

GEORGIA MILEPOST

Winter - Spring 2008

Georgia DOT's Historical Quest: Finding USS Water Witch

Plus:

*Georgia DOT Honored
for Contributions*

The logo consists of the letters 'Q' and 'A' in a large, white, serif font. A blue ampersand (&) is positioned between the two letters, partially overlapping them.

with
Commissioner
Abraham

GEORGIA MILEPOST

SPRING 2008

Contents



- 2 Commissioner's Corner
- 3 Welcoming HERO Graduates
- 3 New Cable Barriers in Georgia
- 4 GPTQ Conference
- 4 Wayne Shackelford Interchange
- 5 Q & A Interview with Commissioner Abraham
- 7 14th Street Bridge Project to Undergo Facelift
- 8 Employees Honored for State Charitable Contributions
- 9 Finding USS Water Witch
- 11 New Members Elected to State Transportation Board
- 12 Exploring Georgia's Scenic Byways
- 13 Making Headlines

On the cover: Georgia DOT collaborates with the Department of Natural Resources to search the Vernon River near Savannah for the Water Witch, a sunken vessel lost 150 years ago.

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Commissioner's Column

It is my pleasure to offer you my first Milepost column as your Commissioner!

I relish the opportunity to share with the “good news” about GDOT and the dedicated employees who are committed to performing quality work across our state. From our Highway Emergency Response Operators (featured in this issue) to our engineers, our employees are responding to the needs of our traveling public and committing every day to a more efficient operation.



As you will see in this issue of Milepost, we are increasing the number of our certified HEROs; improving safety on our highways with the installation of cable barriers; resurfacing more than 4.7 miles of the Connector while also replacing the 14th Street Bridge; and demonstrating our stewardship as part of a collaborative project with the Department of Natural Resources to locate a 150-year-old sunken vessel near Savannah.

In addition to these projects, we have been busy with other important work. We have reorganized divisions and offices and enhanced processes and procedures throughout the Department, all as part of our plan to make systemic improvements to the way we do business.

We also have begun what is arguably one of our most important tasks – the creation of a major project prioritization plan. We are taking a hard look at all 9,000 road and infrastructure projects on our books and prioritizing which ones should move forward. A transportation funding shortfall that has presented serious challenges for our state requires that we maximize our resources and choose projects based on true engineering principles and which offer us the most bang for our buck. That plan – with the prioritized list of projects – will be completed by September.

As we move forward, I will continue to share with you the “good news” of how you – our employees – are building a better GDOT through hard work, efficiency and excellent customer service. We will continue to take what has worked for many of you in the past, combine it with what we know today, and create what I believe will be the best transportation department in the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gena L. Abraham".

Gena L. Abraham

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Commissioner Welcomes New HERO Graduates

By Carla Murphy

Commissioner Gena Abraham welcomed 22 newly-certified Highway Emergency Response Operators to the Georgia DOT during the 2007 HERO Graduation Ceremony, praising them for their commitment to ensuring the safety of the traveling public and for their role in relieving congestion along the state's busy highways.

"I have an enormous appreciation for the work you do, and I just want to thank you for serving as our first responders to people who call on you every day," said Commissioner Abraham, noting that HEROs have been called to do everything from change flat tires to assist in delivering newborns. "You are the face of the Georgia DOT that the public sees and meets, and you consistently do an outstanding job in representing us."

In addition to awarding graduation certificates, Georgia DOT leadership used the ceremony to honor employees for their exemplary work throughout the year.

HEROs were recognized in the areas of



Director of Operations, Steve Henry (right) presents Marcus Bennett a Road Warrior Award for his exemplary work.

leadership, maintenance and safety. "We have an extraordinary group of employees who put their lives on the line every day in doing their jobs," says Director of Operations Steve Henry. "In addition to earning these awards, they have earned the respect of the public which has come to rely on them on our highways. We are extremely proud of the work they do."

Award Recipients Most Assists

Ramon Cantres
Bennie Conley
Thomas Davis
Randy Smith

Road Warrior Award

Marcus Bennett

Leadership Award

Girard White

Appreciation Award

Margaret Johnson

Honorary HERO

Marvin Woodward

2007 HERO Graduates

John Anderson
Michael Basemore
Antonio Belcher
Odell Bryant
Patrick Dudley
Eric Harris
Johnny Harris
Robert Hay
Bert Hutchinson
Corey Jackson
Steven Jones
Chris Middleton
Aubrey Mitchell
Elnora Redd
Perseil Tranium
Harold Tucker
Fernodor Walker
Robert Willis
Rebecca Wyatt

New Cable Barriers in Georgia

Cross-median crashes pose a significant hazard for motorists in Georgia and throughout the country. In a continual effort to provide the safest roadways, the Georgia Department of Transportation has begun installing cable barriers at selected state roadways this year.

