

Arkansas HIGHWAYS

SEPTEMBER 2014

A PUBLICATION OF THE
ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY & TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT | MAGAZINE

The Peel Ferry

AN AHTD ONE-OF-A-KIND
ON BULL SHOALS LAKE



The Ozark
National Forest:
A GRAND VIEW

The Last
GRAVEL HIGHWAY
in Arkansas

Building a
New Bridge at
BLACK ROCK



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It's always this time of year when swimming pools and summer camps become empty. That's because students across the State have returned to school campuses. The return to school means increased traffic on our roadways. Not just in the mornings and afternoons, but on the weekends as well as family and friends head to football stadiums to cheer on their favorite teams.

Whether traveling across town or across the State this fall, be sure to include *IDriveArkansas.com* along with the football tickets, binoculars and picnic lunches. No one wants to miss kickoff due to unexpected delays on our roadways. *IDriveArkansas.com* can help prevent that with live traffic conditions, construction zone information and real time weather maps. It's right at your fingertips on your smartphone, tablet or computer.

I encourage you to make it part of your game plan, especially with the Department's Interstate Rehabilitation Program (IRP) and Connecting Arkansas Programs (CAP) under way. The IRP is improving just over 450 miles of Interstate highway. Already, ten projects have been completed. Another eleven IRP projects are currently under construction and 54 are still scheduled to be let to contract.

The CAP has begun and will construct four-lane highways that will eventually connect all four corners of the State. This includes the widening of existing four-lane highways to help improve traffic flow. The first project got under way in February on the Bella Vista Bypass in Benton County. A total of 34 more projects are scheduled over the next nine years that will improve approximately 180 miles of highway.

With these improvements and others going on across the State, also remember these tips... Drive carefully through construction zones, keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you, don't use your cell phone in construction or school zones and watch for construction crews in the work zones.

Before you take to our highways this fall to support your favorite team, remember to take *IDriveArkansas.com* with you so you can "know before you go." It can make for a safer, easier road trip on your next football weekend.

And as you gather with family and friends this fall, be sure to spread the word about what we do and the services we provide here at the AHTD. We are the best ambassadors to tell our story. I encourage you to take opportunities to talk up *IDriveArkansas.com* and programs such as Adopt-A-Highway, our Litter Hotline and our Wildflowers program. And remember, *Arkansas Highways* magazine is available for everyone to read on our website at *ArkansasHighways.com*. These programs are there for the public's use. Let's share our success story and make everyone aware of the services available to them from the AHTD.



Scott E. Bennett, P.E.
Director of Highways and Transportation

FRONT & BACK COVER:

The Peel Ferry
Highway 125
Marion County

EDITOR

David Nilles

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Paula Cigainero

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Randy Ort

Glenn Bolick

PHOTOGRAPHERS

John Jackson

Lindy Bragg

David Nilles

Paula Cigainero

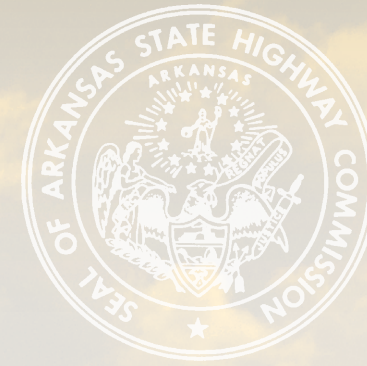
Correspondence should be directed to:

ARKANSAS HIGHWAYS
Public Information Office
P.O. Box 2261, Room 1002
Little Rock, AR 72203-2261



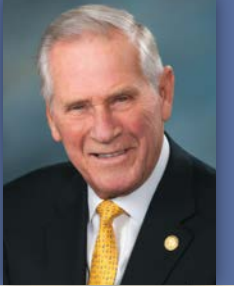
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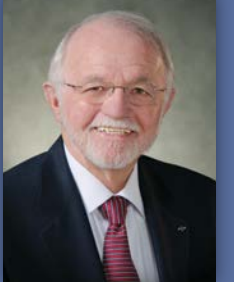


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RIDING ARKANSAS' LAST FERRYBOAT: THE PEEL FERRY

BY DAVID NILLES

N YEARS PAST, BEFORE THERE WAS AN EXTENSIVE HIGHWAY SYSTEM IN ARKANSAS, travelers relied on ferryboats

to cross large bodies of water. There was the

Spring Bank Ferry, Toad Suck Ferry, Guion Ferry and Moro Bay Ferry, just to name a few. The list stretched on.

As the highway system grew, bridges began to replace ferries. In 1968, 17 ferryboats operated in the State. By 1986, that number was down to four.

Today, there is only one remaining ferryboat operating on the State highway system. It's the Peel Ferry and it can be found in northern Arkansas, operating on Bull Shoals Lake. Follow Highway 125 to the lake, and the Peel Ferry will take you to the other side, where Highway 125 takes you up a hill, around a bend and on into Missouri.

The Peel Ferry has been in operation since 1968. Today, Mark Grozis serves as Supervisor over all ferryboat operations.

The *Arkansas Highways* magazine team spent a day with Mark and one of his crews to find out what it's like to operate the AHTD's last remaining ferryboat.

(continued on page 6)



Mark Grozis
Ferryboat Supervisor



MOST RIDERS ARE JUST OUT HAVING FUN, VISITING OR DOING CHORES FOR THE DAY. You get to know some people that ride across every day back and forth to work, so you get acquainted with quite a few of the regular riders.

NILLES: How long have you been with the Highway & Transportation Department, and how long have you operated the ferry?

GROZIS: I've been with the AHTD for about 33 years. I started here on the ferry when I was 18 years old. I was hired on as a Deckhand. Then I became a Deckhand Pilot. It takes about three years to accumulate enough time to get your pilot's license. Later, as things moved forward, I became a Pilot. And now I serve as Supervisor.

NILLES: Is this a one man operation?

GROZIS: No, there are two crews, each with three people and myself. Each crew works "on a day" and then "off a day." We have one crew today; tomorrow it will be a completely different crew. It just rotates, even through weekends and holidays.

In addition to me, we have Randall Williams, a Ferryboat Pilot; Rob Mersman, a Ferryboat Pilot; Jeff Pokorny, a Ferryboat Pilot; Scott Burleson, a Pilot Deckhand; Neil Wood, a Pilot Deckhand and Andy Cagel, a Deckhand.

We occasionally have additional helpers during the summer. We're appreciative when we get them because they are pretty handy and help with the chores. And in years past, I might add that we have had women as part of our crew as well.

NILLES: What are the hours of operation?

GROZIS: We operate the ferry seven days a week, 365 days a year. We are open during

daylight hours. This time of year, those guys are working 14½ hour days. It's a long day. They earn their keep, but we've had an awesome summer. The heat hasn't been too extreme this year.

In the winter months our days get shorter than they are this time of year. We get down to about 11 hours. Our first trips are around 6:00 or 6:15 in the mornings. We knock trips off of the back end of the day as it gets dark earlier in the fall.

NILLES: Is there a cost to ride to the other side?

GROZIS: No, the ride across the lake is free.

NILLES: How many vehicles can fit on the boat for a trip across?

GROZIS: We use what are called six-car barges. You can get 8 smaller vehicles or 25-30 motorcycles on board if that is all you have crossing.

We're excited because we are getting a new, larger barge in October. We received some grant money and some State matching funds and we are getting a barge that is actually twice the size that we have now. So it will be a twelve-car barge. This is going to be helpful because, especially this time

of year, you may have two vehicles pulling boats and then one with a camper, and with the arrangement being three deep, you just can't get them all on the barge. So the larger barge will be helpful in fitting vehicles on. It will arrive in October. It will come in sections and they will actually finish putting it together on-site.

NILLES: Is the ferry often at full capacity?

GROZIS: At times, it is. We are gaining a little on our traffic counts. We are seeing a small percentage increase in the number of riders. Weekends and holidays are busy days. You may have a trip where the barge is full and then some where there is no one on. It's not really a rush hour thing with us. It can get busy at any time.

NILLES: How long does it take to get to the other side?

GROZIS: It is a 40-minute round trip. That gives you five or ten minutes at the dock on each side. If it gets real busy, we can make a round trip in 10 or 15 minutes less than that.

NILLES: How many trips does the ferry make in one day?

GROZIS: This time of year we make about 24 roundtrips across the lake.

NILLES: What kind of people do you find ride the ferry across the lake?

GROZIS: Highway 125 is a secondary route. You get folks going to the doctor, you get folks going to the store and you get sightseers. We have a good number of sightseers. It's a popular route for some of the motorcycle clubs and the car clubs who are looking for a scenic route or a day ride. We also get some motorists that get onboard just because they want to ride a ferryboat. Last week we had a gentleman from Tennessee come through. He was catching all of the ferries on his way back home and he had a list of about seven. So we get people that simply want to go for a ride. Interestingly, there are some people that live as close as Harrison that don't even know the ferry is here or they are making their first trip.



Jack Morrow of Wichita, Kansas, takes his first ride across.

NILLES: Have you ever been forced to suspend operations temporarily due to inclement weather?

GROZIS: Yes, we have but it's very rare. This spring we had some very strong winds through here. We made the call to officially hold off. It was blowing so hard, we had to push the tug against the barge and it was breaking the cables it was so strong. Fortunately, in another two or three hours, it let up and we were back in business. A storm front coming through may delay us 15 or 20 minutes. We usually wait and let it pass through. That's a pilot's call.

NILLES: Does the water level of the lake change very much? If so, how does that affect operation?

GROZIS: This is a flood control lake so it changes a lot. But it's usually not a big deal. We've gained or lost about a foot and a half in the past month or so. Now, there is a sign out front near the top of the hill that indicates the high water mark. The highest water level was in May of 2011 when the water was up the hill close to our building.

NILLES: This far north, does the snow and ice affect you?

GROZIS: Normally, we can make it here to the ferry in the morning. We have some determined crew members that are good about getting to work if the roads are bad. Even if the roads are nearly impassible, we will get out our equipment and start cleaning the hills going down to the ferry and clearing the barge. Then we will get the hills sanded. So, if you can get here, we can get you across. We might stay on one side of the lake or the other and then look across to see if there is someone waiting to cross the lake. We can get them up the hill from the lake, but beyond there, they are on their own. The weather changes our routine slightly, but it's kind of business as usual. We still get ready and we do a very good job and are ready to go early.

NILLES: If you don't take the ferry, how far is the drive around the lake?

GROZIS: To get from dock to dock, it's nearly one hundred miles either direction. You have to go up towards Branson or around to Mountain Home.

(continued on page 8)



Deckhand Andy Cagel prepares to dock the ferry.

NILLES: In March of 2011, the ferry received two new tugboats. The old ones, the Spring Bank and the St. Charles, had been in service since 1967 and were due to be replaced. How have the new tugs performed?

GROZIS: They are excellent, they are very good tugs. They are the same as the old ones as far as dimensions but they are nearly double the horsepower. Each is 300 horsepower where the old ones were about 180. They have air conditioning, which is the first time we have had that. They steer and run well and are a pretty good deal for us. One of the biggest differences in the new tugs is that they don't have a conventional steering wheel like the old tugs. The new ones are steered using a joystick. It's a little different. It took a week or two for our pilots to get used to it but they work well.

