

More money for I-73

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The local business community and politicians were in Washington, D.C. Monday to convey the importance of I-73 to the Grand Strand and the Pee Dee.

Faces like that of Myrtle Beach Mayor John Rhodes were there, but it's the new faces in Washington that had everyone talking. For the first time in 20 years, the National Corridor Association was actively represented. In the past, it was basically South Carolina making a solo pitch for I-73. But now, all six states that would be along the route are all making the pitch to national folks that I-73 should be a top federal priority.

The bottom line for the group from South Carolina was millions of dollars. The last transportation bill that passed in 2005 contained \$81 million for I-73.

The folks were hoping that, by being in front of the line, they could receive up to \$250 million when the transportation bill is re-authorized in 2009. Of course, when that happens, a new president will be in the White House.

Senator Lindsey Graham insists it's mainly a result of all of the hard work that folks in South Carolina have done to push this along. Graham said these meetings, organized by the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, are some of the best organized that he's seen here on the Hill.