another \$1 billion + in the Midlands with the start of the Malfunction Junction project. Following those projects will be the improvements on existing I -526 in the Lowcountry.

- The specifics for the 10-Year Plan include improving 140 miles of interstates over the decade.
- Already in Year #1, **70 miles** are under contract.

Hall also reviewed the emergency responses that challenged SCDOT shortly after the Roads Bill became law on July 1, 2017: Hurricane Irma, a coastal snow storm, a train derailment, a truck collision that destroyed a bridge on I-26 and the emergency repairs to the Wando Bridge in the Lowcountry.

Secretary Hall credits the SCDOT staff for minimizing the impact these challenges had on the 10-Year Plan schedules. "I am very proud of the SCDOT Team. We have an experienced staff that is more than capable of reacting to emergency situations while still keeping our long-term task of fixing our roads and bridges on schedule," said Hall. The public is invited to review SCDOT's webpage for information about the 10-year plan, Infrastructure Maintenance Trust Fund, and to view an interactive Project Viewer map to see what projects are planned and underway in your community.

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