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INTERSTATE 73

Commission set to reveal northern leg
Preferred route to be shown July 19

By Zane Wilson - The Sun News

The preferred route for Interstate 73 north of I-95 will be revealed at a July 19 meeting of the Department of Transportation Commission in Bennettsville.

I-73 is planned to run from Horry County to Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. The preferred route for the southern leg, between I-95 near Latta and S.C. 22 near Aynor, was announced a little over a year ago.

The northern section of South Carolina's portion of the road will join I-74 just east of Hamlet, N.C. The DOT is working with the N.C. DOT on the 30-mile section of road.

The DOT Commission will meet at 1:30 p.m. at the Marlboro Civic Center, 106 Clyde St.

"We expect to have a large crowd, and we're rolling out the red carpet for the commission and staff," said state Rep. Doug Jennings, D-Bennettsville.

Jennings chairs the North Eastern Strategic Alliance's I-73 Committee and has been a supporter of the road since it was designated by Congress in 1991.

Jennings said the announcement of the preferred route for the road is an exciting step in the process, though there are some who disagree with the route because they do not want their land taken for the highway or their way of life changed by it.

A public meeting on the northern leg of the road will be held later in Bennettsville.

The date and time will be announced at the DOT Commission's meeting.

At the public meeting, detailed maps will be available for people to view and planners will be available to answer questions.

Information provided by residents could result in minor changes to the preferred interstate route.

The southern leg is close to receiving its federal permit. The remaining hitch is an agreement to cross a heritage preserve at the Little Pee Dee River.