Commissioner Gena Abraham announced that \$26 million has been awarded for cable barriers and bridge replacements throughout Georgia. "These projects continue the Georgia DOT's mission to maintain a safe

driving environment on our roads," said Commissioner Abraham. "The cable barriers in particular should help prevent accidents where vehicles might leave their side of the road, cross the median and strike oncoming traffic."

Two contracts were awarded to Nationwide Fence & Supply Company, of Chesterfield, Michigan totaling \$6.1 million for construction of cable barriers on I-985 in Hall County and GA 400 in Gwinnett County.

The completion date for cable barrier

installation along both routes is fall 2008.

Georgia DOT maintains 18,000 state highways and interstates miles or 15.5 percent of the 116,000 miles of public roads in Georgia. These state highways and interstates carry 63 percent of the total vehicle miles travelled statewide. Thanks to the dedication of Georgia DOT employees, Georgia's highways have consistently been rated among the nation's best maintained highways.

GPTQ '07: Focus on Innovation and Quality

By Lillian Jackson

Each winter, the 15 member agencies and associations of the Georgia Partnership for Transportation (GPTQ) host the GPTQ Workshop on the campus of the University of Georgia. With the goal of ensuring a quality transportation infrastructure for the traveling public, the annual Workshop agenda is developed to meet the challenges of Georgia DOT's consultants, contractors and other partners.

This year's Workshop provided 700 attendees two days of learning and networking opportunities, including 30 sessions that presented current and future tools and techniques; case studies of innovative, "out of the box" solutions; and summaries of new and updated federal and state guidelines and specifications.

Guided by the theme "Innovation and Quality = On-Time Project Delivery," Workshop attendees were reminded that the GPTQ is a year-round initiative guided by several

teams that constantly explore ways to streamline and improve the way the Department and its partners work to cooperatively achieve on-time, quality project delivery. These teams presented their respective reports on this year's achievements and goals for the coming year.

The Awards Ceremony at this year's Workshop provided deserved recognition for several outstanding design and construction projects and a select few that were exemplary for their work zone safety practices and procedures. The Ceremony also included presentations of the 2007 NPHQ Achievement Award for the 5th Street Bridge Pedestrian Bridge Project and the QBS Georgia Achievement Award and ACEC National Grand QBS Award to the Georgia DOT Office of Program Delivery and Consultant Design.



State Transportation Board member Raybon Anderson (left) presents award to E.R. Snell Contractor, Inc. for overall excellence in Work Zone Safety.

A sample of the topics presented at GPTQ 2007 include: PDP Changes and Constructability Review; NEPA 101 for Engineers and Construction Contractors; Managed Lanes in Georgia; and Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule Update/Section 150 Specifications Changes. To view some of the presentations and more information, please visit www.gptq.com or Georgia DOT's Web site at www.dot.ga.gov.

State Transportation Board Honors Wayne Shackelford

By Carla Murphy

The State Transportation Board recently urged state legislators to honor former Georgia DOT Commissioner Wayne Shackelford by naming the Interstate 85 and Georgia Highway 316 Interchange in Gwinnett County the "Wayne Shackelford Interchange."

The Board made the request as they recognized the former commissioner with a resolution at the State Board meeting this fall.

Mr. Shackelford, who led the Department from 1991 to 2000, told the Board, "I am humbled and over-



Former Georgia DOT Commissioner Wayne Shackelford, his wife Anna, and State Transportation Board member Dana Lemon.

whelmed by the recognition." He also praised Georgia DOT's partnership with local communities that make

projects such as the I-85/Georgia 316 interchange possible.

The Board lauded Mr. Shackelford's exemplary leadership as Commissioner and for serving as the catalyst for Georgia DOT's implementation of an Intelligent Transportation System prior to the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. Additionally, board members praised his leadership of the Southeastern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (SASHTO) and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

Q&A

with Commissioner Abraham

By Carla Murphy

Gena L. Abraham assumed the leadership of the Georgia Department of Transportation in December, becoming the first woman to hold the state's top transportation post. As Commissioner, she oversees 5,800 employees statewide and an annual budget of over \$2 billion.

In her first interview for the Milepost, Commissioner Abraham responded to a series of questions about priorities for the Department and the areas on which she plans to focus as the new Commissioner.

Q: If you were to give a report on your first 60 days as Commissioner, what would be the top three or four items that have either challenged you most or pleased you most?

A: The item that has challenged me most is funding, funding and funding. I've also found that our Department is challenged by a lack of process and procedure checks and balances in some areas, which compromises accountability.

The positive things are the Department's great staff, the tremendous dedication of our employees, and a great Transportation Board.

Q: You have identified several areas — three in particular — on which we will focus as a Department. What can employees and our stakeholders expect immediately in terms of improvement in those three areas? We can take them one at a time: improving project delivery; working toward a statewide transportation plan with our partners and exploring opportunities for alternative financing.

