Introduction/Objective
The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) proposes to construct a new three-lane rural arterial roadway between SR-85 and SR-84 in central Overton County, Tennessee. The total project length is approximately 2.5 miles.

Project History
TDOT had been preparing the FONSI for the SR-52 Improvements Project in Overton County. The initial environmental studies were completed in 2002 and a preferred alignment was selected following the public comment period for the EA. The project would have constructed a new four-lane roadway between SR-52/SR-85 west of Campground Road to SR-52 west of the Pickett County line, a distance of about fourteen miles.

In finalizing the technical studies for the SR-52 FONSI, TDOT identified previously undisclosed significant environmental impacts to archaeological and natural resources along the alignment of the preferred alternative in the eastern half of the project area. Because of the mountainous terrain in the eastern portion of the study area, TDOT and FHWA decided to “right size” the project to reflect the most critical areas for improvement. TDOT initiated a new project, the SR-85 Improvements Project, which would use a section of the preferred alternative from the SR-52 Improvements Project west of SR-84/SR-111 for which no significant environmental effects have been identified. This project has independent utility and logical termini.

Technical Approach
Due to the tight right-of-way and construction deadlines, TDOT needed to complete the environmental phase of project development for the new SR-85 Project within a one year schedule. This schedule included updates to previous technical studies as well as a public meeting and public hearing. Also, the project was now subject to the recently approved Tennessee Environmental Streamlining Agreement (TESA) which includes a series of four mandatory concurrence points for federal and state agency approval. All four concurrence points were completed for this project and any input from the public and/or agencies was included in the final environmental document.

Results
Even with the tight project deadline, the project team was able to receive FHWA’s approval of the FONSI in less than a year. The environmental document was also completed by the consultant under budget.

The right-of-way for the project was acquired in 2010 and construction is slated to begin late 2011. The clearance of the environmental document in less than a year is not typical for TDOT. Currently, TDOT averages a project timeline of three years to reach a FONSI. The results of this project can be attributed to continuous efforts by TDOT to seek early and frequent coordination from the public and local/federal/state agency partners.

Lessons Learned
Add text here to explain how TDOT is using this project as an example for future projects.