

JANUARY 2016

# Arkansas HIGHWAYS

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

## Keeping Arkansas Bridges Safe

**AHTD'S BRIDGE  
INSPECTION PROGRAM**



Touring the  
City of  
**BENTONVILLE**

**READY TO SERVE:**  
Highway Police Graduate  
New Class

Retirees Association  
Keeps **EMPLOYEES**  
**CONNECTED**



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



## Listening to Our Employees

**T**HE BEGINNING OF THE NEW YEAR IS ALWAYS A GOOD TIME TO PAUSE AND REFLECT ON OUR PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS, TO ASSESS WHAT WE DO WELL AND FOCUS ON WHAT AREAS WE CAN MAKE IMPROVEMENTS IN. The same holds true for the AHTD.

It's helpful to know what things make our Department great and what areas we can improve.

Because it's important for our employees to be totally involved in what we do, our AHTD staff was given the opportunity to participate in an employee engagement survey near the end of 2015. I'm happy to report that of our 3,709 active employees, a total of 3,039 took time to answer the survey. That is an 82 percent participation rate.

Early assessment of survey results are in. They indicate that an overwhelming majority of our employees are satisfied with such things as the Department's retirement plan, company benefits, our vacation and sick leave policies, and job security.

Results also suggest that employees would like to see improvements in some areas in the future. That includes training and development, career growth, performance feedback, employee salaries, and recognition of work.

To help in these areas and as a direct investment in our employees, the Department is working with a software vendor to implement a "performance and learning management system." The system will give our staff more access to training and development opportunities, empower employees to set individual goals, provide resources to employees to help develop their potential, and encourage employees and supervisors to work together and provide feedback in all areas.

There will be more information shared on these new strategies in the months ahead. Incidentally, the employee engagement survey was our first step to introduce email to all of our employees who previously did not have a Department email address. There were over 1,700 employees who were new users to our Department's email system when the survey was sent out.

As we move forward to meet the needs of employees, email will play an important part in our communications and in the functionality of the new performance and learning management system.

Thanks are extended to everyone who took time to participate in our survey. The results are proving to be helpful as we look to the upcoming years and beyond, and continue to make the AHTD a great place to work!



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

**FRONT AND BACK COVER:**  
AHTD Employees Chris Doggett and Kevin Milligan conduct a bridge inspection on the Interstate 55 Bridge at West Memphis.

### EDITOR

David Nilles  
[David.Nilles@ArkansasHighways.com](mailto:David.Nilles@ArkansasHighways.com)

### GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Paula Cigainero  
[Paula.Cigainero@ArkansasHighways.com](mailto:Paula.Cigainero@ArkansasHighways.com)

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Glenn Bolick  
[Glenn.Bolick@ArkansasHighways.com](mailto:Glenn.Bolick@ArkansasHighways.com)

### PHOTOGRAPHER

Rusty Hubbard  
[Russell.Hubbard@ArkansasHighways.com](mailto:Russell.Hubbard@ArkansasHighways.com)