A: To improve project delivery, I foresee a new Project Management Group to manage projects from start to end and a focus on new contracts for improved accountability. Work on the SWTP will mean increased cooperation and co-optation with our transportation partners. Exploring and securing

opportunities for alternative financing will require us to think outside the box.



Q: We also understand that customer service — internal and external — will be an area of focus. What specific initiatives do you foresee and what do you hope to achieve in this area?

A: Customer service is one of my priority areas, and I've already directed that responses to calls and emails will be made in one day, and that we all work to go the extra mile to answer questions. In addition, our Web site now includes a "How's My Service?" option so that our customers can evaluate employee responsiveness and knowledge. And to address the concerns of two of our key customers, we'll establish new processes to pay our contractors and consultants promptly. What I hope to achieve is a culture where responsiveness, initiative and helpfulness are a priority... and I want us to win the state's Best Agency customer service award in the very near future!

Q: We know that this is a critical time for Georgia DOT — with congestion in metro Atlanta and the funding shortfall for road construction and maintenance. Where do you begin to tackle those challenges?

A: The reality is that there are many more transportation needs in Georgia than our funding will cover. Given



Commissioner Abraham and Susanne Sitherwood served as panelists for the Airport Area Chamber of Commerce "Women Take Charge" luncheon.



Airport Area Chamber of Commerce President Bob Wilson; 2007 Chamber President Shelley Lamar; President of Atlanta Gas Light, Florida City Gas and Chattanooga Gas Suzanne Sitherwood; and Commissioner Gena Abraham participate in the "Women Taking Charge" luncheon at the Georgia International Convention Center.

the tremendous growth of the state, traffic congestion is inevitable, even as we encourage the use of modes other than SOV commutes. The Governor's visionary Fast Forward program addressed congestion from a holistic perspective, but we are still challenged by delayed travel times during peak hours. We will take one bite at a time — both the funding and congestion issues are the big elephants for us. We will take small steps and work on small successes.

Q: Since assuming your position, you've often mentioned the high caliber of our employees. As we move forward with new leadership, is there a message you want to share with employees about your vision, expectations and management style?

A: I want Georgia DOT to be the best in the country, more streamlined, more efficient, better able to achieve its core objectives. To achieve that, I expect everyone to work hard and give a full eight hours of work for a full eight hours' pay. As we go through this transitional phase together, we may need to tweak some of the policies and procedures that impact your daily work. I ask that you think outside the box with me as we transform into a more efficient agency. I value each employee as a resource of information to help me make improvements. I'll never ask you to do something that I wouldn't do myself. My management style is pretty straight-forward: I analyze information and scenarios and say what I think should happen. Between your experience and mine, we should be able to achieve our goals while maintaining total accountability, ethical behavior, and outstanding customer service.

Q: With so many "irons in the transportation pot," how do you foresee Georgia DOT positioned in the future of transportation in the state?

A: I see the Department at the forefront, leading the way for much-needed transportation reform.

Q: Is there anything that I did not ask you about that you would like to share with our employees, retirees, and stakeholders?

A: The most important thing that I focus on is "doing the right thing." It's sometimes the most difficult part, but it's what we should do. I will be honest, transparent and tell you exactly what is going on in the Department.

Favorite book: *Good to Great* by Jim Collins

Greatest accomplishment thus far: Being a parent.

Best advice you ever received from your parents: Never stop trying and go after what you want regardless of the obstacles.

Favorite way to spend a Saturday: At the lake, working on the lake house or skiing and wakeboarding with my family.

Pet peeve: People chomping on ice or smacking while they eat.

14th Street Bridge and Connector Undergo Facelift

By Melany Reynolds

The Midtown community soon will have the Georgia Department of Transportation to thank for design improvements and congestion relief when the 14th Street Bridge is rebuilt and two exit ramps are added to the Connector.

For motorists who work in Midtown, where some of Atlanta's largest employers are located, 14th Street is a major thoroughfare. Motorists began witnessing changes in their commute when three lanes on Williams Street were reduced last fall.

"We are diligently working on this project and making great progress," said Metro Atlanta District Construction Engineer Mickey McGee. "It is very important for the traveling public to use commute alternatives now to help avoid delays."

The planned improvements consist of replacing the 14th Street Bridge over Interstate 75/85 and installing exit ramps from the Connector southbound to 10th Street and northbound to 17th Street. In addition to congestion relief at the 14th Street interchange, the



Georgia DOT reminded motorists of road closures and detours related to the construction projects in the Downtown Connector corridor, including the replacement of the 14th Street Bridge (above).

modifications will result in improved motorist and pedestrian safety.

