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## DOT SEEKS INPUT FROM AREA BLACKS ON I-73 PROJECT Zane Wilson The Sun News

CONWAY About 20 people came to an information session on Interstate 73 Monday night at Cherry Hill Missionary Baptist Church, but they had few questions about the project.

I-73 is planned to connect Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., and Myrtle Beach, traveling through Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina. Planning for its route in South Carolina is under way.

The meeting at Cherry Hill was the third in the past week at black churches in the area set up by planners to expand participation in the process.

“Participation by black folk in the study area has been slim to none,” said Joe Grant, a consultant to the state Department of Transportation.

That is why the DOT wanted to try reaching further for comment from residents, even though they will not be directly affected by the road, Grant said.

A man asked why a southern route for the interstate to connect with Waccamaw Neck is not being considered.

Road planner Skip Johnson said a more southern route would make the road too long and add costs. It would also cause more environmental damage that would raise permit difficulties, he said.

Gwen Sarvis asked how far the interstate will be from U.S. 701.

Johnson showed her on a map the new road would be miles away, most likely connecting with S.C. 22 west of Conway.

Sarvis said after the meeting that she came to find out if the road would affect her property, which is on U.S. 701 south of Conway.

She said she was satisfied with what she heard but will keep track of the project “because that's not written in stone.”

Sarvis said she favors the interstate because Horry County needs more highways so more visitors will come.

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