The old ones were becoming a maintenance nightmare. It was almost daily we had to do some type of repair. Most of the maintenance we have done is performed right here by the AHTD crew. The Department maintains two tugs so that if one has to be sidelined for repairs or service, ferry service can continue using the other one. As far as their workload, we alternate the tugs out every 500 engine hours.

NILLES: How do you gas up the tugs?

GROZIS: We have tanks here by the office. We have a 100-gallon tank in the back of the Department pickup. We just shuttle it down to the tug. These new tugs are pretty efficient. The engines are running up to 14 hours a day in the summer. It will only burn 30 to 35 gallons per day. That's a lot of work on that amount of gasoline.

NILLES: Have you ever had anything out of the ordinary happen on the tugs?

GROZIS: We have something out of the ordinary all the time. People are people and we see a little of everything. Most of our incidents are just characters that have perhaps had a "parking lot" accident. Somebody will open a door onto a vehicle or bump a bumper. We've been extremely fortunate to not have any injuries to us or motorists in years and years and years.

Now we have some people that are a little hesitant to ride the ferry because they are afraid of the water. There was one woman riding on a motorcycle who was a bit hesitant. We gave her a life jacket so she would feel more confident and so she agreed to wear it. She hung onto the railing with a blank stare the entire trip. She did well. She got to the other side and got on that motorcycle and they went speeding up the hill. Now that motorcycle taking off so fast was much more dangerous than the barge ride! But that's rare, we do a good

job of keeping people happy and most of our riders are good people.

We really get a neat clientele out here. Most riders are just out having fun, visiting or doing chores for the day. You get to know some people that ride across every day back and forth to work, so you get acquainted with quite a few of the regular riders.

We've seen bear swimming across the lake. Once we picked up a momma duck and her babies and made a little box for them. We saw about 20 squirrels migrating across the lake one week. That's a long swim across for a squirrel. We fished out as many as we could with a shovel for the ride to the other side. They took off when we reached the dry land.

Nearly a year ago, the Sheriff's Department had a 911 call late at night with nobody on the other end of the phone line across the lake. They called and told us they had to check it out. So we told them we would be there. We were here and fired up before they got here. We took them across and told them we would wait. They had our number in case it looked like it was going to be in the morning. We waited a couple of hours. Fortunately, it turned out well but it took a little while. We loaded them up, went home and went to bed.

If we are making our last trip and somebody rolls up late right after hours, we will usually take them across. We realize it happens. We try to accommodate all we can in that way.

NILLES: Safety is an important priority for the Department. Are life jackets required?

GROZIS: Yes. We have to have a life jacket on board for every person that rides the ferry. We have 50 life jackets we keep on the barge. We had a school bus once full of kids, we had to put an extra case of life jackets on to be sure we were safe.

NILLES: What's it like to spend your work day out on the water at the lake as opposed to sitting behind a desk?

GROZIS: It's terrible. It's really hard on me... I'm teasing. It's neat, it really is awesome. Just take a look around and you realize how awesome it is. The setting speaks for itself. One of the neatest things through the years is that, on a hot summer day, you might take a little swim right after work. How cool is that? Or you might come a little early to work or stay late and do some fishing when off the clock.

I had a pair of ladies come and wait on the ferry. We visited for a few minutes and I said to them, "I don't know how you can stand not getting that fishing pole out." And they looked at me and said, "Can we?" I told them they had ten minutes so they pitched it in and tried their luck. It's so enjoyable to have the opportunity to interact with people while you work.

NILLES: When someone comes to work here or applies for a job, what kind of experience must they have? Do they have to know how to operate a ferryboat previously?

GROZIS: There's not really a huge turnover here. But we expect somebody to come to work here that's personable, that's efficient and somewhat handy mechanically because we do a great deal of repairs ourselves.

A lot of applicants don't really have experience with the ferry when we get them. I didn't and most don't. There's the understanding that you must strive to achieve that pilot's license. It's a 100-ton gross weight license. It's the same license you would need to operate in the gulf or on

the Mississippi River. You also have to get 360 8-hour days behind the wheel and have three pilots verify that you are capable.

There is also a written test. You have to score a 98 percent on a certain portion of the test and 90 percent on the rest. It's a large test; there are about 2,000 pages of information regarding currents, speed,

wind, weather, lights, bells etc. to learn about. It's not an easy test.

The hours we work, including evenings, weekends and holidays can be hard on some applicants. It takes a little bit different person to really be right for the job. But once you're on board with the crew, it's the perfect job! ▣

Editor's Note: The Spring Bank tug, retired in 2011, is now on display at the City Park in Doddridge, Arkansas. See the July 2013 issue of Arkansas Highways for an article on its restoration.



IN THE WHEELHOUSE

WITH PILOT ROB MERSMAN

How long does it take to cross over the lake to the other side?

It's a nine or ten minute ride from one side to the other.

Do you run on a time schedule?

We try to run on the hour, twenty minutes past the hour and then 40 minutes past the hour.

How fast does the tug generally run?

We usually operate at 6 miles per hour. If need be, we can up it to 8 miles per hour.

What are some of the challenges to piloting across the lake?

The wind can be the most aggravating thing. You also have to watch for scuba divers. I had one pop up out of the water right in front of the barge one time. Fortunately, I slowed in time. They weren't using a diver's flag on the surface so there was no way to know he was down there. It worked out okay though.

How much weight can the barge carry?

Our weight limit is 50,000 pounds. It can hold more, but that is our limit.

How many vehicles cross each day?

Our yearly average is 85 vehicles a day. I think the record is 454 vehicles in one day. Summer days are busy. As school starts, that number starts dropping. On a bad winter day, you may have just a handful go across.

I notice a lot of motorcyclists riding the ferry...

We get all kinds of clubs that come through. Motorcycle clubs, Corvette clubs, MINI Cooper Clubs, Mazda Miata clubs. We carefully got 12 Mazda Miatas onboard one day. There are YouTube videos online of different clubs riding across the lake.

Any particular riders you remember?

I had one that was afraid of the water. She was hesitant to ride across and obviously nervous. I told her to relax, the water was only four feet deep and if anything happened her feet would touch the bottom and she could walk across to the other side. She relaxed immediately. Truth be told, the lake is over 180 feet deep in places, but it got her across in a better frame of mind. ▣

Traffic flows over the historic Black Rock Bridge while construction proceeds on the new bridge.



REPLACING THE BLACK ROCK BRIDGE

BY DAVID NILLES

THE ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT IS CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS OF BUILDING A NEW BRIDGE AT BLACK ROCK, IN NORTHEAST ARKANSAS.

Before it opens to traffic, it's appropriate to stop and reflect on the one that has spanned the Black River there for 65 years.

Today, five highway and four railroad bridges cross the river as it winds its way through Arkansas. One of those highway bridges is the Highway 63/412 Bridge at Black Rock.

The current bridge was built in 1949 by the Massman Construction Company of Kansas City, Missouri. It's a two-lane bridge reaching 2,607 feet in length. It's classified as a "Warren truss bridge." Truss bridges are one of the oldest types of modern bridges. A truss bridge is one whose load-bearing superstructure is composed of a truss, a structure of connected

elements forming triangular units. The connected elements (typically straight) may be stressed from tension, compression or sometimes both in response to dynamic loads. The Warren truss was patented in 1848 by its designers James Warren and Willoughby Theobald Monzani.

The bridge at Black Rock has served well throughout its lifetime with its average daily traffic currently at 15,000 vehicles per day. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in June of 2000.

"I have heard stories about the original and current bridges my whole life," says Brad Smithee, District 10 Construction Engineer.

"My dad and grandmother both remembered that the current bridge began construction prior to the U.S. entering World War II but stopped during the war. They understood the stoppage of work was due to the lack of availability of structural steel during war time. Dad said the current bridge resumed construction in the mid to late 1940s."

As with any bridge structure, time has taken a toll. After an inspection in 2010, the AHTD rated the bridge as "structurally deficient." Structural deficiencies are characterized by deteriorated conditions of significant bridge elements and potentially reduced load-carrying capacity. A "structurally deficient" designation does not imply that a bridge is unsafe, but such bridges typically require significant maintenance and repair to remain in service, and would eventually require major rehabilitation or replacement to address the underlying deficiency.

"I have had the privilege of administering the bridge inspection program for District 10 since 2009," Smithee adds. "During this time we have recognized that the aging structure had concerns that necessitated lowering the posted weight limit and reduction of speed across the structure."

As a result of the rating, in early 2011 the Department reduced the weight limit from 80,000 pounds to 66,000 pounds on vehicles crossing the bridge. The new weight limit has

caused commercial trucks in the area to have to find alternate routes to reach their final destination.

"Our most frequent calls are from the trucking industry, wanting to know how to meet the required posted loading or help in finding an alternate route."

A new bridge is now under construction that will feature four lanes and eight-foot shoulders. The new \$30 million structure is being built right beside the old bridge, just ten feet away.

"Constructing the new bridge thus far has been both fun and quite challenging," Smithee states. "While my involvement as District Construction Engineer has been administrative in nature, I am so blessed to at least have a small role in this project. One of my goals has always been to get to be involved in building this new bridge. I suppose in a year or so, that goal can be checked off of my bucket list."

Completion of the new Highway 63/412 Bridge is expected late this year or early next year, at which time Black Rock will say goodbye to a little bit of history. ■

DISTRICT 2

CONSTRUCTION



CORNER

A new railroad overpass is under construction in the town of Montrose, in southeast Arkansas. The project is located on Highway 82, on the south edge of town.

The project was awarded to Chancellor & Son, Inc. of Cordova, Tennessee, for approximately \$6.8 million in June of 2013. Work began in July of that year.

When completed, the bridge will be one continuous composite W-Beam structure measuring just over 306 feet in length. It will feature two 12-foot lanes and 8-foot shoulders.

Geosynthetic internal reinforcement was used in the slopes and the embankment of the project for seismic stability and because of the condition of the subsurface. Reinforcement was placed every two feet with fill heights over ten feet.

Work is over halfway completed at this point. The job is expected to be finished in December of this year. ■



ARKANSAS' LAST GRAVEL HIGHWAY

BY DAVID NILLES



You can see it on an Arkansas State Highway map, a stretch of highway in northwest Arkansas indicated by a **BLACK AND WHITE DASH** on the map legend. That dash represents Arkansas' only unpaved highway, and next year, that dash will become smaller as the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department prepares to pave the eight-mile stretch of roadway.

IT'S HIGHWAY 220 and it crosses the boundary between Washington and Crawford Counties just south of Devil's Den State Park.

Most people aren't even aware that there is a gravel highway in the State. The Department launched a program in 1985 to pave all State highways by 1995.

"The Department was successful in accomplishing that program's goal," says Randy Ort, AHTD Public Information Officer. "However, we took ownership of the unpaved section of Highway 220 in 1998."