According to McGee, "This work will have a huge impact on the public. In a perfect world, reducing the number of cars that come into the area by 30 percent would be ideal. A 10 percent reduction will be absolutely necessary to avoid complete gridlock."

To accommodate the utility work currently underway, traffic on the downtown Connector was paced and shifted. Techwood Drive has been closed to traffic from 10th Street to 16th Street. The roadway will reopen by summer 2009. Another noteworthy event taking place has been the closing of the 14th Street Bridge. The project is scheduled to be completed in May 2010.

The Department also awarded the contract to complete the Downtown Connector resurface project. Crews began resurfacing 4.72 miles between University Avenue and the Brookwood Interchange this spring. All travel lanes both northbound and southbound will be resurfaced.

Additionally, lanes in the area between Courtland Street and 10th Street will receive a measure of deep milling. This work is taking place during nights and weekends and will wrap up in late fall.

Meanwhile, the Department's Communications Office has developed a comprehensive campaign to give motorists ample notification and information related to the project.

Continued on page 8



The 14th Street Bridge reconstruction will improve motorist and pedestrian safety.

14th Street Improvement Project

Project Scope

- Project will consist of replacing the 14th Street Bridge over Interstate 75/85.
- Bridge improvements to include two new exit ramps from the Connector southbound to 10th Street and northbound to 17th Street to relieve congestion on exit ramps.

Georgia DOT Employees Honored for State Charitable Contributions

Georgia DOT coordinators for the State Charitable Contributions Program (SCCP) accepted the State Personnel Board Commissioner's Award – the second highest honor given to state agencies – for their participation in the program. Georgia DOT employees contributed more than \$173,200 to charities in the 2007-2008 campaign.

Georgia DOT coordinators accepted the Commissioner's Award at a luncheon featuring Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle and State Personnel Administration Commissioner Steve Stevenson. They were praised for their participation, particularly their coordination of contributions in support of hundreds of Georgia charities. Georgia DOT and Georgia State University shared runner-up honors in the category for agencies with 1001 to 9000 employees. Georgia Institute of Technology employees received the

Governor's Cup – the highest award – in the same category of “highest contribution per employee.”

The State Charitable Contributions Program offers state employees an opportunity to give annually to thousands of Georgia families and more than 1,200 non-profit organizations.

Other SCCP coordinators (not pictured) are: Carrie Hart, Gloria Curtis, Renee Mays, Nanette Morgan, Kathryn Grace, Anita Henson, Angela Taylor, Wanda Collier, Chantay Nettles, Elizabeth Ann Willis, Darlene Williams-Lynah, Linda Capaccio, Julie Kenneweg, Tracy Winsky, Judith Malone, Hester Sturrock, Cindy Christian, Patricia Perry, Carol Jacobs, Helene Nickey, Kim Coley, Ana Ammons, Jacquelyn Walker, Brandi Martin, Lew Walker, Barbara Thomas, Elaine Cooper, Brenda Howard, Glenda Stephens, Damon Carr, Debra Hill and Floyd Smith.



Georgia DOT General Office employees serving as 2007-2008 SCCP coordinators pictured with DOT Commissioner Gena Abraham are from the left: Jennifer Harris-Dunham, Care Whitmore, Carolyn Patterson, Don LaFrenier, Sheila Allen, Glenda Campbell, Nancy Bolen, Donna Shaw, Linda Shivers, Virginia Bond, Brendalyn Ellis, Commissioner Abraham, Bruce Brumalow, Amelia Craig, Albert Smith, Denise Spence, Vivian Hood, Sheila Smith, Sharon Loper, Patricia Johnson, Sonya Isom and Gwendolyn Dudley.

