

## **Bonner Bridge Record of Decision**

The Federal Highway Administration signed a Record of Decision on December 20, 2010 which will allow the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to move forward on construction of a new bridge over Oregon Inlet. The Bonner Bridge was built in 1963 with an intended life span of 30 years. The three mile bridge has been scheduled for replacement since 1993 but legal and permitting issues have held up the process. This record of decision signifies a major step in the decades old battle to replace the Bonner Bridge.

Most arguments for a new bridge have focused mainly on what is carried over it. And rightly so, as evidenced by the estimated two million vehicles that travel over it each year. The Bonner Bridge is also very important to Hatteras Island for another reason; what is attached to it.

CHEC receives power at a point north of Oregon Inlet and delivers it to its Hatteras Island members and on to Ocracoke Island served by Tideland EMC. CHEC's 115kV transmission cables that deliver this power are in protective conduit which is connected to the Bonner Bridge. Thus, CHEC has worked very closely with NCDOT to ensure that the electric needs of Hatteras Island were considered when discussion of bridge replacement took place.

CHEC has a signed Design Build Utility Agreement in place with NCDOT for the new bridge. This agreement will allow the transmission cables to be placed in a cable trench, a segmented box or a combination of the two depending on how the selected design build contractor constructs the bridge. Having provisions for the cables in the design build process is essential to the cooperative's mission of providing safe, reliable and affordable electric service to its members on Hatteras Island.