### Correspondence should be directed to:

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

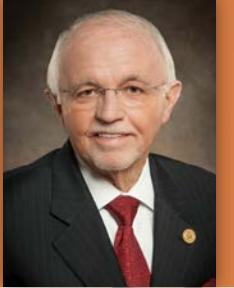


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JANUARY 2016

# CONTENTS

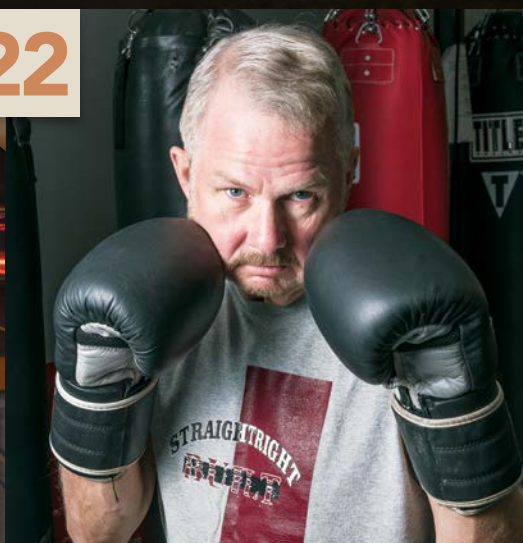
## FEATURES

- 5 ..... Keeping Arkansas Bridges Safe
- 10 ..... Seat Belts Save Lives
- 11 ..... A Closer Look: The Interstate Highway System
- 12 ..... Highway Police Graduate New Class
- 14 ..... Davies Retires from Arkansas Parks & Tourism
- 16 ..... Weekend Road Trip: Bentonville
- 22 ..... Into the Ring with AHTD Retiree Frank Vozel
- 27 ..... AHTD Retirees Association:  
Keeps Employees Connected

16



22



## DEPARTMENTS

- Director's Message ..... 2
- Out & About ..... 21
- Dear AHTD: Letters ..... 28
- Construction Corner ..... 29
- Arkansas Welcome Centers ..... 30
- AHTD People ..... 31

IN THE  
**NEXT** issue

- The Old Saline River Bridge Near Benton
- Texarkana: Twice as Nice
- Governor's Working Group on Highway Funding

## AHTD'S BRIDGE INSPECTION PROGRAM:



# KEEPING ARKANSAS BRIDGES SAFE

BY DAVID NILLES

**T**HERE ARE 12,678 BRIDGES ACROSS THE STATE OF ARKANSAS. THAT INCLUDES BRIDGES ON OUR STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM, COUNTY ROADS, CITY STREETS AND OTHER PUBLIC ROADS. IT'S THE JOB OF THE AHTD'S HEAVY BRIDGE MAINTENANCE SECTION TO MONITOR THE INSPECTIONS OF THOSE BRIDGES AND TO INSURE THEY REMAIN SAFE FOR MOTORISTS. THAT TASK IS SUCCESSFULLY CARRIED OUT THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT'S BRIDGE INSPECTION PROGRAM.

(continued on page 6)



<https://vimeo.com/ahtd/bridgeinspection>

**CLICK HERE**  
FOR VIDEO CONTENT





Fate Canady, Maintenance Aide I, directs traffic through the inspection zone.

“THE HEAVY BRIDGE MAINTENANCE DIVISION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INSPECTING **7,308 BRIDGES** ON THE STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM AS WELL AS **5,370** ON COUNTY, CITY AND OTHER PUBLIC ROADWAYS.”



Chris Doggett, Statewide Bridge Inspector, uses an iPad on location to record data.

## HISTORY AND PURPOSE

In 1967, the Silver Bridge spanning the Ohio River between Point Pleasant, West Virginia, and Gallipolis, Ohio, collapsed resulting in 46 deaths. As a result of that tragedy, federal legislation was passed that required all states to develop and implement a bridge inspection program.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968 required the Secretary of Transportation, with the state highway agencies, to develop National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS). The Act required each state to establish and maintain a current inventory of all bridges on the Federal-Aid Highway System. The Surface Transportation Assistant Act of 1978 greatly expanded the program to require that all bridge structures on the public highway system be inventoried and inspected regularly.

## THE AHTD'S ROLE AS INSPECTOR

“We are responsible for inspecting 7,308 bridges on the State Highway System as well as 5,370 on county, city and other public roadways,” states Mike Hill, Heavy Bridge Maintenance Engineer. “In addition, we assist the Districts as needed with the maintenance on the state bridges in the inventory.”

For most bridges across the State, the Department inspects them every two years. But there are some exceptions.

“For those bridges with weight limits, we look at them every year,” Hill states. “If a bridge is rated structurally deficient or has certain types of details, we like to take a closer look so we inspect those every year as well. Our rules are a little bit tighter than the federal ones.”