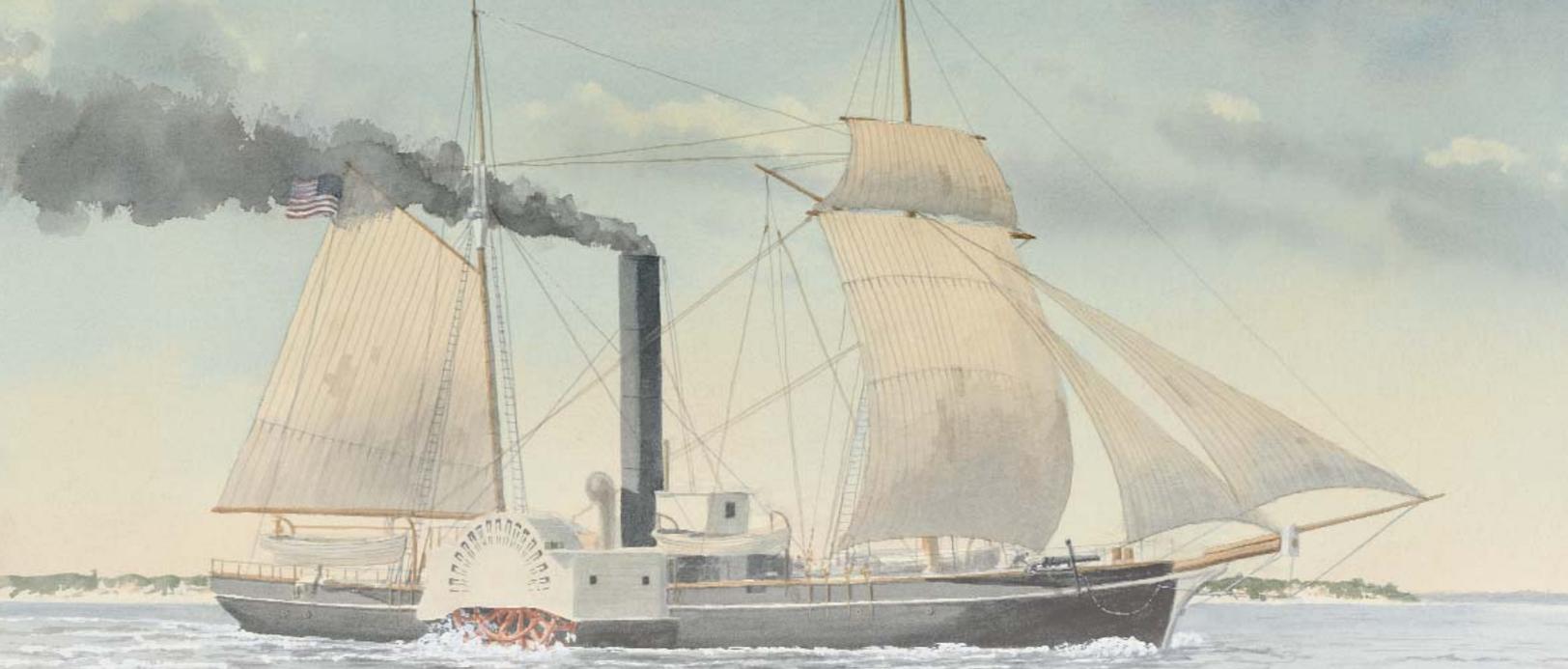
14th Street Bridge - Continued

Karlene Barron, Communications Administrator said, “We have covered the gamut with our communications efforts in order to reach a broad audience. We have a commitment to employees and the motoring public to get the word out so that we can promote safety among workers and motorists and reduce frustration.”

According to Barron, the information is being disseminated through various media, including radio, television, print and interactive advertising. Information on the Georgia DOT Web site also is updated regularly.

With the move of the Department's general and additional offices to One Georgia Center this spring and summer, Georgia DOT employees have been directly affected by this work. Workers who have moved to the new office space have easy access to the nearby North Avenue MARTA Station, while others may consider carpooling, vanpooling or perhaps biking to work.

Additional resources are available to motorists to help efficiently plan their commutes. The Georgia NaviGator Web site posts real time construction, lane closures and traffic incident information statewide; and motorists may register to receive updates via email or PDA for free. Travelers also may utilize the 511 phone service to get traffic information 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Finding USS Water Witch

By Crystal Paulk-Buchanan

A survey mission in South America, a Civil War naval battle and a Georgia Department of Transportation bridge construction project may not initially seem to have very much in common. Recently, these historic and modern events converged with the discovery of a sunken vessel lost for nearly 150 years in the muddy depths of the Vernon River near Savannah.

In 2007, Georgia DOT was alerted to the possibility that a planned project in Chatham County was in the vicinity of one of the more storied ship wrecks amid thousands of military and civilian boats to have vanished off the waterways and coast of Georgia.

Built in 1851 by the U.S. Navy, the Water Witch was part of an extended exploration along the Atlantic Coast of the southern portion of South America, including rivers in Paraguay, Argentina, and Uruguay. When the Civil War began in 1860, she served in the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, and was primarily stationed in Ossabaw Sound — about 15 miles due south of Savannah.

On the night of June 3, 1864 the Water Witch, with a crew of 65, was captured by a boat force of 120 members of the Confederate Navy who had been guided to the vessel by African American pilot Moses Dallas. Although the Confederate force was successful, their victory came with a critical loss of nine men including Dallas. Without the pilot's expert knowledge the ship ran aground as it began maneuvering up the Vernon River towards Vernonburg. Six months later, with General William Sherman approaching from the west, the unit commander ordered the ship to be stripped of all salvageable equipment, burned and abandoned in the Vernon River.

Georgia DOT archaeologist Jim Pomfret said he was immediately fascinated by the ship's rich history and felt that the Department's participation in the search fit perfectly in its environmental stewardship philosophy. Pomfret is lead archaeologist for the project in Savannah that will tie SR 204/ Abercorn Street to a new loca-

tion on Whitfield Avenue on the east side of Savannah. The Harry S. Truman Parkway will run two miles and includes parallel bridges over the Wilshire Canal, Vernon River and associated marsh. The expected cost is \$86 million and the first phase should be let in summer 2008.

