

New Ridgeline Trail to link N.C., S.C. state parks
April 16, 2007

Tryon Daily Bulletin

One of the final hurdles has been cleared on the path to an interstate linking the Roanoke, Virginia area to the Greensboro, N.C. area.

The Federal Highway Administration gave the Virginia Department of Transportation the authority to begin designing Interstate 73, a \$4 billion, 70-mile highway between Virginia's Roanoke Valley and the Piedmont Triad.

Groups of residents and business leaders in both states have been working toward the highway's construction for more than a decade, hoping to economically revitalize areas devastated by the downturn of the American textile industry.

"I began to think we would never get it through in our lifetime," said Bill Goldston, a former N.C. Senator. "If you think about the three counties that connect Greensboro to Roanoke, it's Henry County, Franklin County and Rockingham County. Those are all counties that were heavy into textile, and that market had disappeared."

A part of I-73/I-74 already has been completed south of Greensboro, and construction is under way on a section north of the city of Rockingham.