## BRIDGE INSPECTION RATINGS

Ideally, the majority of bridges will rate good to fair. But as bridges age, they begin to show some wear. There are two terms heard often when it comes to bridge inspections: “structurally deficient” and “functionally obsolete.” They can be defined as follows:

- **Structurally-Deficient Bridge:** the bridge has deterioration to one or more major components, but is not necessarily unsafe to motorists.
- **Functionally-Obsolete Bridge:** the bridge features outdated building standards, such as older design features. Functionally obsolete bridges are those that do not have adequate lane widths, shoulder widths or vertical clearances to serve current traffic demand, or those that may flood occasionally.

Each bridge is given a numerical inspection rating from one to nine in three key areas including deck, superstructure and substructure.

“The higher the score the better shape a bridge is in,” Hill explains. “For example, nine would be an excellent score, while one

means imminent failure. If a bridge rating gets down to a four in any of the three key areas, that’s when we call it structurally deficient.”

## OUT IN THE FIELD

For the most part, the Department does all of its inspections using AHTD staff.

“We have 24 bridge inspectors and 24 assistant bridge inspectors,” Hill explains. “Twenty-three teams are spread out among our ten Districts and are responsible for those bridges within the District. We also have one statewide inspection team that inspects the more unique and larger bridges.”

Depending on the size and complexity of the bridge, the amount of time it takes to do an inspection can vary. Four or five small bridges or culverts can be inspected in one day. For something as large as the Interstate 40 Bridge crossing the Mississippi River in West Memphis, an inspection can take up to four or five weeks.

In addition to the size of the bridge, traffic traveling on a bridge can come into play.

“Traffic has a big impact because it slows down the inspection,” Hill explains. “Usually, if we can, we try to do our work from underneath so we don’t disrupt traffic. But if we have to bring a Snooper in to do a thorough job, we wind up having to do a lane closure.”

Today, Departments of Transportation do what are called element inspections for

District Two bridge inspectors are lowered into position on a Snooper.



bridges on the National Highway System. The bridge is broken down into different elements and each element is rated.

“The deck is an element, the beams underneath the deck are elements, joints are different elements, etc. We grade each one of those specifically,” Hill states.

During an inspection, teams are looking for deformation, deterioration or damage to the bridge. Depending on the type of bridge the wear can vary.

“For timber bridges, we look for cracks, wood rot and fungus,” Hill explains. “On steel bridges, we are looking for corrosion and cracks. On concrete bridges, we are looking for delamination, efflorescence and cracks. We try to discern if it is something we need to look at a little closer or if it is just normal wear and tear.”

Bridge inspections don’t stop at the surface of the water below the bridge. While the Department takes soundings and probes around the bridges itself, it hires contractors to do the deeper underwater portions of the structure inspections when needed. Taking a close look at bridge elements underwater is done at least every five years.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

When it comes to inspecting bridges, access to the bridge is of critical importance. Because of the nature of the work, ladders are put to good use. In addition, each District has what is called a ‘Snooper.’ These are trucks that sit on the bridge deck and are equipped with mobile platforms. The Snooper lifts inspectors and equipment up and over the side of a bridge and then positions them underneath the deck.

(continued on page 8)



(L. to R.) Chris Doggett and Kevin Milligan take a close look at the underside of the Interstate 55 Bridge over the Mississippi River.



“Our bridge inspections are mostly visual so we have to look at every angle,” says Hill. “Besides using a Snooper, the Inspectors often take a flat bottom boat out to get up under a bridge.”

There are times though that the flow of water can keep teams from doing their inspections.

“We don’t encourage our teams to put a boat in for an inspection if water is approaching high levels or flood stage. We don’t want them getting out there in that kind of water. It’s better to just wait until the water level comes down,” Hill explains.

Once in place, if a problem area is found that needs a closer look during an inspection, teams may do a dye penetrant inspection. A colored dye is applied to the area. The dye is applied like spray paint. It seeps into any fault or fracture and highlights that area for the inspector.

“There are also some ultra-sonic tools that we can use to check pins or deterioration in some areas,” Hill adds.