“Career wise this definitely ranks at the top for me. From day one this project was surrounded by an air of excitement,” Pomfret said. “Although historical documents indicated that the ship was likely outside the project corridor, we received permission to add a couple of extra miles to the underwater survey to see if we could find the ship and our guess paid off.”



Harry Pecorelli reviews sonar detection.

In late October 2007, Pomfret joined a team of archaeologists and historians that included Georgia DOT historian Chad Carlson, Georgia DNR's David Crass and Chris McCabe, underwater survey contractor Gordon Watts with divers Harry Pecorelli and Steve Howard, hoping to locate the Water Witch. Using a combination of high tech equipment, radar, and low tech, an aluminum probe, the team discovered a debris field buried beneath nearly 20 feet of sticky black mud. When Pecorelli thrust the probe into the muck he struck iron and then wood — strong signs that they had found the missing ship. Also, they compared the site coordinates to a survey map completed after the Civil War in 1865 that matches the location of the Water Witch to the debris field.

“In all of my years in archaeology this is the first time I've actually seen X mark the spot,” said Watts, who has



Tidewater Atlantic Research surveys the Vernon River.

been an underwater archaeologist for more than 20 years and participated in recovery dives on the Civil War era CSS Alabama off the coast of France.

Carlson, who filmed the search and is producing an educational film about the find, echoed the team's excitement. “I would say that it is the kind of project that I would have dreamed about participating in grad school,” he said. “I was lucky enough that this project happened to fall into my lap — since we (Georgia DOT) have four other histori-

mentary on the discovery. Civil War history and documentary films are my passion.”

The search for the Water Witch developed into a unique Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Georgia DOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Georgia DNR and the Civil War Naval Museum in Columbus. The MOU provides a structure for the agencies and museum to work together and outlines a strategy for scientific research as well as public education.

Georgia DNR state archaeologist David Crass said he believes the project can serve as a model for interagency cooperation. Establishing the framework (the MOU), keeping open lines of communication, and working constructively and jointly with the media as appropriate are three very strong keystones to the success so far in this project.”

Crass stressed that pinpointing the location of the wreck is only the first step in a long process. For one thing, the wreck is buried under more than 15 feet of mud in a stretch of water where the tide can rise and fall more than 25 feet in the morning and afternoon.

While this factor has likely protected any artifacts from deterioration by the elements or discovery by looters, it poses a significant challenge to archaeologists hoping to excavate the site. He said he will meet with officials at the Georgia DOT and the Federal Highway Administration to discuss the



Divers search the murky Vernon River for a vessel sunk during the Civil War.

potential for a Transportation Enhancement Award or other possible grants to fund further investigation and interpretation.

“The bottom line in all of this is that Georgia DOT and DNR have a great working relationship within the regulatory framework of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act,” he said. “What we are trying to do here from my perspective is leverage that relationship which already exists and use it to support a Civil War research and education effort that will directly benefit multiple audiences in Georgia, from heritage tourists to local schools. The Water Witch project has enormous potential. I'm very confident based on the relationship that we have developed an ongoing partnership that would vastly increase the odds of realizing that potential.”

Any artifacts raised from the vessel will likely be housed at the Civil War Naval Museum, which coincidentally is planning to build a full scale replica of the 160 foot long wooden hulled, side wheel steamer to be located in the front of the museum and visible from Victory Drive.

The museum currently houses the only known artifacts salvaged from the Water Witch before it was burned — the ship's original bell and one of its flags.



New Members Elected to State Transportation Board

By Jeff Armstrong



Steve Farrow



Johnny Floyd



Emory McClinton



Raybon Anderson



Dana Lemon

Three State Transportation Board members were re-elected and two received their first appointment to the Board by a caucus of state representatives and senators from their respective districts.

Representative **Johnny Floyd** of Crisp County was elected to the State Transportation Board from the 2nd Congressional District. Representative Floyd replaces Board member W.P. “Billy” Langdale of Valdosta, who decided not to seek re-election after 20 years of service.

A native of Cordele, Mr. Floyd had served on the Georgia House of Representatives since 1989 and was Vice Chairman of the House Transportation Committee. He also was a member of the Appropriations, Banks & Banking and Motor Vehicles committees. Mr. Floyd retired from the Legislature after the 2008 session and began serving a full five-year term on the Board in April.

Attorney **Steve Farrow** was elected to the State Transportation Board of Georgia by a caucus of state representatives and senators from the 9th Congressional District. Mr. Farrow replaces former Board member Mike Evans of Cumming, who resigned in April.

