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Lake Harbour project to start

Seven years on the drawing board now over

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Officials, including (from left) 3rd District U.S. Rep. Gregg Harper, Central District Transportation Commissioner Dick Hall and Ridgeland Mayor Gene McGee, break ground Tuesday on the new Lake Harbour widening project during a ceremony by the Trace Ride Baptist Church in Ridgeland. / Rick Guy/The Clarion-Ledger

Written by **Terricha Bradley-Phillips**

RIDGELAND — Motorists need to heed to the orange barrels that will soon pop up on Lake Harbour Drive.

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After seven years of planning and waiting on funds, the city of Ridgeland is finally starting the widening project meant to ease congestion and improve access points.

Eutaw Construction Inc. Engineering will immediately begin construction. Waggoner Engineering Inc. completed the design.

A few dozen city and county officials, legislators and contractors gathered at Trace Ridge Baptist Church for the groundbreaking Tuesday morning.

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"I am excited that after many years of planning that the Lake Harbour widening has started," said Mayor Gene McGee. "This will prove to be one of the most important road construction projects in the metropolitan area, because of the tremendous amount of traffic it carries. Our citizens will benefit greatly because of this project."

Lake Harbour is being widened to five lanes from Northpark Drive to U.S. 51. The new roadway will be similar to the portion of Lake Harbour east of Northpark.

The new road will have a center turn lane, landscaping, multi-use trail, new traffic signals and new water lines. And, another left turn lane will be added to each side of Pear Orchard Road at the intersection.

According to the 2003 Ridgeland Transportation Plan, Lake Harbour Drive has been in desperate need of improvements as a critical east-west corridor.

Construction will last 609 calendar days (about 20 months). The first parts are the placement of traffic control devices and erosion control measures. The clearing of right of way will begin followed by installation of new storm drains and water lines.

Project manager Andrew Conner said traffic will shift to the south side of Lake Harbour while trees are being cleared. Once the lanes on the south side are finished, traffic will shift to the north side.

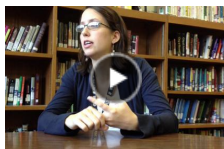
Traffic signals will be disrupted at times during construction, so the city is asking residents and motorists to be patient during the construction period and be mindful of the safety of workers.

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