Feaster named Director of Rights of Way

By Bob Kudelka

Kenneth C. Feaster, a 25-year SCDOT veteran who began his career as a field agent in the Rights of Way Office, has been named Director of the Rights of Way division.

Feaster succeeds Oscar Rucker, who retired earlier this year after 33 years with the Department.

A Saluda County native, Feaster supervises approximately 100 employees in a division charged with securing property needed for South Carolina's efficient transportation network of roads and bridges and provides utilities and railroad coordination.

"I strongly believe that you try and lead by example," Feaster said. "I recognize I have a very capable staff that I rely on. They are the experts in the individual fields. I feel fortunate to have come up through the ranks because I've gained much experience, which I'm able to use in making decisions now.

"I think the Rights of Way office has been fortunate to have had good leadership in the past and I certainly want to continue to build upon that."

Feaster joined SCDOT in 1985 as a Rights of Way agent in Engineering District 2, which included Greenwood, Laurens, Newberry, Saluda, Edgefield, and McCormick counties. Later these counties were combined with the counties of Engineering District 3 to form the Upstate right of way region.

In 1998, he moved to SCDOT Headquarters as the on-call ROW coordinator, managing consultants and conducting quality control duties. Two years later, he became CRM Eastern Region program manager overseeing ROW in the Midlands and Pee Dee areas.

In 2001, Feaster was promoted to Field ROW Administrator.

In March of this year, Feaster was named Director of ROW.

Feaster describes his division as being on the front lines with the public, or "where the rubber meets the road."

"We have to go out and acquire the properties before we can build the first stretch of highway," Feaster said. " We have to research courthouse records to determine ownership; be familiar with road plans to explain plans to the landowner; meet the landowner; coordinate appraisal work; negotiate rights of way offers and settlements; and handle closing of property."

The majority of ROW work involves acquiring strips of property, which sometimes involves improvements to the land. The most difficult tasks, he said, are the times when land or housing is needed and owners have strong emotional ties.

"It can be delicate," Feaster said. "We understand right of way acquisition can be quite traumatic for some landowners depending upon the extent of impact on individual properties. Usually, if you're able to sit down and explain the public benefit of the project and engineering design requirements to the landowner and further explain federal and state guidelines, which provide fair and equitable treatment for all landowners an amicable settlement can be reached. "

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Ken Feaster will supervise the SCDOT division that secures property necessary for South Carolina's highway system.

Kenneth C Feaster

Residence: Saluda County
Education: B.S in Business Administration, USC
Education: Saluda High School (1978), Piedmont Technical College – Associate Degree with an Emphasis on Construction Management (1981)
Hobbies: operating a small beef cattle farm, woodworking, camping with family and friends
Family: Wife, Angela R. Feaster; children, Emily and Anna
Clubs, memberships, etc: Deacon at Richland Springs Baptist Church, Children and Youth Ministries, Adult Sunday School Teacher

SCDOT Enhancement Program includes widening shoulders for bicyclists

SC Bicycle Tour Routes scheduled for resurfacing could be considered for wider paved shoulders

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) has updated the Enhancement Program to allow the improvement of bicycle facilities on some roads by increasing the paved shoulder widths from two feet to four feet.

Consideration will be given to pave four-foot shoulders on highways that are designated South Carolina Bicycle Tour Routes when those roads are scheduled for resurfacing. The Enhancement Program would provide up to $1.5 million annually to fund the paving of the extra two feet.

The SC Bicycle Tour Routes are roads that have been identified as scenic routes and/or places of historical interest that could be enjoyed by cyclists and pedestrians. South Carolina has six Bicycle Tour Routes that crisscross the state.

Transportation Secretary H. B. Limehouse Jr. said using the agency's Enhancement Program contributes to the overall Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Program. "The Statewide program is designed to enhance alternative transportation by expanding bicycle and pedestrian facilities wherever we can across the state. These low-cost improvements will make cycling on our state highways a little more safe and add to the quality of life in South Carolina. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities provide more opportunities for our citizens to improve their health through exercise. Alternative transportation improves the environment by reducing the ozone levels in the air," Limehouse said.

More information about the SC Bicycle Tour Routes and their locations is available at this web site:
http://www.sctrails.net/trails/ALLTRAILS/Bikeguide/biking.html