The road was originally owned by the U.S. Agriculture Department's Forest Service. There were attempts in the

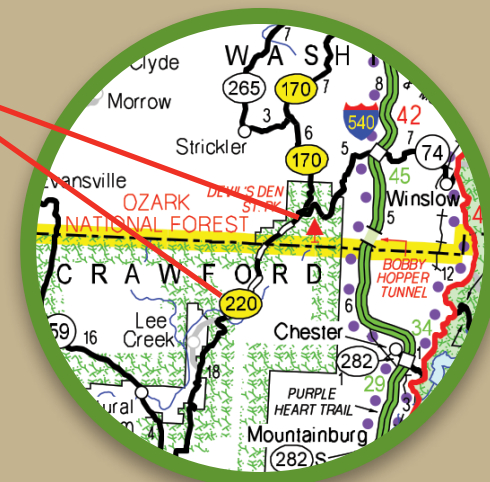
1970s to pass ownership to the AHTD but they always fell through. Over time, it became two county roads, one in Washington County and one in Crawford County.

Ownership was then passed to the Highway and Transportation Department.

Highway 220 leads motorists into Devil's Den State Park from the south.

"Part of our role at the AHTD is to provide access to all of our State parks," Ort stated. "This is one of those routes as it leads into Devil's Den."

Traffic on the unpaved section of Highway 220 is light to say the least. It averages between 20 and 30 vehicles per day.



Since it is a gravel highway, maintenance on the roadway is different than for any other highway in the State.

"The Area Maintenance Supervisor routinely uses a Motor Patrol to grade the road for smoothness," states Chad Adams, District 4 Engineer. "We typically get a lot of calls from local people after a heavy rain." *(continued on page 14)*

Paving the road will mean a change in maintenance duties in the future.

“I suspect that it will mean less roadway maintenance because the asphalt should hold up for many years before showing any signs of deterioration,” Adams adds. “We will still have to mow the rights of way and keep it cleared during inclement weather.”

There are a few things that Area Maintenance Supervisor Kenneth Gentry will miss about the gravel road.

“Because of its location and the fact that this is still a gravel road in the middle of the forest, I have seen all kinds of wildlife crossing the road including bears, turkey and a family of raccoons,” Gentry comments.

“I also use the gravel road as a training ground for employees that want to learn how to operate equipment such as a motor patrol or backhoe,” he adds. “It’s a place where employees can be out of harm’s way and really get familiar with a piece of equipment.”

Attention turned to paving the gravel section of the roadway when Federal funding became an option.

“Funding became available through the Federal Lands Access Program which was created by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP 21),” says AHTD Director Scott Bennett.

The funds are available for transportation projects within or adjacent to or that provide access to Federal land. Paving Highway 220 will significantly improve access to the southern entrance to Devil’s Den State Park, which is located within the Ozark National Forest.

“The federal agency awarded \$4 million to the AHTD for the project and we will match that with \$1 million,” Bennett adds. Additional funding will have to be put in place as well to complete the entire project. The AHTD estimates the cost to pave the entire stretch will be between \$12 million and \$14 million.

Plans call for the new section to feature two ten-foot travel lanes and have two-foot shoulders on each side of the roadway. The project will replace a one lane bridge over Ellis Branch and a low-water crossing of Fall Creek. It will also realign curves along the route and provide a solid surface roadway to increase the safety of travelers visiting the Ozark National Forest and the State Park.

Prior to improvements getting underway, consideration must be given to environmental issues,



especially the local population of bats in the area. This area of northwest Arkansas has numerous caves, trees and rock outcrops where bats live. A survey of the bat population along the route will be carried out before any work gets underway to pave the roadway. Three endangered species of bats are found in the region including Gray, Ozark Big-eared and Indiana bats. The survey will determine if any bats live in the area near the highway construction project. The survey will be carried out by Mitigation Surveying Services LLC of Benton and should begin soon.

During the planning phase of the project, the Department has worked closely with the U.S. Forest Service, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality and Arkansas State Parks to insure that this project will cause minimal disturbance to the surrounding land.

Blake Sasse, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

nongame mammal biologist, states that it is unlikely that paving the road will disturb the bat populations and ultimately, the paving will be good for the park.

The AHTD Environmental Division has completed the Environmental Assessment of the project location and the project design was completed in accordance with the findings of the Environmental Assessment. Right of way has been acquired and utility adjustments are complete. Once plans are reviewed to insure the design meets current federal standards, a project can be let to contract. The awarded funding has to be utilized within four years but the Department hopes to get the paving underway in the spring of 2015.

And once the improvements have been completed along the entire route, Arkansas’ total highway system, including Highway 220, will, once again, be paved. ■

Highway 220 East changes from asphalt to gravel heading towards Devil's Den State Park.



Currently Highway 220 narrows at points making it a challenge when two cars meet.



HIGH FRICTION SURFACE TREATMENT AIMS TO LOWER CRASH RATES

BY DAVID NILLES

At the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, one of the top priorities is safety. That includes safety for motorists, as well as safety for pedestrians and construction workers. This article addresses that first group... motorists and a new surface treatment for roadways that the Department hopes to prove effective in reducing crashes on our highways.

It's called High Friction Surface Treatment and its aim is to provide better traction on road surfaces. The AHTD has seen successful results applying it on some Interstates across Arkansas and now is ready to utilize a modified version on non-Interstate highways.

A High Friction Surface Treatment, or HFST, is laid on top of an existing driving surface. Crews first lay a binder on the surface, usually epoxy resin, and then apply a layer of aggregate on top of the resin. That aggregate is calcined bauxite, a hard aggregate that retains sharp edges. It generally is a size of approximately three millimeters. The new surface has skid resistant properties that give vehicles better traction on hazardous curves or grades and help them stay on the road, especially when it rains.

"High-friction surfacing systems show promise in helping transportation agencies improve skid resistance on wet pavement and hazardous curves and grades," states

Frank Julian, a Safety Engineer with the Federal Highway Administration. "The treatment is functionally durable lasting 7 to 10 years, it can be implemented quickly by road crews, it has minimal impact to traffic during construction and it has a good 'benefit to cost' ratio."

In Arkansas, the treatment has already been applied at six locations on Interstate 30, Interstate 40 and Interstate 440. So far, approximately 23 miles of Interstate have been treated at a cost of \$6.3 million.

"HFST has been applied on our Interstates to reduce the likelihood of hydroplaning at high speeds in the rain," states AHTD Director Scott Bennett. "The aggregate drains more water from the roadway than a typical surface and increases the skid resistance. The new texture also reduces splash which can limit visibility."

Due to its success, the Department is now ready to apply a modified HFST to non-Interstate highways.

A work crew applies a layer of aggregate over a resin binder which creates a high friction surface.

Photos of high friction surface treatment application are courtesy of Utah DOT.

"The treatment of non-Interstate highways addresses different problems motorists encounter in the rain: losing traction when hitting the brakes at intersections and in curves," states Randy Ort, AHTD Public Information Officer. "We expect that the new treatment will result in decreased braking distances."

The epoxy that will be used on the non-Interstate highways contains sharper aggregate or rock that is highly abrasive. The increased abrasiveness will aid in braking and control of vehicles.

The AHTD has identified 1,200 miles of non-Interstate highways that have an average daily traffic count of

1,000 vehicles or more and on which wet pavement was a factor in at least 35 percent of the total crashes. Those numbers have helped determine where to apply the new surface treatment. Typically, the locations are short and are found at curves and approaches to intersections, areas that require quick braking.

Highways scheduled for the new treatment include Highway 5 in Garland, Saline, Lonoke and Baxter Counties; Highway 7 in Clark, Garland and Boone Counties; Highways 72, 102 and 279 in Benton County and Highway 65 in Chicot County. Two sections of Highway 10 (LaHarpe Boulevard) in Little Rock will

also see the new surface treatment.

The 22 locations identified for the new treatment total approximately seven miles. The estimated cost is near \$3.6 million.

"Although it might be too soon to know conclusively whether high-friction surfacing systems are indeed an effective countermeasure to run-off-the-road and wet-weather crashes, current anecdotal and other evidence indicates that high-friction surfaces are indeed life-saving treatments," Julian concludes.

At the AHTD, construction bids were awarded in July to begin application of the new treatments on just over seven miles of identified highways in the State. ■



2014 Graduating Class of the Arkansas Highway Police Academy

ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE: A NEW GRADUATING CLASS

July 29th was graduation day for 16 men and women who have recently completed the Recruit Training Program of the Arkansas Highway Police (AHP).

Over 100 relatives and friends gathered at Central Office for a ceremony honoring the newest members of the AHP.

"This graduating class has endured nine hard weeks of classroom, firearms and physical training," commented AHP Chief Ron Burks at the ceremony. "We truly appreciate the dedication and commitment that you have demonstrated and look forward to seeing the fruits of your training for many years to come."

Burks then recognized First Lieutenant Ross Batson who was responsible for the development of the academy and its curriculum.

Class spokesperson Patrol Officer Matthew Price also had an opportunity to address the audience and his fellow classmates.

"We started as a family and finished as a family. We received some of the most valuable training possible from the best instructors. I am very proud to be serving on the front lines on our highways and in our communities."

Price also thanked the families present at the ceremony. "Without you, there is no way we would have ever made it."

The Arkansas Highway Police and the Highway and Transportation Department have enjoyed a long, rich history together. It was 85 years ago that the Arkansas Legislature passed Act 299 assigning oversight of the Arkansas Road Patrol to the AHTD.

Today, the Arkansas Highway Police is a nationally recognized leader in the fields of motor carrier safety, drug interdiction

and hazardous materials enforcement and training. Highway Police officers serve as instructors for the Criminal Justice Institute, National Training Center, Transportation Safety Institute, Drug Interdiction Assistance Program, Arkansas State Police Troop School and the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy.

"We are excited to see each of you take the next step and become part of the future of our Arkansas Highway Police," AHTD Director Scott Bennett told the graduates. "It's a job in which you will meet many people, work many hours and face many challenges. It's also a job that will bring you many rewards as well. We are thrilled to have you onboard."

Two officers received Firearms Awards for their marksmanship during the training program. The award for Top Gun was shared by Patrol Officers Joseph McCollum and Matthew Price.

The graduating class included the following Patrol Officers: **Marshall Ashcraft, Evan Austin, Jonathan Beshears, Stacy Cantrell, Brandon Clark, Ryan Grisham, Joseph McCollum, Nathan McCollum, Robert Pauley, Matthew Price, Matthew Ross, Kallyn Shea, DeVaughn Stephens, Brian Sturdivant, Natasha Williams and Matthew Wren.** ■



Cotter Bridge

OUT & ABOUT

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AROUND THE STATE

As you travel Arkansas over the next two months, consider checking out some of the listed events. Our State is full of interesting things to do, no matter which highway you find yourself driving. For additional event listings, check Arkansas.com/events.

