



Making

progress

Crews gather near the Issaqueena Trail exit on U.S. Highway 123 in Clemson to begin roadwork.

SAVANNAH BLAKE | THE JOURNAL

Officials give update on Oconee, Pickens road paving projects

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

COLUMBIA — Road paving projects in Oconee and Pickens counties have been a common sight in recent months because of the state gas tax bill approved more than two years ago. Oconee County has seen

more than half of its repaving projects completed, with nearly 63 miles finished at a cost of more than \$6 million. Total construction is nearly \$12.5 million, and in the area of rural road safety, nearly \$307,000 has been spent completing almost 25 percent of nearly 54 rural road miles.

The South Carolina Department of Transportation lists West South 4th Street, 0.95 miles; 0.45 miles on Daniel Avenue, 1.11 miles on Wells Highway, including the installation of new guardrails along with repaving; and 0.58 miles on East South 2nd Street as projects completed last spring.

Construction projects that began in late summer include U.S. Highway 123 in Westminster; S.C. Highway 59 south of Seneca; U.S. Highway 123 near the Seneca River Crossing and S.C. Highway 182 in Oakway. Pickens County has seen

SEE PROJECTS, PAGE A5

PHILL SIZE BENT NAME PAID TO PRIOR BID BALANCE HEIGHT FLOOR INCH

Completed on November 18, 2016 at 10:00 AM
Ending on November 18, 2016
Beginning on November 18, 2016
Job title: PAVING
RED ROCKS TO TAKE OFF (15' x 7')

more than 63 of the 73 miles set for paving work completed, at a cost of more than \$4.7 million. Among the projects completed were a 1.13-mile stretch of Tiger Boulevard, between U.S. Highway 123 and the Oconee County line, in late July.

Other projects still in the works include Old Greenville Highway on S.C. Highway 93, set to begin in December, and involving full-depth patching; Jones Mill Road, 1.72 miles between Old Seneca Road and Walhalla Highway; U.S. Highway 123 between Old Greenville Highway and Ruhamah Road, 8 miles, involving resurfacing and safety upgrades including a new guard-rail; and S.C. Highway 93, Greenville Highway, 4 miles from Alta Vista Drive to Amsterdam Road.

In 2017, the state legislature approved a roads bill and the transportation department was tasked with preparing a 10-year strategic plan to rebuild the state's roads and bridges. The roads bill provided a sustained incremental increase of 2 cents per year for a six-year period and SCDOT spokesman Pete Poore said the 10-year plan provided a guide as to how the department

would steadily improve the highway system with an emphasis on repairing roads.

"The first six years will permit the contractors time to ramp up for the volume of work that is coming in the way of workers and equipment,"

Poore said. "In addition to rebuilding and repaving roads, the target includes preserving and maintaining good roads and replacing a significant number of deficient bridges, improving 1,000 miles of the 'worst of the worst' rural roads where the highest number of fatalities occur and improving the state's interstate system."

'For three decades that began in 1987, the state department of transportation had one of the lowest fuel taxes in the United States. The result of this more than 30 years of highway funding policy is poor pavement conditions and more than \$40 billion in backlogged paving needs across the state.'

Pete Poore

South Carolina Department of Transportation spokesman

Poore said South Carolina maintains the fourth-largest state-owned highway system in the nation, with 41,000 miles — twice the number maintained by neighboring Georgia.

"For three decades that began in 1987, the state department of transportation had one of the lowest fuel taxes in the United States," Poore said. "The result of this more than 30 years of highway funding policy is poor pavement conditions and more than \$40 billion in backlogged paving needs across the state."

To see the road paving priority list, visit scdot.org/inside/new-gastax-trustfund.aspx.