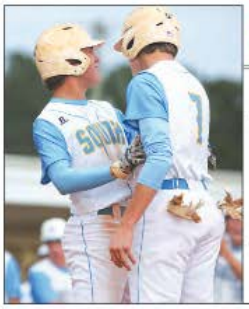

SPORTS South Florence, West Florence to clash on diamond. **Page 1B**

Morning News
TUESDAY MARCH 21, 2017

TODAY'S WEATHER
Partly sunny and warmer. High 86, low 53.
DETAILS 2A

www.scnow.com The Voice of the Pee Dee 75 cents

Study: SC roads cost Florence drivers $1,283 every year

LOCAL REPORTS
03/21/2017

S.C. Department of Transportation/FILE
A section in the I-95 Northbound right lane at the Great pee Dee River bridge is closed for repairs in January, 2015. The bridge is set for further closures as DOT crews work to repair the deck

FLORENCE, SC – Roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack some desirable safety features cost South Carolina motorists a total of $5.4 billion statewide annually - $1,283 per driver in the Florence urban area - due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays.

Increased investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels could relieve traffic congestion, improve road, bridge and transit conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in South Carolina, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

Location	VOC	Safety	Congestion	TOTAL
Charleston	$452	$351	$1,047	$1,850
Columbia	$449	$316	$951	$1,716
Florence	$472	$539	$272	$1,283
GSA Metro	$492	$378	$509	$1,379
Myrtle Beach	$527	$508	$754	$1,789
South Carolina	**$1.8 Billion**	**$1.8 Billion**	**$1.8 Billion**	**$5.4 Billion**

A look at the costs to drivers associated with South Carolina's roads.

The TRIP report, "South Carolina Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility," finds that throughout South Carolina, two-thirds of major, locally and state-maintained urban roads are in poor or mediocre condition, ten percent of locally and state-maintained bridges are structurally deficient and the state has the highest rate of fatal traffic crashes in the nation. The state's major urban roads are becoming increasingly congested, with vehicle travel in South Carolina increasing 10 percent in the last three years.

Driving on Florence area roads costs the average driver $1,283 per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the costs of traffic crashes in which roadway features likely were a contributing factor. The TRIP report calculates the cost to motorists of insufficient roads in the Charleston, Columbia, Florence, Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson and Myrtle Beach urban areas. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in each area along with a statewide total is below.

The TRIP report finds that 53 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in the Florence urban area are in poor or mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional $472 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

Location	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good
Charleston	17%	26%	33%	25%
Columbia	13%	40%	27%	20%
Florence	15%	38%	27%	21%
GSA Metro	17%	40%	21%	22%
Myrtle Beach	23%	37%	6%	34%

A look at the pavement conditions of the state roads.

"South Carolina has so much going for it today," said Michael Miller, president of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce. "It would be a shame to imperil our bright future by not acting on a solution for our dangerous and crumbling roads. Our legislators know we have a grave problem. It's beyond time to be responsible

and agree on a sensible plan to resolve our aging infrastructure. It has already cost our businesses too much productivity and many of our citizens their lives."

The South Carolina Department of Transportation currently spends $415 million annually on road and highway pavement repairs and reconstruction. This represents less than half (46 percent) of the $900 million needed annually to significantly improve the state's major roads and highways.

"This is the year to finish the job on roads. The business community has long known the cost of losing when it comes to efforts to invest in our roads and bridges," said Ted Pitts, president of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce. "We will continue working with members of the General Assembly to give the people of South Carolina what they want and deserve: a long-term investment in our infrastructure, which is a long-term investment in our future."

Traffic congestion in the Florence area is worsening, causing 11 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costing the average driver $272 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

Location	Bridges	Deficient	Deficient
Charleston	492	33	7%
Columbia	584	78	13%
Florence	275	3	1%
GSA Metro	1,699	144	8%
Myrtle Beach	448	23	5%

A look at the condition of the state's bridges

Ten percent of South Carolina's bridges are structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. In the Florence urban area, one percent of bridges are structurally deficient.

Traffic crashes in South Carolina claimed the lives of 4,406 people between 2012 and 2016. South Carolina's overall traffic fatality rate of 1.89 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel is the highest in the nation and significantly higher than the national average of 1.13. South Carolina's rural roads have a traffic fatality rate that is nearly four times higher than on all other roads in the state (3.82 fatalities per 100 million VMT vs. 1.03). In the Florence urban area, on average, 31 people were killed in traffic crashes in each of the last three years.

Location	Average Fatalities	Cost Per Driver
Charleston	86	$351
Columbia	90	$316
Florence	31	$539
GSA Metro	154	$378
Myrtle Beach	65	$508

A look at South Carolina highway fatalities and the cost to drivers.

The efficiency and condition of South Carolina's transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Annually, $333 billion in goods are shipped to and from sites in South Carolina, mostly by truck. Seventy-six percent of the goods shipped annually to and from sites in South Carolina are carried by trucks and another 14 percent are carried by courier services or multiple mode deliveries, which include trucking.