- * **EL DORADO FILM FESTIVAL:** The South Arkansas Arts Center hosts the first annual El Dorado Film Festival with screenings of films accepted to the competition in all genres. Something for everyone in this festival's first year. • SEPTEMBER 18-20
- * **BRIDGE BASH 2014:** Celebrate the Cotter Bridge and the beautiful fall weather in Big Spring Park. This event helps provide meals for people in need and is great fun for all involved. Enjoy live music, great food, artists' works and more! • SEPTEMBER 20
- * **WAR EAGLE MILL FALL ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR:** Enjoy one of the most picturesque places in Arkansas and the sights, sounds and aromas of the State's most famous arts and crafts show all in one weekend. Professional craft men and women offer original, handmade work such as country decorative items, folk art, watercolor and oil painting, pottery, stoneware, wreaths, potpourris, quilts, miniatures, country clothing, wearable art, candles, homemade soaps, country furnishings, bird houses, collectables and much more. The participants come from across the United States. • OCTOBER 16-19
- * **23RD ANNUAL DOWNTOWN RUSSELLVILLE FALL FESTIVAL AND CHILI COOKOFF:** Started in 1992, this old fashioned street festival celebrates the season of harvest with a chili cookoff, 5K and 1K runs, Tour de Pumpkin bike ride, kid's costume contest, old fashioned pie contest, dog show, car show, arts & crafts, games & rides, live music, great festival food and more! • OCTOBER 25

SEPTEMBER 16 - 21

HOT SPRINGS JAZZFEST
Various venues throughout Hot Springs
Hot Springs, AR

SEPTEMBER 18 - 20

EL DORADO FILM FESTIVAL
South Arkansas Arts Center
El Dorado, AR

SEPTEMBER 20

BRIDGE BASH 2014
Big Spring Park
Cotter, AR

SEPTEMBER 24 - 27

15TH ANNUAL BIKES, BLUES & BBQ MOTORCYCLE RALLY
Fayetteville and Eureka Springs, AR

OCTOBER 12

43RD JOE WEBER ARKY 100 BICYCLE TOUR
Sheridan Community Center Pavilion
Sheridan, AR

OCTOBER 16 - 19

WAR EAGLE MILL FALL ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR
War Eagle Mill
Rogers, AR

OCTOBER 24 - 25

18TH ANNUAL LAKE CHICOT FALL FESTIVAL
Chicot County Courthouse Square
Lake Village, AR

OCTOBER 25

23RD ANNUAL DOWNTOWN FALL FESTIVAL AND CHILI COOKOFF
Russellville Depot
Russellville, AR



Film Festival



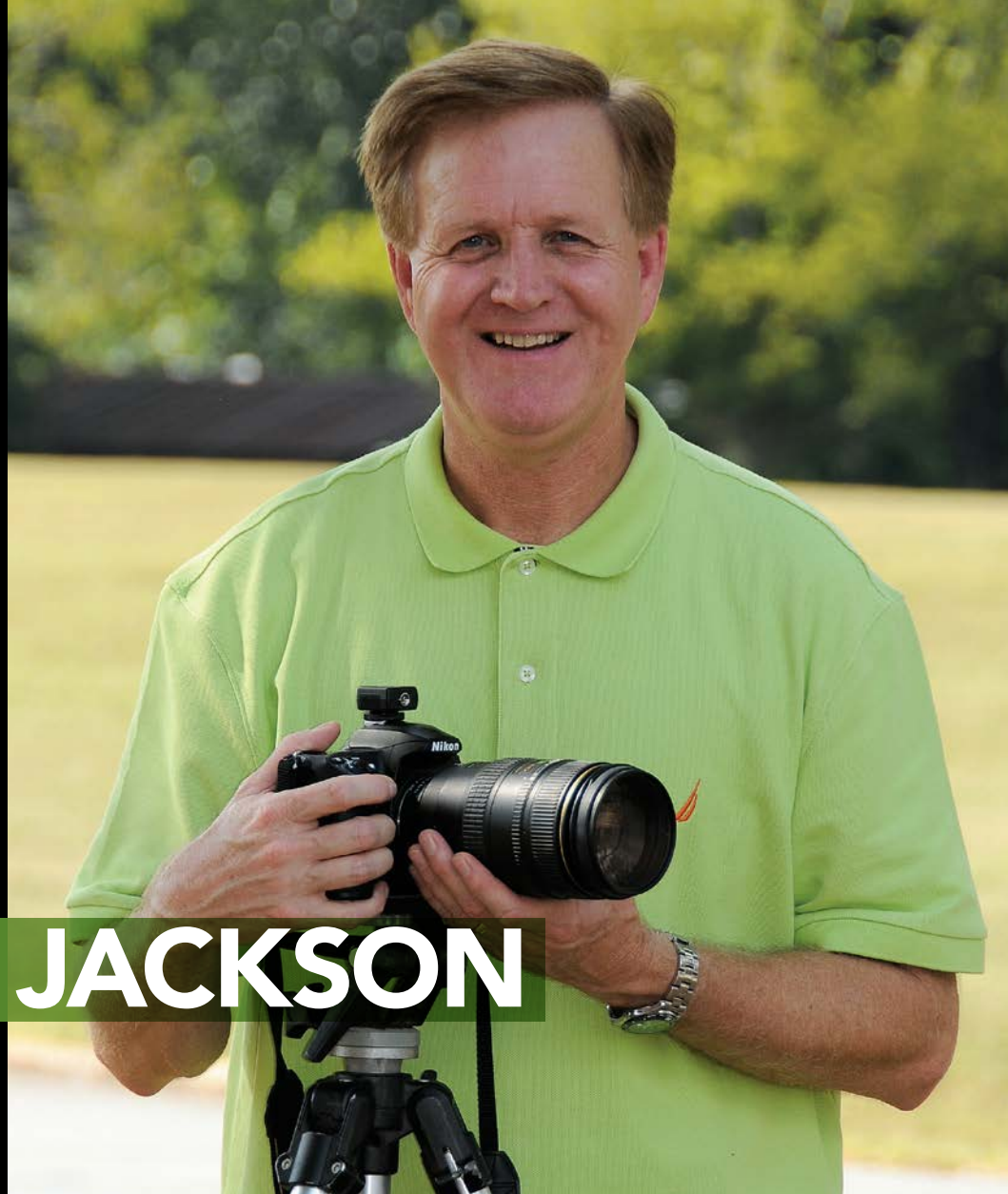
Craft Fair



Chili Cookoff

THROUGH THE LENS of JOHN JACKSON

BY RANDY ORT



This photo by John was chosen for the cover of the 2014 AASHTO Publications Catalog.



Taken at I-430/I-630 in Little Rock, this is just one example of the thousands of captivating photos of construction sites John shot during his career at AHTD.



Jackson's "Prairie Blazing Star" took first place in the close-up category of a FHWA photography contest.



John stands with his mother, wife and son (L. to R.) Gerry Jackson, Pam Jackson, and Rusty Jackson.

the Department three summers as a summer employee. That makes Rusty a third generation AHTD employee on BOTH sides of his family.

So John, his father, father-in-law, wife, and son have all been AHTD

employees. When you total the years of service for that family tree, you get 99 years and 10 months. Bottomline, if John would have worked two more months, the family would have achieved 100 years of service, and I might have gotten this article done before he left.

Though John created his legacy as the AHTD Photographer, his career didn't begin there. He started in March of 1976 as an Engineering Aide in the Surveys Division. He progressed through various jobs in District 6, Photogrammetry, and Records & Reproduction before landing in the Public Affairs Office in June of 1983 as a Photographic Technician. And the rest, as they say, is history.

WE'VE ALL HEARD THE SAYING, 'a picture paints a thousand words.' If that's the case, then John's work speaks volumes. It has appeared in local, state, national and even international publications. His photos have graced the front of dozens of State Highway maps, over 100 *Arkansas Highways* magazine covers, and appeared in over 350 *Centerline* newsletters.

He has 'shot' Presidents of the United States, dozens of Senators and Congressmen, multiple dignitaries from around the world, all the Arkansas Governors dating back to Frank White, and too many State legislators, County Judges, and Mayors to even attempt to calculate.

He has worked under and photographed four AHTD Directors and at least 22 Highway Commissioners. Best I can calculate, he has photographed well over 100 Division Heads and District Engineers, and most impressively, thousands of 'us,' his fellow coworkers.

John retired as the lone Photographer for the Department, but he started at a time when we had multiple photographers. I asked him what it was like from working with and learning from those other photographers.

"I was fortunate when I became a Photographer for the Department to have the pleasure of working with Johnny Gray, the first real photographer at the AHTD. Johnny's work is still highly regarded, especially his famous "Six Bridges" photo taken over the Arkansas River between Little Rock and North Little Rock. Working beside him was David Hunter, also a great photographer. The two of them were the best, and working with them made my learning curve easier."

As you can imagine, John has seen his share of significant events over the years. "One special event that comes to my mind was the opening of the Bobby Hopper Tunnel in January 1999. It was significant because that event concluded the Highway 71 Relocation Project which was, at the time, the most challenging highway we had ever constructed. It was a cold, drizzly day, but every TV station in Northwest Arkansas brought a satellite truck and the event was broadcast live. That was exciting for everyone.

(continued on page 22)

It HAS BEEN THE GOAL OF THE ARKANSAS HIGHWAYS STAFF TO MAKE OUR PUBLICATIONS AS

ENJOYABLE AS WE CAN FOR OUR READERS, PARTICULARLY OUR OWN EMPLOYEES. I tell people all the time that we are an agency of dedicated, hard working people and we've got a great story to tell, we just need to do the best job possible of telling it.

One way we've tried to achieve this is by publishing stories about our own employees and the jobs they perform. When we started this effort about two years ago, I said "We have got to do a story on our longtime AHTD Photographer, John Jackson." I told the magazine staff that I've worked with John longer than anyone else in the office, over 25 years, so I'll write the story myself.

I waited too long.

John retired from the Department in July with over 38 years of service, but only a couple of week's notice of his departure. John knew we wanted to feature him in a story so I accused him of speeding up his retirement because of that. Of course he denied that.

We're doing the feature on John anyway. He spent most of his career documenting, through pictures, the projects and people of the AHTD. His focus was on everyone else, never himself. That was his job. But considering his travels over the years, the people and images he's shot, the changes he's seen — well, it's time to focus our view on the man behind the lens.

We like to say that working at the AHTD is like being part of a big family. But for John, his family has literally been a big part of

the AHTD. Many employees still remember John's father, Glendol, who retired in 1987 as Division Head of the Right of Way Division with 30 years of service.

Some may remember that John's wife, Pam, also worked at the Department. As a matter of fact, John and Pam met when they both worked in the Records and Reproduction Section. I've always found it interesting that after they met, Pam quit. She left the Department. But John has always been persistent — they've now been married over 32 years.

But the family ties go even deeper, this time on Pam's side of the family. Pam's father, James Welcher, retired as the Area Maintenance Supervisor for Hot Spring County with 30 years of service. And John and Pam's son, Rusty, has worked at



I've HAD TO HANG OVER RAILS OR STRETCH OVER AN EDGE TO CAPTURE A PHOTOGRAPH. I'VE HAD TO WALK MILES JUST TO GET THE SHOT I WANTED. STANDING ON TOP OF THE TRUCK BECAME A FAMILIAR PERCH.

feel them brushing your clothing.

"There are other dangers when you are working under bridges and tromping through the woods to get a shot. I had to always keep an eye out for snakes and make my way through thorns. It pays to be in good shape too.

"Actually getting the right perspective for a photograph can be challenging. I've had to hang over rails or stretch over an edge to capture a photograph. I've had to walk miles just to get the shot I wanted. Standing on top of the truck became a familiar perch.

