

## **North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., Construction Notes**

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### **Regional Leaders Launch Chesapeake Crescent Initiative**

Washington, D.C. – Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, Virginia Governor Tim Kaine, Washington, D.C., Mayor Adrian Fenty and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer joined together at the U.S. Capitol to launch the Chesapeake Crescent Initiative, a unique partnership designed to increase the region's global competitiveness. The initiative, which is considered the first of its kind in the nation, is focused on integrating the valuable resources of the region, addressing environmental challenges, harnessing intellectual and entrepreneurial assets, and creating effective transportation options.

Governor Kaine noted, "In the 21st century economy, we know that regions, not artificial political boundaries, compete for talent and capital."

Added Mayor Fenty, "To build a truly globally competitive region, we have to think across jurisdictional lines when it comes to building a more green and sustainable economy, driving innovation and investment and making our transportation network more efficient and effective."

### **State Auditor Finds DOT Miles Away From Goals**

Raleigh, N.C. – State Auditor Leslie Merritt released a performance audit on the Department of Transportation (DOT) that identified significant cost overruns which were due to construction delays, inflation and departures from original project plans. In addition, auditors found that DOT was deficient in key management controls and was not meeting accountability requirements.

"DOT is a multi-billion dollar state agency that appears to operate on hunches and intuition rather than hard data analysis," said Merritt. "As a result, taxpayers paid \$152.4 million in unnecessary construction costs."

OSA audited all 390 highway projects completed between April 2004 and March 2007. Auditors found that 73 percent missed the targeted construction year with 40 percent of projects missing the mark by more than a full year. As a direct result, taxpayers paid an extra \$152.4 million in inflation-related construction costs. After concluding the extensive review, auditors believe that DOT lacks a fundamental understanding of how to organize data and analyze a project's problems to make improvements.

Auditors found that when DOT measures an individual project's results, it compares those results to the revised schedule or budget and not the original baseline. Auditors contend that this method distorts the project's true picture and wastes an opportunity for meaningful systemic improvements.

"It's reasonable to expect that with any large construction project there will be 'bumps in the road'," said State Auditor Leslie Merritt. "But taxpayers expect DOT to learn from their past projects, not simply blur the numbers to make every project appear more on target," Merritt concluded.

### **Federal Approval Granted For Interstate 73 South Project Route**

Myrtle Beach, S.C. – Leaders from the SCDOT and the USDOT gathered in Myrtle Beach last week to announce approval of the Record of Decision and the request for public-private partnership proposals for the Interstate 73 South Project. The Record of Decision (ROD) completes the environmental review process for the I-73 South project. The ROD, approved by FHWA, locks in the selected alternative and the preliminary design of the new interstate.

FHWA approval of the ROD also allows SCDOT to move forward and expend federal transportation dollars to acquire the necessary rights-of-way for I-73. South Carolina Secretary of Transportation H.B. "Buck" Limehouse Jr. said the SCDOT will be putting out a request for proposals (RFP) for public/private partnership to facilitate financing of the I-73 project.

SCDOT will also need to secure the necessary permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies before construction could begin. The Southern I-73 Project is from I-95 in Dillon County through Marion County to SC 22 (Veterans Highway) in Horry County. The Northern I-73 Project extends from I-95 in Dillon County to US 74 in Richmond County, N.C., a distance of approximately 35 miles.

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was approved on July 29, 2007, and work on the Final EIS is underway. It is anticipated to be completed by late spring 2008 with the Record of Decision to come early this summer. For more information in the I-73 project, visit [www.i73insc.com](http://www.i73insc.com).

### **I-95/Telegraph Road Interchange Work Begins This Spring**

Alexandria, Va. – The Commonwealth Transportation Board has awarded a \$236.4-million contract to rebuild the I-95 interchange at Telegraph Road, the final major contract of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project. Construction will begin this spring and take five years to complete. Building an improved Telegraph Road Interchange is the final component of the overall \$2.52-billion Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project. During construction the Telegraph Road Interchange project will be closely coordinated with several additional mega-projects in Northern Virginia, including the building of high-occupancy-toll lanes on I-95 and I-495 and widening I-95.

Overall, the contract will build eleven ramps and bridges, five box culvert extensions, drainage improvements, retaining walls, noise walls, pedestrian paths, traffic systems, lighting, signage, landscaping and an environmental mitigation project at the Cameron Run Wetlands. Business and utility relocations as well as ground strengthening work were completed in advance of the interchange reconstruction. Corman-Kiewit Constructors, a joint venture of Corman Construction and Kiewit Corporation is the contractor.