Location	Hours Lost	Congestion Cost
Charleston	41	$1,047
Columbia	38	$951
Florence	11	$272
GSA Metro	20	$509
Myrtle Beach	30	$754

A look at the annual cost to residents of traffic congestion on SC roads.

"These conditions are only going to get worse, increasing the additional costs to motorists, if greater investment is not made available at the state and local levels of government," said Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director. "Without adequate funding, South Carolina's transportation system will become increasingly deteriorated and congested, hampering economic growth, safety and quality of life."

The cost of state roads by the numbers

An inadequate transportation system costs South Carolina motorists a total of $5.4 billion every year in the form of additional vehicle operating costs (VOC), congestion-related delays and traffic crashes.

- Driving on rough roads costs South Carolina motorists a total of $1.8 billion annually in extra vehicle operating costs. Costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.
- Traffic crashes in which roadway design was likely a contributing factor costs South Carolina motorists a total of $1.8 billion each year in the form of lost household and workplace productivity, insurance and other financial costs.
- Traffic congestion costs South Carolina motorists a total of $1.8 billion each year in the form of lost time and wasted fuel.
- The rate of population and economic growth in South Carolina has resulted in increased demands on the state's major roads and highways, leading to increased wear and tear on the transportation system.

South Carolina's population reached approximately 5 million residents in 2016, a 24 increase since 2000 and

the tenth largest increase in the nation during that time. South Carolina had approximately 3.7 million licensed drivers in 2015.

- Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in South Carolina increased by 19 percent from 2000 to 2016 –from 45.5 billion VMT in 2000 to 54 billion VMT in 2016.
- Vehicle travel in South Carolina has increased 10 percent just in the last three years (2013-2016), the ninth largest increase during that time.
- From 2000 to 2015, South Carolina's gross domestic product, a measure of the state's economic output, increased by 21 percent, when adjusted for inflation. U.S. GDP increased 27 percent during this time.
- By 2030, vehicle travel in South Carolina is projected to increase by another 20 percent.

A lack of adequate state and local funding has resulted in two-thirds of major urban roads and highways in South Carolina having pavement surfaces in poor or mediocre condition, providing a rough ride and costing motorists in the form of additional vehicle operating costs. SCDOT estimates that it has less than half of the funding needed to improve the state's major roads and highways.

- The pavement data in this report, which is for all arterial and collector roads and highways, is provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), based on data submitted annually by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) on the condition of major state and locally maintained roads and highways.
- Pavement data for Interstate highways and other principal arterials is collected for all system mileage, whereas pavement data for minor arterial and all collector roads and highways is based on sampling portions of roadways as prescribed by FHWA to ensure that the data collected is adequate to provide an accurate assessment of pavement conditions on these roads and highways.
- Twenty-nine percent of South Carolina's major locally and state-maintained urban roads and highways have pavements in poor condition, while 35 percent are rated in mediocre condition. Nineteen percent of major urban roads are in fair condition and the remaining 17 percent are rated in good condition.
- Overall, 16 percent of South Carolina's major locally and state-maintained roads and highways have pavements in poor condition, while 29 percent are in mediocre condition. Twenty-four percent of the state's major roads are rated in fair condition and the remaining 32 percent are rated in good condition.
- SCDOT reports that the pavements on 54 percent of state-maintained roads and highways are in need of reconstruction.
- Currently SCDOT spends $415 million annually on road and highway pavement repairs and reconstruction, less than half (46 percent) of the $900 million that is needed annually to significantly improve the condition of the state's major roads and highways.

Roads rated in mediocre to poor condition may show signs of deterioration, including rutting, cracks and potholes. In some cases, these roads can be resurfaced, but often are too deteriorated and must be reconstructed.

- Driving on rough roads costs South Carolina motorists a total of $1.8 billion annually in extra vehicle operating costs. Costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

Ten percent of locally and state-maintained bridges in South Carolina show significant deterioration. This includes all bridges that are 20 feet or more in length.

- Ten percent of South Carolina's bridges are structurally deficient. A bridge is structurally deficient if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Structurally deficient bridges are often posted for lower weight or closed to traffic, restricting or redirecting large vehicles, including commercial trucks and emergency services vehicles.

The fatality rate on South Carolina's roads is the highest in the nation. Improving safety features on South Carolina's roads and highways would likely result in a decrease in the state's traffic fatalities and serious crashes. It is estimated that roadway features are likely a contributing factor in approximately one-third of all fatal and serious traffic crashes.

- South Carolina's overall traffic fatality rate of 1.89 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2015 is significantly higher than the national average of 1.13 and the highest fatality rate in the nation.
- A total of 4,406 people were killed in South Carolina traffic crashes from 2012 to 2016, an average of 881 fatalities per year.
- The fatality rate on South Carolina's non-interstate rural roads in 2015 was nearly four times greater than on all other roads in the state (3.82 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel vs. 1.03).