"The weather can be a factor as well. When they make the call for Department employees to stay home due to bad weather, that's my signal to strap on those overalls and take off with my camera to capture winter photos. There have been times when my ears have been so cold that I think if somebody had thumped them, they would have fallen off my head. When I'm searching for photos of snow and ice, the danger of just driving in those conditions is significant. It's the same situation when I was shooting flood photos. I often had to make the decision as to whether I was in a safe location to get the shot."

THE BIGGEST TRANSITION JOHN HAD TO MAKE while at the Department was going from film to digital photography. I've told people numerous times that John had to be taken kicking and screaming into the digital age.

"It was a substantial learning curve going from film to digital. I was using film in the camera, processing the film in the lab and then making prints from the film that I processed. A lot of that work was in the dark.

"Learning digital was a whole new way of operating. I instantly could see the image that I shot and make corrections on the fly if I needed to. I had to enhance my computer

skills because everything was done on the computer after I got the shot. There was new software to learn. The way I printed photographs was different as well. It was in total daylight instead of in the dark. Everything now is done on printers right off of the computer.

"The cameras are completely different too. Instead of film, we all use memory cards. Going from 36 exposures per roll of film to a memory card with an endless amount of photographs on it is a pleasant adjustment. Digital definitely has its advantages, probably more so than its drawbacks."

Through the years, John has become the resident expert on places to eat around the state. I think he could host his own show on the Food Network.

"Hey, there are some great restaurants in Arkansas. There are several places that come to my mind when it comes to good eating.

"One would be in the town of Paris, at the base of Mt. Magazine. It's called The Grapevine Restaurant. It's one of my favorite places and I would highly recommend it if any readers are ever in that area. Everything is homemade. You sit down and they bring you homemade bread and homemade apple butter. It just escalates from there! The Grapevine would be right up there at the top.

"Then there is Grandma's Cafe in Winslow. It is a magnificent place to eat lunch. I'm also told it's a great place for breakfast. I haven't had breakfast there yet, but I hope to remedy that problem now that I am retired.

"In Fort Smith, you have The Red Rooster. The Big Bayou Market in Bald Knob is a wonderful place for shrimp or fried catfish. The guy that runs it gets all of his food shipped up from Louisiana. Then there's a place in Greer's Ferry called Janssen's Lakefront Restaurant that has excellent food. Granny's Restaurant in Huntsville and Pickens Restaurant in Dumas are good ones

as well. If you want fried pies and some hot tamales, you can't beat Rhoda's Famous Hot Tamales in Lake Village.

"I think I've covered every corner of the State! There are so many good places to eat, I'm sure I've left some out. Arkansas is filled with so many good cooks!"

Thirty-eight years is going to be hard to replace — any suggestions for the next 'John Jackson?'

"My advice would be to attack the job as best as you can. Always try to have as placid a personality as possible because there are a good number of people you will be working with on a daily basis. Sometimes your patience can be tested, just understand that you are there to do your job. Do the best you can, work well with everyone.

"In this position, the hours are not always 8:00 to 4:30. There may be times when you will have to get up early in the morning and not get back until late at night. That's just part of it. I remember having to shoot a highway dedication in Bentonville. The event started at 8:00 in the morning and I wasn't able to go up the night before. I had to leave at 3:30 in the morning and be there before 8:00 to get set up."

John's retirement is obviously well-deserved. We asked John what he's going to do with all that extra time he now has. "Well, I hope to be able to do some traveling. Right after retiring, I took my family to the Black Hills of South Dakota. I had always wanted to see Mount Rushmore and the Black Hills. I would encourage anyone considering taking that trip to go ahead and do it.

"I'm very connected with my church, so I'd like to devote more time to doing things there. And, I look forward to spending more time with my Mother. I'm excited to be able to spend some time with her and help her.

"I got a kayak, and I've been out on the water numerous times — it's so enjoyable. Now my wife and son have decided they need kayaks, too! We also like to camp and I enjoy doing a lot of hiking and backpacking, too.

"And of course, I look forward to keeping in touch with all my friends at the AHTD. It's been a large part of my life for over 38 years, and my family's life for even longer. I'll be coming back to the Department to make sure everything is going alright."

Things may keep going 'alright,' but they won't be the same. I already miss John. I miss our photographer, my coworker, my friend. But our work goes on, and his work is still all around us. His photos remain in virtually every building owned by the Department and many others around the state. And though we miss his presence — John doesn't mosey into the office anymore at his own steady, deliberate pace — the legacy of his work will live with us for a lifetime and be forever appreciated.

A few months ago, before I knew of his departure, I asked John what his favorite photograph was that he had ever taken. I just knew he would have one in mind, that his answer would come quickly. It did come quickly, but it wasn't what I expected. He said smiling, "I haven't taken it yet. It will be my last one." I should have known right then that he was planning his exit.

Good luck, John, and thanks for all the photographic memories you've left us with.

Now you've seen a glimpse of another one of our thousands of employees who work behind the scenes. The magazine staff hopes you enjoy these articles, and that in each one you learn a little something you didn't know before — something that reveals the dedication and diversity present throughout the AHTD and its employees. ■



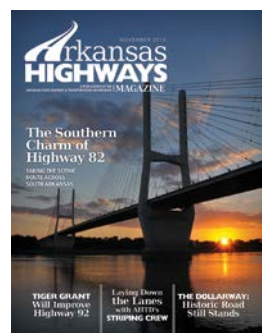
J.J. through the Years



John's last photograph as AHTD Photographer which he took at his retirement party in July of 2014.

"The new Highway 82 Bridge crossing the Mississippi River near Lake Village was big for me as well, mainly because of its design. I've been on it, under it, and above it — it's amazing from every angle.

"One other thing that I think has been significant in my career has been the improvements that we've made to our *Arkansas Highways* magazine. We were

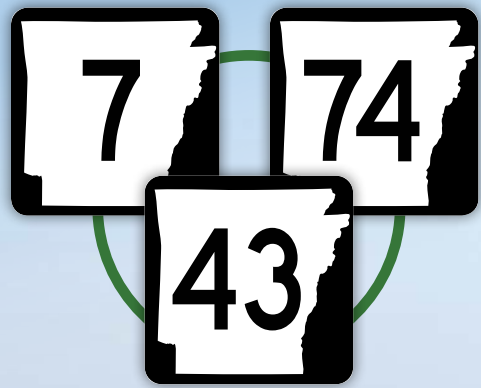


The November 2013 issue of *Arkansas Highways* magazine.

doing only two magazines a year. Then we transitioned into producing a magazine every other month and we began using color photographs.

We had such great chemistry on the staff and the magazine absolutely speaks for itself. It has won several awards and multiple people have made comments about how good it is and the great articles that are in it. We really appreciate the positive reception. I'm happy and proud to be a part of that."

John also pointed out some of the dangers of the job, some of which are experienced by hundreds of AHTD employees every day. "Due to the nature of our work here at the AHTD, just being on the highway with traffic going by is extremely dangerous. It's scary when you are on the side of the road and your job requires you to be close to the yellow stripe on the highway. You have heavy trucks going by and sometimes you can even



WEEKEND ROAD TRIP:

OZARK NATIONAL FOREST

BY DAVID NILLES

THIS MONTH'S WEEKEND ROAD TRIP is all about spending time in the great outdoors.

For canoeing, hiking and much more we travel Highways 7, 74 and 43 into northern Arkansas and Newton County. This trip will take us into Buffalo River country and the towns of Jasper, Ponca and Boxley.

Upon leaving Interstate 40 at Russellville and heading north on Arkansas Scenic 7, it doesn't take long to begin to enjoy the spectacular beauty of the mountains in the **Ozark National Forest**.

For an impressive look at what lies ahead, be sure to pull into Arkansas' first official rest stop... **Rotary Ann**¹. This rest stop is one of the few places in the Ozarks where you have a panoramic view of the Boston Mountain highlands. A history of the area can be found at the rest stop. Continuing north towards Jasper, you'll find additional scenic overlooks. Just up the road from Rotary Ann, stop at the Cliff House Inn and take in the view of the "**Arkansas Grand Canyon**"². If it is mealtime, the view from the restaurant provides the perfect backdrop to a good meal. Many times, a cool mountain breeze is blowing in the mountains this far north.

Highway 7 eventually leads into the town of **Jasper**³. This small town is a great place to call headquarters if you are staying in the Buffalo River area over several days.

(continued on page 26)



(Background): Rotary Ann Overlook on Arkansas Scenic Highway 7.

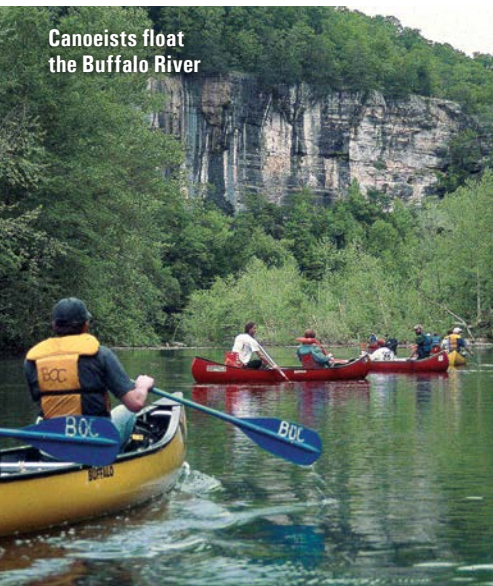
(Above): "Arkansas Grand Canyon" Overlook at the Cliff House Inn.

Pruitt Bridge over the Buffalo River

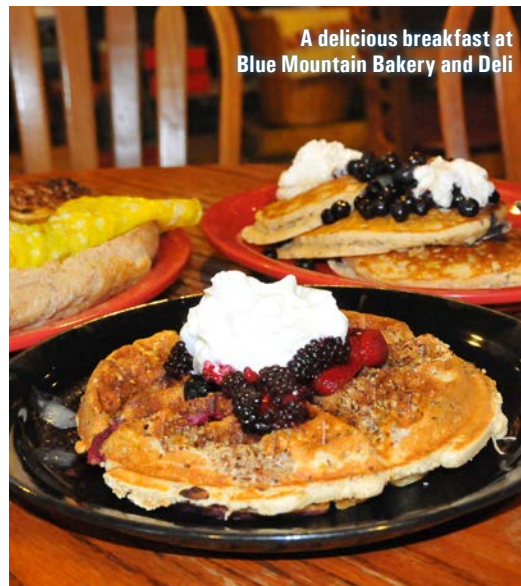


THE BUFFALO RIVER
IS THIS COUNTRY'S FIRST
NATIONAL RIVER. THE RIVER
FLOWS FOR 135 MILES AND
IS ONE THE FEW REMAINING
UNDAMMED RIVERS IN THE
LOWER 48 STATES.

Canoeists float the Buffalo River



A delicious breakfast at Blue Mountain Bakery and Deli



There are numerous good places to eat downtown if it is meal time. Right on the courthouse square is the Ozark Café, known for its delicious sandwiches and plate lunches. Down the street is the Blue Mountain Bakery and Deli. The deli emphasizes all-natural, fresh ingredients and is home to amazing breakfasts, pastries, sandwiches and pizzas. Homemade jams can also be found here.

