

## **Work begins on Backgate Interchange this week**

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COLUMBIA, SC –The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and Horry County will begin work this week on the Backgate Interchange at US 17 Bypass and SC 707/Farrow Parkway.

Minimum traffic interruptions will be experienced at the Backgate area in Myrtle Beach beginning Tuesday, as crews begin mobilizing equipment for clearing and grubbing of 13.6 acres. That work will be completed in February 2010. Also, utility clearance and construction will begin this week with completion in late summer or early fall 2010. The remainder of the project will be let out for bids in fall 2010.

Existing utilities, such as electrical transmission and distribution, natural gas and communications will relocate into the cleared area east of US 17 Bypass, between Temperance Drive and Emory Road. GBS Construction will perform the clearing and grubbing with other contractors on site for various utility relations.

“The beginning of this clearing project,” said Mike Barbee, SCDOT Program Manager, “is a visible and tangible representation of the efforts between Horry County, the city of Myrtle Beach and SCDOT staff, during the design and permitting of this project.”

One business will be relocated, which is Jerry Dan the Gutter Man, during this phase. SCDOT is currently negotiating with the property owners, Jerry and Brenda Vickery.

The Backgate project is part of the One-Cent Capital Projects Sales Tax. “Having equipment and personnel on-site provides the public with the assurances that their penny is at work to bring much needed improvements to this location,” said Steve Gosnell, Horry County Director of Infrastructure and Regulation.

The purpose of the project is to improve traffic flow, increase intersection capacity, and improve safety at the intersection of US 17 Bypass and SC 707/Farrow Parkway. The project will construct a signal point diamond interchange to replace the existing at-grade intersection. US 17 Bypass will be bridged over SC707/Farrow Parkway and will operate without interruption of signalization at this location. SC 707/Farrow Parkway will be signal controlled.

In November 2006, Horry County voters supported a One-Cent Capital Projects Sales Tax for roadways. There were 15 road projects to be funded from the One-Cent Capital Projects Sales Tax. The Interchange of U.S. Route 17 at S.C. Route 707/Farrow Parkway ranked third.

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