Mr. Farrow, a Dalton native, served two terms in the State Senate as a

Democrat. He served as Chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee, Vice Chairman of the Senate Finance and Public Utilities Committee and Vice Chairman of the Senate Higher Education Committee. He also served as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate Public Safety Committee.

Emory McClinton of Fulton County was re-elected to serve a fourth five-year term on the State Transportation Board from the 5th Congressional District.

Mr. McClinton was first elected to the board in 1993. He served as Chairman from April 2001 to April 2002 and as Vice Chairman from April 2000 to April 2001.

In thanking the 5th District legislators, McClinton said the Board will work to mitigate traffic congestion and promised “a year of progress.” He promoted a Multi-Modal Transit Center in downtown Atlanta that will “bring a new level of economic development.”

Mr. McClinton serves on the Board’s Equal Access, Intermodal and Georgia DOT Overview committees. He also represents the Board on the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Additionally, **Raybon Anderson** of Statesboro was re-elected to a five-year term on the State Transportation Board from the 12th Congressional District.

He serves on the State Transpor-

tation Board’s Consultant Services, Equal Access, Highway Contractors, Intermodal and Legislative committees.

Mr. Anderson thanked the 12th District legislators, saying, “We have lots of work to do and I’ll do my best; I pledge to move transportation forward.”

Dana Lemon of Clayton County was re-elected to the State Transportation Board from the 13th Congressional District. This is the second term on the Board for Ms. Lemon, who was first elected in 2003.

Ms. Lemon serves on the Board’s Consultant Services, Equal Access, Finance, Intermodal and Public-Private Initiatives committees. She has been instrumental in the prioritization of major projects within her district and is an advocate of alternative transportation modes in Georgia.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is governed by the State Transportation Board. Its 13 members, representing each of the state’s Congressional Districts, exercise general control and supervision of the Department. Each member serves a five-year term and the terms are staggered. Board members are elected by the state representatives and senators whose state districts fall within the Congressional District.

Exploring Georgia's Scenic Byways

By Laurie Scott

Interstate-185 and Warren County-Piedmont Scenic Byway Extension are the latest Scenic Byways approved by the State Transportation Board.

Interstate-185 qualified for the Scenic Byway designation due to its scenic qualities. Board member Sam Wellborn of Columbus, representing Congressional District 3, presented the resolution to the Board. "This took the efforts of many people such as the Keep Columbus Beautiful Commission to make this happen; I appreciate the hard work and support for getting this resolution passed," Wellborn said.



Northern view of the I-185 Scenic Byway

The I-185 Scenic Byway is a 39-mile route that begins at Interstate 85 in Troup County and passes through Harris County and northern Muscogee County. It ends at Ft. Benning, near Columbus, Georgia.

The purpose of the I-185 Scenic Byway designation is to protect the existing scenic qualities of the route and to provide information about the rich, cultural and natural attractions in the vicinity of I-185. The byway designation also ensures that billboards will not be allowed along the route.

The overpass highway bridges that are varied by architecture and the miles of mixed pine and hardwood forests are among the attractions of the I-185 Scenic Byway.

Beyond the designated route of the I-185 Scenic Byway is a rich network



Callaway Gardens is located 6.5 miles from the I-185 Scenic Byway.

of scenic roads, natural areas, cultural and historic sites. Callaway Gardens (6.5 miles from the byway) is a 14,000-acre woodland and display garden, resort, and preserve attracting thousands of visitors annually from around the world.

The 23-mile Pine Mountain Trail in Franklin Delano Roosevelt State Park (9 miles from the scenic byway) is a scenic hike which winds through a mix of hardwoods, pines and waterfalls.

The Warren-County Piedmont Scenic Byway Extension is a 15-mile route that begins at the Hancock County line at Jewell and continues east on State Route 16 to the City of Warrenton. The byway passes through a wildlife management area, farmland, rivers, and historic properties. It serves as a continuation of the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway (located in Putnam and Hancock counties).



Scenic view along SR 16 at the Warren-Hancock County line.

Board member Raybon Anderson of Statesboro, representing Congressional District 12, presented the resolution to the Board. "I am pleased that my district is able to do its part in preserving the natural beauty of Georgia," he said.

The route was once part of the old Native American Okfuskee Trail, which connected what is now Augusta with the Mississippi River.

The Warren-County Piedmont Scenic Byway has been featured twice on the Tour de Georgia bicycle race route. Visitors have many choices for recreation such as cycling, golfing, boating, fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, and equine activities.



Historic church along State Route 16 in downtown Warrenton

A Georgia Scenic Byway is defined as any designated highway, street, road or route that possesses qualities that are natural, scenic, recreational, cultural, historic or archaeological.

