CASE STUDY: ***Green Rest Area***

North Carolina Department of Transportation

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (N.C. DOT) was asked by the Governor's Office in 2001 to investigate the feasibility of designing and building a "Green" rest area in North Carolina. After this study, N.C. DOT advertised a request for proposal to LEED architectural firms in 2003 and five designers were chosen to give presentations for design of the U.S. 421 Wilkes County Rest Area/Visitor Center project. A firm was picked in 2003 to complete the design and work with N.C. DOT through the construction phase until project completion.

In the early planning stages, Wilkes County, the Town of North Wilkesboro and the Town of Wilkesboro bought in to this project as major stakeholders by funding the purchase of the right of way as well as the funding for the water and sewer installation to the site. This was indicative of how important the project was to the region.

The funding for project construction is similar to other rest area projects in North Carolina with 90 percent being Federal funds and 10 percent State funds. The funding for the right of way and utilities were seperate from the project by the local municipalities.

The Wilkes Rest Area/Visitor Center will strategically serve the northwestern part of North Carolina including Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Alexander, Caldwell, Watauga and Wilkes Counties giving them the opportunity to showcase their history, culture, economy and natural environment that this area of North Carolina is so richly blessed. The Wilkes County Visitor Center will also promote tourism in the rest of North Carolina. Project completion is scheduled for September 2009.