

MEMBER ALERT

SCDOT Posting H-10 Bridges

With the increased unmanufactured forest products (UFP) trucking tolerance to 15% allowing 84,272 pounds GVW, SCTPA has shared its concerns with SCDOT regarding bridge maintenance and is working to assist in addressing the agency's concerns.

SCDOT forwarded a statewide directive that certain bridges (Class H-10) located on rural and state roads would be posted immediately to 8 tons per axle and 33 tons GVW. After SCTPA received word that SCDOT was going to begin posting state and rural road H-10 bridges back to these limits, SCTPA president and board member Joe Young, former SCDOT commissioner, notified SCDOT for clarification.

After the new UFP tolerance became effective, SCDOT did a structural analysis to determine the operating loading of H-10 bridges. Since the mid-1980's, SCDOT has allowed these bridges to carry the previous 80,608 pounds GVW. However, due to bridge deficiencies and deterioration over time, these bridges will have to be posted back to 8 tons per axle and 33 tons GVW.

After SCTPA's president had discussions with Jim Feda, it appears the postings will be conducted in phases. The first two groups are those bridges that are structurally deficient and have decking and piling problems. Feda indicated the third group will be re-evaluated and possibly the postings for this group may be held off for a period of time.

Initially there was the thought that SCDOT had miscalculated the new 15% UFP tolerance. However after further discussions with Jim Feda, that was not the case.

With the vast number of proposed bridge postings statewide, UFP and regular trucking commerce will be impacted. While SCTPA and the industry recognized additional bridges would be posted due to the increased tolerance and the structural deficiencies of our state's bridges, this great of an impact was not expected.

SCTPA is continuing ongoing discussions with SCDOT to hopefully be able to reduce the number of bridge postings. SCTPA president Crad Jaynes expressed his concern to Jim Feda during their conversations that such immediate postings will impact on-going and future timber harvesting operations. Crad requested there be some type of working relationship with SCDOT regarding jobs in progress as well as jobs to be started soon that may be impacted by such sudden bridge posting actions. Jim indicated he had forwarded SCTPA's contact information to all the districts that if there were problems to contact the SCTPA office. If there are problems, let SCTPA know and efforts will be initiated with SCDOT to hopefully help resolve the problem.

A meeting was held September 23rd with DOT's Jim Feda, Director of Maintenance, and other staff members. Discussions went well and resulted in what may be a compromise solution. Participating in the meeting were: Crad Jaynes, SCTPA, Bob Scott, SCFA; Bernie Deason, Smurfit Stone, Chair, SCFA Transportation Committee; Rick Todd, SC Trucking Association; and Jim Griffin, SC Farm Bureau.

Here's the agreement with SCDOT. In instances where a timber sale or harvest tract is affected by a posted bridge, logger, landowner, or wood buyer should notify the District Engineer providing the tract, road and bridge information. If the bridge can be repaired at reasonable cost, SCDOT will repair the bridge prior to when logging begins so that trucks can be loaded to the legal 15% GVW tolerance weight limit of 84,272 pounds. The

decision to repair the bridge will be made on a case-by-case basis and predicated on cost to repair, time required to repair, and other factors.

SCTPA feels the compromise with SCDOT is reasonable. SCTPA has received the list of SCDOT District Engineers that will be contacts.

SCTPA requested SCDOT's Jim Feda provide information regarding the H-10 bridge postings to share with members.

A list of the Group One and Group Two H-10 Bridge Postings is available from SCTPA.

Be advised to check your haul routes to identify new bridge postings and recheck your routes regularly in the event the posting occurs while your job is in progress.