The role of the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) is to provide the infrastructure for economic growth in our state by planning, designing, building and maintaining the state’s highway system, and coordinating mass transit systems all around the state. The goal is to provide the means in which people, goods and services can efficiently and safely travel so as to enhance the overall quality of life in South Carolina. Significant points in this goal include good stewardship of the taxpayers’ money and maintaining and preserving the state’s resources and environment.

SCDOT is responsible for operating and maintaining 41,500 miles of roads and bridges, which ranks as the fourth largest state-owned highway system in the nation according to the Federal Highway Administration. The Palmetto state is home for five interstate highways; I-95, I-85, I-20, I-26 and I-77, all of which account for over 800 miles of the state highway system.

SCDOT is one of the largest state agencies in South Carolina and has a staff of approximately 5,000 men and women who work in all of the state’s 46 counties and the central headquarters located in Columbia. The Governor appoints the Secretary of Transportation who serves as the Chief Administrative Officer. A seven member Commission sets policy for the Department.

SCDOT has been on the cutting edge of innovative financing for highway needs. The key to the success in funding highway projects can be summed up in one word, “partnerships.” The recent increase in the number of local sales taxes for transportation, the creation of the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank, and the expansion of regional and metropolitan planning organizations, the importance of partnering has grown. SCDOT has committed itself to making partnerships work to benefit the people of South Carolina.

SCDOT has been recognized for efficiency, innovative financing and for the quality of our highway facilities. The Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge that crosses the Cooper River and Town Creek to connect the city of Charleston and the town of Mount Pleasant is the longest cable-stay bridge in North America. The 5635 million bridge opened in the summer of 2005 on budget, and one year ahead of schedule. This structure features the signature diamond towers that are visible all around the Charleston area. The bridge has won numerous international and national awards for its design which includes architecture, lighting, bicycle & pedestrian facilities and seismic protection.

SCDOT has been fortunate to have received honors in the areas of work zone safety, quality management in construction and maintenance, ecosystem preservation, innovations in outdoor advertising, highway beautification, recycling of highway materials and excellence in financial reporting among other awards.

FHWA is charged with the broad responsibility of ensuring that the nation’s roads and highways continue to be the safest and most technologically up-to-date. Although state, local, and tribal governments own most of the Nation’s highways, FHWA provides financial and technical support to them for constructing, improving, and preserving the highway system. Technical support is provided through the Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center (TFHRC), a federally owned and operated research facility in McLean, Virginia. TFHRC is the home of FHWA’s Office of Research, Development, and Technology. Their Vital Few priorities are focus areas that show the biggest performance gaps in the transportation system and present opportunities for FHWA to make the greatest difference. These focus areas include safety; congestion mitigation; and environmental stewardship and streamlining.

Safety on highways is FHWA’s top priority. FHWA has been studying new opportunities and developing new technologies for saving lives. FHWA is aggressively advancing the activities and projects already known to prevent crashes and reduce fatalities and serious injuries when crashes happen. In addition, FHWA conducts safety research, technology, and outreach projects that contribute to multiple objectives. These include speed management to encourage wider adoption of safe travel speeds appropriate for road and travel conditions; safety management to ensure that resources are allocated to achieve the maximum returns in reducing the severity and frequency of crashes; human-centered systems to incorporate human factors into all aspects of highway design; work zone safety improvements; and a variety of safety outreach efforts.

Congestion mitigation is among their top priorities. Demand for highway travel continues to grow as population increases. FHWA is working with regional partners to address all aspects of congestion, including two of the most prevalent causes of traffic congestion; work zones and traffic incidents. FHWA is providing substantial assistance to State and local transportation agencies as they develop projects to increase capacity and remove bottlenecks.

FHWA is committed to protecting and preserving the environment through stewardship and timely reviews. In recent years, FHWA and their partners have made substantial contributions to the environment and to communities; through planning and programs that support wetland banking, habitat restoration, historic preservation, air quality improvements, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, context-sensitive solutions, wildlife crossings, public and tribal government involvement, among many more.
ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

MCEER

MCEER is a national center of excellence dedicated to the discovery and development of new knowledge, tools and technologies that equip communities to become more disaster resilient in the face of earthquakes and other extreme events. MCEER accomplishes this through a system of multidisciplinary, multi-hazard research, education and outreach initiatives.

Headquartered at the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, MCEER was originally established by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 1986, as the first National Center for Earthquake Engineering Research (NCEER). In 1998, it became known as the Multidisciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research (MCEER), from which the current name, MCEER, evolved.

Comprising a consortium of researchers and industry partners from numerous disciplines and institutions throughout the United States, MCEER’s mission has expanded from its original focus on earthquake engineering to one which addresses the technical and socio-economic impacts of a variety of hazards, both natural and man-made, on critical infrastructure, facilities, and society.

Funded principally by NSF, the Research Foundation of the State of New York, and the Federal Highway Administration, the Center derives additional support from the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency, other state governments, academic institutions, foreign governments and private industry.

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD (TRB)

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) is a division of the National Research Council, which serves as an independent advisor to the federal government and others on scientific and technical questions of national importance. The National Research Council is jointly administered by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine. The mission of the Transportation Research Board—one of six major divisions of the National Research Council—is to promote innovation and progress in transportation through research. In an objective and interdisciplinary setting, the Board facilitates the sharing of information on transportation practice and policy by researchers and practitioners; stimulates research and offers research management services that promote technical excellence; provides expert advice on transportation policy and programs; and disseminates research results broadly and encourages their implementation.

TRB fulfills this mission through the work of its standing committees and task forces addressing all modes and aspects of transportation; publication and dissemination of reports and peer-reviewed technical papers on research findings; management of cooperative research and other research programs; conduct of special studies on transportation policy issues at the request of the U.S. Congress and government agencies; operation of an on-line computerized file of transportation research information; and the hosting of an annual meeting that typically attracts 9,000 transportation professionals from throughout the United States and abroad.

TRB’s varied activities annually draw on more than 10,000 engineers, scientists, and other transportation researchers and practitioners from the public and private sectors and academia, all of whom contribute their expertise in the public interest by participating on TRB committees, panels, and task forces. The program is supported by state transportation departments, the various administrations of the U.S. Department of Transportation and other federal agencies, industry associations, and other organizations and individuals interested in the development of transportation.
The conference organizers thank the following professional organizations and industry associations who have provided valuable assistance by promoting the conference to their memberships. While these organizations did not provide direct financial contributions, their efforts in making announcements, spreading information and supporting the goals of the conference organizers have helped make the conference a success.