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South Carolina's Christy Hall Takes Big Road Fix and DOT by Storm



Hall won kudos and an expected permanent role as South Carolina DOT chief for managing its response to epic flooding.

PHOTO COURTESY SCDOT

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[Debra K. Rubin](#) and [Jim Parsons](#)

The “1,000-year” flood that wreaked havoc on South Carolina infrastructure last October took many residents and politicians by surprise, but Christy A. Hall spent a career getting ready for it. Her two decades of experience managing structures and budgets at the state Dept. of Transportation were widely credited for the agency’s rapid response to storm impacts that closed more than 540 roads and bridges across the state, including 13 miles of I-95, a key artery.

Hall and the agency already have a big mission, managing the fifth largest state road network in the country—about 41,000 road miles in a state of only 30,000 square miles.

But within 10 days, Hall—whose talents had elevated her to interim SCDOT chief several months before, when a political appointee suddenly resigned—directed the agency’s 4,500-person staff to cut closures by nearly 60% and map out a comprehensive repair operation.



“Early on, I knew we had to treat this differently than other storm events,” says Hall. “I understood the field issues because I spent a lot of time there.” The civil engineering-trained executive won kudos from many stakeholders for efficient contract awards and management, straightforward explanations to politicians and wide use of social media. “Message, message, message” is her mantra, she says.



Hall and SCDOT “did a lot of preplanning, which was a major step in preparing for the floods,” says Leslie Hope, director of a Carolinas AGC chapter. “We’re big Christy fans.” So is Gov. Nikki Haley (R), who last year nominated Hall to fill the DOT top job permanently. “She knew the agency better than anyone else,” said Haley.

Even with state lawmakers debating the future of a fuel tax increase and a possible agency reorganization, Hall was expected to win quick state senate confirmation in hearings that began Jan. 20.