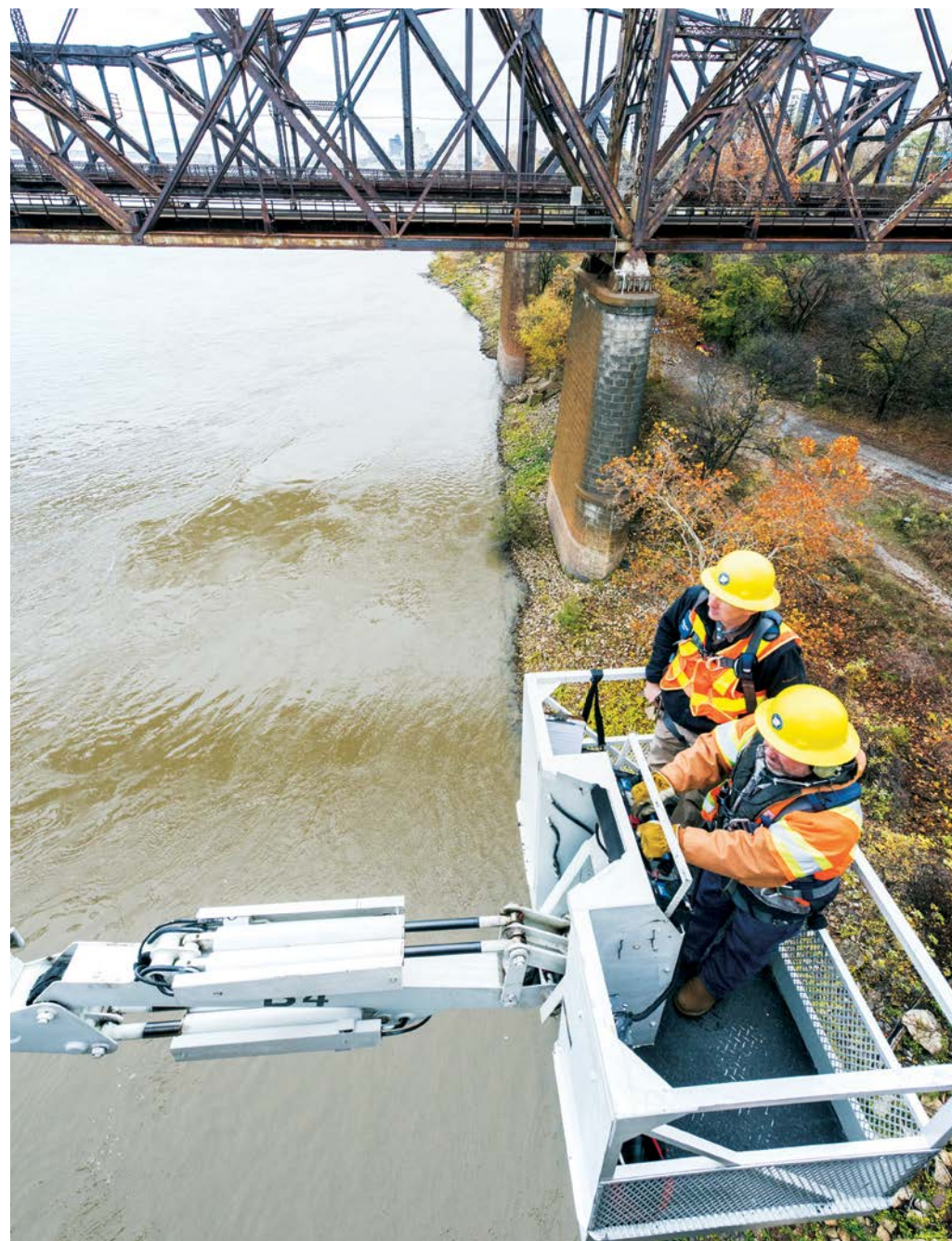
In earlier days, inspection results were recorded on paper. In 2004, inspection data began being entered into a bridge inspection/management computer program called PONTIS. It served as the Bridge Management file. It allowed queries to be run from its database giving better access to that data.