The benefits of the designation include increased tourism; placement of the byway on state maps and travel magazines; and access to state, federal and private funding sources for projects. To obtain the designation, a local sponsor must complete a multi-stage process that includes identifying the route; submitting an application that develops a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) and receiving approval of the State Transportation Board. For more information on Scenic Byways, please visit www.byways.org.

Making HEADLINES

Clark Named Chief Operating Officer

Kevin Clark was appointed by Commissioner Gena Abraham to serve the Department in a newly-created position as Chief Operating Officer, effective March 3, 2008. For the past six months, Clark served as Interim State Property Officer and was responsible for leading the Georgia Business Authority and State Properties Commission. Prior to that position, Clark was appointed by Governor Perdue to serve as Executive Director of the Lake Lanier Islands Development Authority.

In 1988, Clark joined the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC) as a project manager for the Construction Division. After ten years of service, he returned to the private sector to pursue other opportunities.



In 2003, as former Director of GSFIC's Construction Division, Dr. Abraham named Clark Director of Special Projects for GSFIC's Construction Division, and subsequently, he served as Deputy Director. Throughout Clark's career, he has contributed to and participated in the success of the construction of some of the largest projects in the State of Georgia. These projects include the Georgia Dome, Philips Arena, and Centennial Olympic Park.

Clark received his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Asheville, and later pursued a law degree from the John Marshall Law School in Atlanta while working at GSFIC. He also received his Juris Doctorate and is an active member of the State Bar of Georgia.

Chance Appointed Special Advisor to Commissioner

JoAnn T. Chance was appointed by Commissioner Gena Abraham to serve as Special Advisor to the Commissioner, effective March 1, 2008. For the past five years, Chance served as Chief Financial Officer at the Georgia Building Authority and State Property Commission, with the last two of those years under the direction of Commissioner Abraham. Prior to that position, Chance helped establish the Department of Motor Vehicle Services and then served as the Director of the Administration Division. Chance also has served as Director of Finance at the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism (currently the Department of Economic



Development); and as Director of Finance and Administration at the Department of Corrections.

Additionally, Chance has served in various finance and budget capacities at the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and at the Department of Human Resources during her 30-plus years with the State of Georgia.

As Special Advisor to the Commissioner, Chance will concentrate on budgetary and financial systems, procedures and issues. Chance received her Bachelor's degree from Georgia State University. She lives in Gwinnett County and has one grown son.

Davis Named Division Director for Office of Communications

By Carla Murphy



Veteran state employee Ericka Davis has been named Division Director for the Office of Communications. She is the former Communications Director for three state agencies: the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission, the Georgia Building Authority and the State Properties Commission.

Davis brings to the Georgia DOT 15 years of experience in state government, including a stint as Director of Public Affairs for the Georgia Department of Juvenile

Justice. She also worked in Child Protective Services for the Department of Family and Children Services.

Davis is a graduate of the University of Georgia, where she earned a Bachelor's of Arts degree in English. Additionally, she holds a Master's degree in Technical Communication from Southern Polytechnic State University. In 2003, Davis was selected for the 2003 Class of the Regional Leadership Institute by the Atlanta Regional Commission. In 2004, she won the National Association of Government Communicator's Award of Excellence for Writing.

Thomas Named Division Director of Office of Planning, Data and Intermodal Development

By Carla Murphy



Michael L. Thomas has been appointed Division Director for the Georgia Department of Transportation's Office of Planning, Data and Intermodal Development, where he manages the statewide transportation planning process and the collection and sharing of transportation data, including vehicle volumes and the state route network.

Additionally, his office is responsible for researching,

developing and implementing transit, port, freight and passenger rail opportunities.

With more than 24 years of experience with the Georgia DOT, Thomas has held various positions with the Department. Prior to being named Division Director, he served as District Engineer for District Two for 10 years, overseeing transportation activities in Eastern Middle Georgia.

Thomas attended Middle Georgia College and is a graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Collins Leads District Two Office in Tennille

By Cissy McNure



Anthony "Tony" Collins has been tapped to lead the Georgia DOT District Two Office. Collins serves as the District Engineer for the Office in Tennille, replacing Mike Thomas.

Collins began his career with the Department in June of 1983 as a co-op student in the Waycross Area Office. After graduating from Southern Tech

with a degree in Civil Engineering Technology, he worked in Road Design in Georgia DOT's Atlanta General Office and has held various engineering positions with the Department. The most recent was District Preconstruction Engineer/Assistant District Engineer in Jesup.

As District Two District Engineer, Collins is responsible for planning, organizing and directing the activities at the local level. The Tennille District employs 600 people and serves 28 counties.



14th Street Bridge Improvement Project

This Spring, the 14th Street Bridge was closed to traffic in late May. The bridge will be replaced and will reopen in the summer of 2010. Meanwhile, motorists are encouraged to use alternate routes when traveling in the Midtown area.