FLOATING THE BUFFALO

For your first look at the Buffalo River, head east out of town on Highway 7. On the edge of town, you will cross the **Pruitt Bridge**⁴. Just on the far end of the bridge is a parking area and several paths leading to impressive views of the river and the bridge.

The Buffalo River is this country's first national river. The river flows for 135 miles and is one the few remaining undammed rivers in the lower 48 states. Floating on the river by canoe, kayak, raft or even a tube is not to be missed as you will experience running rapids and quiet pools depending on where you put in. The crystal clear water and the surrounding scenery down river can't be matched anywhere. Floating season on the upper Buffalo is March through June. If you don't have a canoe or kayak, there are numerous outdoor rental operations that will get you on the river and provide a shuttle as well. Hiking trails and campsites can be found throughout the area.

PONCA: FLOAT HEADQUARTERS

The town of **Ponca**⁵ makes a good destination if you are planning to float the river. Cabins are available in town for overnight stays and several float

outfitters provide everything you need for a great canoe trip down the river. There's even a zip line for the more adventurous.

A good one-day trip is the float from Ponca to Kyle's Landing. The ten-mile trip takes anywhere from four to six hours and you can pack a lunch to enjoy along the way. Big Bluff and Hemmed-in-Hollow are highlights of this section of the river. Hemmed-in-Hollow is the tallest waterfall between the Rockies and the Appalachians. It is just a short hike from the river. Steel Creek and Pruitt are also popular launch sites.

ELK WATCHING

One of the newer attractions in the Ponca area is the **Elk Education Center**⁶ right on Highway 43. Between 1981 and 1995, elk were re-introduced to the Buffalo River area. Today, approximately 450 elk make their home here. The Education Center offers exhibits that focus on the history and recovery of the elk herd in the area. Hands-on displays and interactive computer quizzes can be found indoors. A trail along Ponca Creek and a picnic area allow visitors to enjoy the surrounding area. The Center is found on Highway 43, a quarter mile north of the intersection with Highway 74. Elk can be easily seen at dusk along the road as they graze in the area between Ponca and Boxley, on Highway 43.

HORSESHOE CANYON

Just over seven miles west of Jasper, on Highway 74, is a place this longtime Arkansas resident has never seen. It's Horseshoe Canyon and the only way to experience its beauty is to pay a visit to **Horseshoe Canyon Ranch**⁷. The canyon is appropriately named as the canyon floor is surrounded by high rock bluffs in a horseshoe shape. Nestled on the canyon floor is a working 1,700-acre family dude ranch. There's plenty to do including horseback riding, a zip line, hiking in the surrounding area, disc golf, swimming in the pool, hayrides, cookouts, camping and rock climbing. Stay for several days or a week in a rustic log cabin and enjoy the view from the porch.

Horseshoe Canyon has become a magnet for those who enjoy rock climbing. There are 430 different climbs on the surrounding bluffs and they are set up for everyone from beginners to world class enthusiasts. The last weekend of September, the Ranch hosts "24 Hours of Horseshoe Hell," a rock climbing event that attracted 1,200 climbers last year.

(continued on page 28)

Elk are often seen grazing along Highway 43



Schuyler Svendsen of Conway, Arkansas, climbs a route in Horseshoe Canyon



HIKING TO HAWKSBILL CRAG

Hiking trails abound in this area of Newton County. In addition to Hemmed-in-Hollow, a must-see landmark is **Hawksbill Crag**⁸, also called Whitaker Point. A 40-minute hiking trail leads to one of the most photographed locations in Arkansas. Hawksbill Crag towers hundreds of feet into the air providing a view for miles. The location is featured in many travel brochures and has even been included in the Disney film "Tuck Everlasting." The trail is a total of three miles round trip and is an easy to moderate hike.

To reach Hawksbill Crag, take Highway 21 South through Boxley Valley south of

Ponca. Turn right on County Road 5, Cave Mountain Road, and travel approximately 6 miles to the trail head. The road to the crag is best traveled by truck or by a 4-wheel drive vehicle.

LOST VALLEY TRAIL

The **Lost Valley Trail**⁹ is one of the most popular and beautiful hiking trails in the Buffalo River area. It begins at the Lost Valley campgrounds and ends at Cobb Cave, 1.5 miles through the woods. The trail follows beside Clark Creek and features several waterfalls as you hike. The most inspiring of the falls is Eden Falls. Also along the way are a natural bridge and a large bluff shelter. Near the

end of the trail is Cobb Cave. Feel free to be a little adventurous and go spelunking into the cave. It is a tight squeeze for about 200 feet, but then opens into a large room with a 35-foot waterfall. Don't forget a flashlight if you are planning to enter! Lost Valley is on Highway 43, one mile south of Ponca. Take the paved access road to the right and travel one mile to end.

As you travel south out of Ponca, be sure to take a few minutes to take in the scenery at **Boxley Baptist Church**¹⁰. The church was built in the 1870s and, with its mountain backdrop, it captures the beauty of the area. Watch for it just past the junction with Highway 21.

THE PARKER-HICKMAN FARMSTEAD

For a glimpse of the lives of early settlers in the area, visit the **Parker-Hickman Farmstead**¹¹ at Erbie. The home is the oldest standing log structure in the region and was built between 1847 and 1849 by the Parker Family. By 1912, the Hickman Family had taken up residence here. Today, the farmstead is still in the same shape it was over 150 years ago. Swing open the gate and take a look inside. An orchard still stands near the house as do several barns. Just up the hill is a loop trail leading to the Cherry Grove Cemetery. The entire area was purchased by the National Park Service in 1982. In 1987, the farmstead was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The farmstead is located on Highway 7 North, about five miles south of the Buffalo River Bridge. Turn in at the sign for the Erbie campground and follow the dirt road for several miles. The historic area is just beyond the turn for the campgrounds.

Our road trip ends here but there is much more to see and do when you consider all the opportunities awaiting you in northern Arkansas. One could easily spend a week in this area alone enjoying the natural beauty of the Natural State. ■

Horseshoe Canyon Ranch



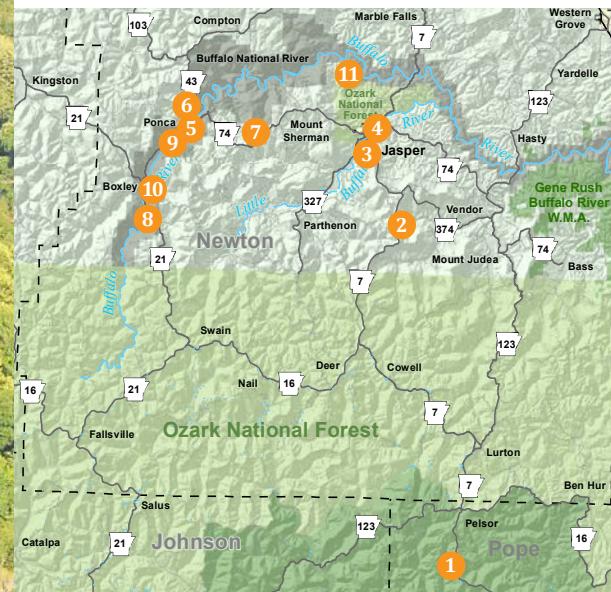
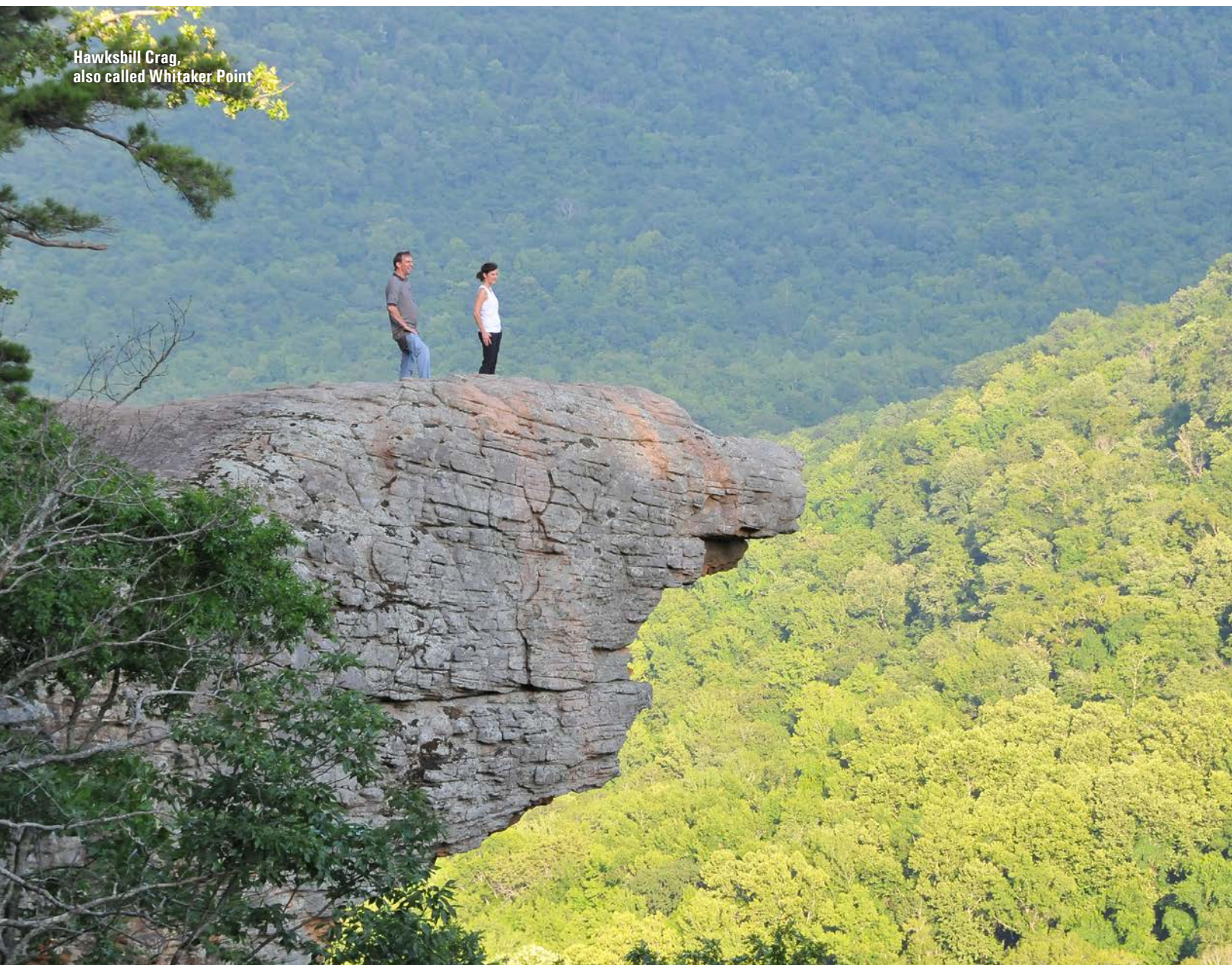
Boxley Baptist Church



Lost Valley Trail



Hawksbill Crag,
also called Whitaker Point



The Parker-Hickman Farmstead





IFTA HONORS VICKI HAYDON

WITH LEADERSHIP AWARD

The International Fuel Tax Association (IFTA) has recognized Vicki Haydon, of the Internal Audit Division, for her work within the IFTA community. The organization presented Haydon with the 2014 Richard L. Reeves IFTA Leadership Award at its 2014 Business Meeting held in Pittsburgh in August.

The Leadership Award is presented to an individual who has distinguished herself of himself by outstanding contributions and involvement within IFTA. It recognizes effective leadership and outstanding accomplishments and contributions.

"I was humbled and honored to be chosen as the 2014 recipient," Haydon stated. "Being a part of an organization that realizes the uniqueness of Canadian Provinces, each State's fuel tax laws and industry's issues for over 20 years has made me a better auditor, given me insights that I would otherwise not have been exposed to, and provided a platform to share work with many across the country who are equally passionate about motor fuel taxes."

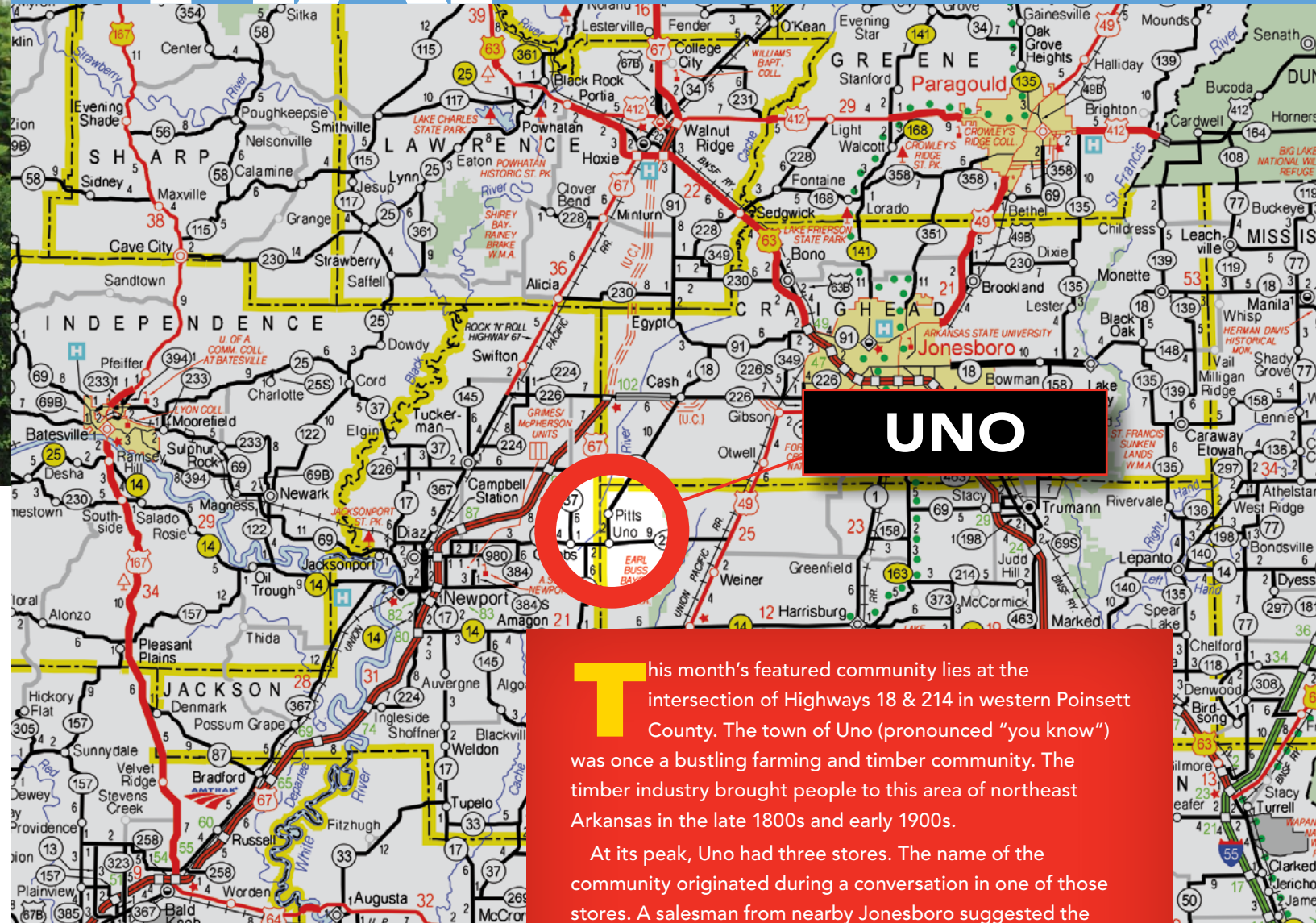
Haydon, AHTD Audit Manager – Motor Fuel, has been

Vicki Haydon with the 2014 Richard L. Reeves IFTA Leadership Award



ON THE MAP

SPENDING TIME WITH AN ARKANSAS HIGHWAY MAP CAN BE INTERESTING. THE FOLLOWING IS THE NAME OF AN ACTUAL TOWN IN ARKANSAS! HAVE YOU EVER VISITED HERE?



This month's featured community lies at the intersection of Highways 18 & 214 in western Poinsett County. The town of Uno (pronounced "you know") was once a bustling farming and timber community. The timber industry brought people to this area of northeast Arkansas in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

At its peak, Uno had three stores. The name of the community originated during a conversation in one of those stores. A salesman from nearby Jonesboro suggested the community needed a name in order to make delivery of goods easier. Justice of the Peace John Howard was in the store at the time and was asked his opinion. His reply was "You know this is your store and you can name it Uno."

Even with three stores, the town failed to grow in the years that followed. Timber land was eventually converted to farm land. Cotton and corn were the chief crops until the Depression. Rice is now the main crop in the surrounding area.

Over the years, people began to leave the farmland for larger communities. Today, other than a road sign, the only reminder Uno existed is a local cemetery. ■

Information provided by The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture at www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.



SPECIAL EVENTS

AROUND THE STATE

BY GLENN BOLICK

Van Buren Sign Unveiling Signifies Completion of INTERSTATE 540 PROJECT

The largest single construction contract to be let in the near 100-year history of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department has come to an end. Commissioner Dick Trammel headlined a group gathered in Van Buren on August 11th to celebrate the completion of the \$78.1 million project with a sign unveiling.

"We are proud to add the 'Project Completed' sign to this project sign today," said Trammel. "Everyone in the Van Buren/Fort Smith area has been so accommodating and understanding while this job was under construction."

The record contract was awarded to Kiewit Infrastructure South in November of 2012. The scope included rubblizing existing lanes, replacing that with seven miles of new pavement, replacing nine bridges and modifications to four other bridge structures. Trammel noted that the contractor had bid a full year less construction

time than the next lowest bidder.

"To complete a project of this magnitude in just two years is pretty amazing," said Van Buren Mayor Bob Freeman.

Fort Smith Mayor Sandy Sanders added, "The Department kept all of us well informed about the job and just did an outstanding job seeing this get done. Travel between our two towns has never been easier."

The Department installs "Voter-Approved" signs on the ends of each work site for all projects funded under the Interstate Rehabilitation Program (IRP) and the Connecting Arkansas Program (CAP).

Once the job is completed a "Project Completed" sign is placed across the existing sign. ■



(L. to R.) Fort Smith City Manager Ray Gosack; Commissioner Dick Trammel; Fort Smith Mayor Sandy Sanders

IDRIVEARKANSAS PROMOTION TOUR Draws Attention in Northwest Arkansas

It was well received, and a lot of fun, in Little Rock earlier this spring when the AHTD hosted the "Summertime travel, tourism, visit a State Park, gas up the vehicle, get a soda, go out to eat, stay in a hotel and know where the construction is before your travel season" news conference to promote the IDriveArkansas website. So the Department decided to do it again in Northwest Arkansas.

The Northwest Arkansas Naturals hosted the July 2nd event at their beautiful ballpark in Springdale. Commissioner Dick Trammel served as the main speaker along with our marketing partners, Parks and Tourism Director Richard Davies and Executive Vice President Steve Ferren of the Arkansas Oil Marketers Association.

"Thanks to our partners, people are starting to see the IDriveArkansas brand all over the place," said Commissioner Trammel. "If you are not familiar with the site, then you need to be."

Davies noted that tourism is the second largest economic industry in the State behind agriculture. "We certainly want people to travel our State and take in all the wonderful sites and activities we have to offer, but we sure want them to know about the construction zones when they do."

Ferren added that more and more of their members are getting on board with the IDriveArkansas promotional campaign by placing decals on gas pumps across the State. ■



Arkansas Parks & Tourism Director Richard Davies

NEW INTERSTATE 49 SIGN Unveiled in Alma

Ask anyone in Alma and they will tell you that they are the gateway to Northwest Arkansas, so it was fitting to hold an unveiling ceremony for one of the new Interstate 49 signs on Interstate 40 in town. Commissioner Dick Trammel joined a large gathering of local elected officials and citizens for the event on a hot, sunny June 25th day.

Conversion of the Interstate 540 signs to Interstate 49 from Alma northward to the

State line began in April. Approximately 700 signs had to be converted to the new Interstate designation.

Eventually, Interstate 49 will be an approximately 315-mile highway through western Arkansas connecting Louisiana to Missouri. To date, about 110 of those miles have been completed at a cost of over \$1.2 billion. The section from Texarkana southward to the Louisiana State line is expected to open by the end of this year. ■

Commissioner Dick Trammel speaks to those gathered at the event.



AHTD Safety Officer Carroll Lathan



DISTRICT FOUR SAFETY EVENT Honors Fallen Coworker

It was June 2, 2011, when District 2 employee Dale "Rookie" Williams was killed in a tragic work accident in Pine Bluff. It was in his honor in 2012 that the District held a "Stand Down for Safety" day to promote added safety awareness. The day included inspecting equipment and assessing individual readiness.

Safety Officer Carroll Lathan also handles safety training for District 4 and this year, on July 1st, he enlisted the help of his Safety

Office colleagues to take that event to the west side of the State.

"We allot half a day to more in depth safety meetings and safety equipment/device checks in our vehicles," said Lathan. "We cover the basics — heat stroke, safe climbing in and out of vehicles, backhoe safety, flagging, pre-trip inspections, first aid, etc. A lot of it is just common sense stuff, but we work in an environment that can be very dangerous and we should always err on the side of safety." ■



Dear AHTD,

I work at the Little Rock Air Force Base, driving there from North Little Rock. Just wanted to say, "Great Job" to everyone who has worked on Highway 67/167. Please let everyone know that has worked on the job location that the work is much appreciated! The road is getting so much better — it is a much smoother ride in the area. I know that most people send emails complaining so I wanted to pass along good news and much appreciation of everyone's hard work!

Sincerely,
Virginia Eschbacher
via Email

APPRECIATED IMPROVEMENTS

I am writing in appreciation for the improvements to Rogers Avenue in Fort Smith. You did it well, in a timely manner and with as little disruption to traffic flow as was possible. You have enhanced the safety of our drive and made our ride more comfortable. Thank you!

Sincerely,
David P. Phillips, DDS
Smile Help Dental
Fort Smith, Arkansas

OUTDOOR PHOTOS IN JULY ISSUE

I would like to thank you and your fellow co-workers for a fun event involving the AHTD employees with our picture taking of some of Arkansas' great outdoors. I must admit, I was a little excited to see my pic was one of the few selected. Of course, after seeing the picture of Cedar Falls in the "Weekend Road Trip" article, I realized what "REAL" picture-taking talent is all about!

Thanks again,
Terry Standard
AHTD District Materials Supervisor

HIGHWAY 309 MAGAZINE ARTICLE

I enjoyed your article in *Arkansas Highways* magazine July issue on Mr. Hardy. Bonnie Littleton shown in the picture with Mr. Hardy was my great uncle. He lived a block away from me in Dardanelle where I grew up, and I mowed his grass for him in the summer. He retired and passed away in the late 60's just before I graduated from high school. It was nice to get to see that picture.

Thank you,
Tommy Littleton
AHTD District 8 Maintenance Engineer

HIGHWAY 63 BRIDGE

Thank you so much for repairing the bridge between Hardy and Mammoth Spring! I drive this route every day and I feel much safer now that it has been reworked. My drive this afternoon was smooth, quiet and safe! Great Job!

Thanks,
Kim Thompson
via Email

AHTD PEOPLE

The AHTD employs approximately 3,600 people. We welcome our new employees, congratulate others on promotions and service, and say goodbye to those retiring.

NEW EMPLOYEES

CONSTRUCTION • Kevin Turner, Construction Helper; Damon Bratton, Construction Helper; Luann Glenn, Construction Helper, James Cummins, Construction Helper
ENVIRONMENTAL • Benjamin Thesing, Environmental Analyst I
SURVEYS • Colt Smith, Office Administrative Assistant I; Adam Caplener, Surveys Helper
SYSTEM INFORMATION & RESEARCH • Vu Nguyen, Engineer II
DISTRICT ONE • Tony Whitted, General Laborer; Typhis Cochran, General Laborer, Joshua Stokes, General Laborer, Willie Winfield, Single Axle Truck Driver
DISTRICT TWO • John Anderson, Mechanic; Brian Lunsford, Single Axle Truck Driver
DISTRICT FOUR • Anthony Kennon, General Laborer; Christopher Sutterfield, General Laborer; Aaron Hobbs, General Laborer
DISTRICT SIX • Larry Clark, Single Axle Truck Driver; Wayne Hogue, Single Axle Truck Driver
DISTRICT SEVEN • Lacey Hollingsworth, Single Axle Truck Driver; Michael Robbins, Single Axle Truck Driver
DISTRICT EIGHT • Will Brewer, Single Axle Truck Driver
DISTRICT NINE • Rickey Chambers, Single Axle Truck Driver; Benjamin Campbell, Single Axle Truck Driver
DISTRICT TEN • Marvin Jolly, Single Axle Truck Driver; Nick Sanders, General Laborer; Steven Wortham, Single Axle Truck Driver

PROMOTIONS

ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE • Jay Thompson, Arkansas Highway Police Major
BRIDGE • Steven Peyton, Staff Bridge Design Engineer
HEAVY BRIDGE MAINTENANCE • Brandon Bird, Bridge Repairer I; Michael Hill, Heavy Bridge Maintenance Engineer, Anthony Washam, Crew Leader
HUMAN RESOURCES • Rasmata Subedi, Office Administrative Assistant II
MAINTENANCE • Deviante Foster, Sign Erector
RIGHT OF WAY • Gayle Hitt, Right of Way Plans Designer I
SURVEYS • Spencer Thomas, Surveys Crew Chief
DISTRICT ONE • Shumn Brown, Multi-Axle Truck Driver; Basil Davis, Senior Mechanic; William Johnson, Motor Patrol Operator; Melvin Price, Senior Mechanic
DISTRICT TWO • Jeffery Byerly, Senior Inspector; Homer Cartwright, Motor Patrol Operator; Joseph Kasiah, Distributor/Roller Operator; Stacy Linder, Storeroom Assistant II; Antonio Spicer, General Laborer; Johnny Williams, Crew Leader
DISTRICT THREE • Richard Kidd, Motor Patrol Operator-Finish; Paul Melton, Street Sweeper Operator; Brandon Otis, Bridge Repairer I; Stephen Pickering, Maintenance Aide II
DISTRICT FOUR • Randy Pounds, Motor Patrol Operator
DISTRICT FIVE • Bobby Finley, Distributor/Roller Operator; Taggart Morgan, Motor Patrol Operator; Catrina Sullivan, Distributor/Roller Operator; Jerry Russell, Multi-Axle Truck Driver; William Miller, Multi-Axle Truck Driver
DISTRICT SIX • Ronald Johnson, Construction Aide III; Calvin Metcalf, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator
DISTRICT SEVEN • Billy Albritton, Street Sweeper Operator; Terry Nelson, Distributor/Roller Operator; Oliver Pierce, Construction Project Coordinator; Charles Poore, Maintenance Aide I
DISTRICT EIGHT • Dennis Condley, Crew Leader; Leslie Crawford, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator; Andrew Crotts, Construction Field Engineer II; Bryan Mills, Hydraulic Excavator Operator-Finish; David Teeter, Crew Leader

DISTRICT NINE • Bryce Flower, Construction Aide I; Brayden Middleton, Asphalt Tank Truck Driver; Darren Ramsey, Crew Leader
DISTRICT TEN • Chancie Acosta, Construction Aide II; Christopher Clifford, Maintenance Job Superintendent; Charles Coffman, Maintenance Aide I; Seth Debord, General Laborer; Colton Groves, Maintenance Aide I; Carl Honorable, Rest Area Attendant; James Keasler, Maintenance Aide II; Jonathan McKinney, Construction Aide II; Kevin McLean, Construction Aide II; Nancy Robinson, Maintenance Aide II; Roger Spence Jr., Senior Construction Materials Inspector; Michael Wood, Advanced Construction Field Engineer

SERVICE

ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE • David Smith, Arkansas Highway Police Corporal, 25 years; John Atchley, Arkansas Highway Police Sergeant, 25 years; Sharelle Brown, Office Administrative Assistant II, 5 years
BRIDGE • Christopher Williams, Advanced Bridge Design Engineer, 5 years
CONSTRUCTION • Dwayne Stone, Construction Project Coordinator, 25 years; Claire Rita Rockwell, Office Administrative Assistant V, 25 years; Arthur Williams, Construction Aide III, 15 years; Todd Tookey, Inspector, 15 years; Jonathan Holland, Construction Aide III, 10 years; Judy Stuckey, Field Clerk I, 5 years
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE • Lindy Williams, Commission Secretary, 30 years
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT • Henry McCoy II, Electrician, 5 years
FISCAL SERVICES • Anne-Marie Wagner, Account Analyst, 25 years; Janet Garrett, Senior Accountant, 25 years; Mary Abels, Insurance Account Coordinator, 15 years
LEGAL • Maria Schenetzke, Deputy Chief Counsel, 30 years; Kimberly Jewell, Office Administrative Assistant V, 25 years
MAINTENANCE • Gale Davis, Senior Accountant, 35 years
MATERIALS • Andrea White, Administrative Aide IV, 15 years
RIGHT OF WAY • Timothy Robertson, Right of Way Acquisition Agent II; Brandy Campbell, Beautification Coordinator, 15 years; Geffery Atkinson, Right of Way Plans Designer I, 5 years; Dawn Salgueiro, Right of Way Plans Designer II, 5 years
ROADWAY DESIGN • Brooke Perkins, Staff Design Engineer, 10 years
SURVEYS • Robert Kesl Jr., Photogrammetry Technician IV; Leslie McPherson, Office Administrative Assistant V, 25 years; Brian Robinson, Surveys Aide III, 15 years; Elizabeth Miles, Administrative Aide III
DISTRICT ONE • Roy Bruce, Hydraulic Excavator Operator-Finish, 15 years; Percy Word, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator, 10 years; Virgil Keeler, Area Headquarters Attendant, 10 years; Bernice Ross, Rest Area Attendant, 5 years
DISTRICT TWO • Roy Lester Jr., Crew Leader, 20 years; Bryan Swinney, District Construction Engineer, 15 years; William Garrison, Welder, 10 years; William Linder, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator, 10 years; Terry King, Street Sweeper Operator, 5 years
DISTRICT THREE • Weldon Garrison, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 35 years
DISTRICT FIVE • Danny Watson, Storeroom Supervisor, 35 years; Tommy Satterwhite, Sign Crew Supervisor, 30 years; Michael Davis, Storeroom Assistant II, 20 years; Dan Yates, Motor Patrol Operator-Finish, 20 years; Carroll Seaton, Storeroom Assistant I, 5 years; Johnny Raper, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator, 5 years
DISTRICT SIX • Benjamin Franklin, Station Attendant II, 40 years; Sam Neal Jr, Senior Mechanic, 25 years; Matthew Vernich, Bridge Repairer II, 10 years

DISTRICT EIGHT • David Keeling, Guard, 30 years; William Wood, District Bridge Inspector, 25 years; Donald Cowen, Station Attendant II, 15 years; Kelli Reynolds, Maintenance Aide II, 10 years; Larry Hill, Multi-Axle Truck Driver, 10 years
DISTRICT NINE • David Clark, Senior Mechanic, 10 years; Scott Greenhaw, Bridge Repairer II, 10 years
DISTRICT TEN • Steve Leath, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 30 years; Paul Carr, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 20 years; Paul Ervin, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator, 10 years; Nolan McDougle, Roller Operator, 5 years

RETIREMENT

FISCAL SERVICES • Carl Harrell, Administrative Assistant I, 36+ years
PUBLIC INFORMATION • John Jackson, Multimedia Specialist, 38+ years
RIGHT OF WAY • Timothy Robertson, Right of Way Acquisition Agent II, 35 years
DISTRICT ONE • Ray Woodruff, District Engineer, 39+ years
DISTRICT TWO • Jerry Cleveland, Crew Leader, 8+ years; Franklin Reynolds, Motor Patrol Operator-Finish, 28+ years
DISTRICT THREE • Weldon Garrison, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 34+ years
DISTRICT FIVE • Dennis St. John, Senior Body Repairer & Painter, 28+ years; Johnny Raper, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator, 5 years
DISTRICT NINE • Everett Burr, Sign Crew Supervisor, 40+ years

MEMORIALS

CHIEF ENGINEER'S OFFICE • Virginia K. Jones, 5/30/14, retired
MATERIALS • Michael Creamer, 8/10/14, active
DISTRICT THREE • Jewell D. Poindexter, 8/9/14, retired
DISTRICT FIVE • John William Garner, 8/5/14, active
DISTRICT SIX • Kenneth P. Shipe, 8/3/14, retired
DISTRICT EIGHT • Mickey J. Hill, 7/30/14, retired

ACTIVE DUTY

As of 8/25/14, the AHTD has four employees serving active duty in the United States military. Deployment dates are noted.
ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE • James Friend, AHP Officer, 7/6/14
DISTRICT FOUR • Christina Simmons, Roller Operator, 10/16/13; Arrow Thornburg, Motor Patrol Operator, 5/1/14
DISTRICT SIX • Marco Newnum, Construction Helper, 6/5/14





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