Last year, the next generation of software arrived in the form of InspectTech. It integrates the maintenance needs database into the bridge inspection software. Inspectors are now equipped with iPads on location to collect data while out in the field.

“InspectTech keeps up with the scheduling so we know which bridge inspections come next,” Hill explains. “It also holds all of our data for our bridge records. Our inspectors go out manned with their iPads. They can download their bridges before going on site. The program allows them to make any observations about an inspection on the tablet. When they get back to the office, they can go into more detail if needed.”

“We are unique in that there aren’t many states that are totally mobile right now. While several states are using InspectTech, I believe that our system is working better than anyone else’s at the moment. That credit goes to Michael Ray Jones, our Bridge Management Engineer. He has done a great job getting this system up and running.”

As for the future, with the sudden popularity of drones, one wonders if they may someday be utilized to fly under bridges to capture bridge areas on video that now are done with the naked eye.



“There are some highway departments actually doing some research on that right now,” Hill comments. “I received an e-mail from Florida and they were polling other states. They want to know what other states have found out. There are some problems, because often, drones are GPS-operated and when you fly one under a bridge, you lose your GPS signal. Then you have to be able to see that drone to make sure it is where you think it is. If there is debris covering something, you still have to get up there under the bridge and clean that stuff off. It will be hard to ever replace somebody actually being there and putting their hands on the bridge.”

### A BAD RATING MEANS A CALL TO ACTION

Part of the inspection process is documenting the maintenance needs once an inspection is complete.

“Every maintenance need we find will go to the Construction Engineer in that District,” Hill explains. “The inspector will put a priority on it. Anything from a critical finding in which we need to make repairs immediately to lesser needs will have a priority put on it. The District Construction Engineer reviews the information. From there, if it is a local bridge, it will be put into a report

to the local owner, be it a county judge or a mayor. If it is a bridge on our highway system, the Maintenance Engineer in the District will review and then pass it to the Bridge Superintendent and he will prioritize his crews. They will discuss what needs to be fixed and in what order.

“For our statewide crew, inspection results go to Stewart Linz, the AHTD Staff Heavy Bridge Maintenance Engineer. He works closely with our statewide inspection team and reviews every report that comes through.”

### TRAINING TO BECOME AN INSPECTOR

Being a bridge inspector is unique because of the amount of training required.

“Our inspectors must attend a one-week class to learn bridge terminology and some of the basics of inspecting,” Hill explains. “Or, there is a 14-hour online class they can go through as an alternative with a test at the end of the session.”

“After that, you have to pass another two-week class with a final exam. A score of at least 70% is required. Before workers can become an inspector, they must also have five years of inspection experience or some type of bridge work. At least two and a half years of those five years of experience has to be inspection work as an assistant to a bridge inspector. Then they qualify to become an inspector.”

In a year’s time, the bridge inspection teams carry out approximately 7,500 inspections of varying sorts on Arkansas’ bridges. From the deck to the substructure to the elements underwater, their job is to guarantee that motorists can travel safely across Arkansas’ bridges.

“We have a good program here because our people know that their job is important and they take their job seriously. I’m proud of the work they do,” Hill says. ■





# SEAT BELTS SAVE LIVES

## DO YOU WEAR YOURS?

**F**OR SOME PEOPLE, IT'S AUTOMATIC. They get in their vehicle and immediately put on their seat belt without giving it a second thought. Others may wear one occasionally and, unfortunately, a third group sometimes forgets to buckle up at all.

The fact is, seat belts save over 13,000 lives every year. One of them could be yours, so here are the Top Five things you should know about buckling up.

Buckling up is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash. During a crash, being buckled up helps keep you safe and secure inside your vehicle, whereas being thrown out of a vehicle during a crash is almost always deadly.

Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, not replace them. If you don't wear your seat belt, you could be thrown into a rapidly opening frontal air bag; a movement of such force could injure or even kill you.

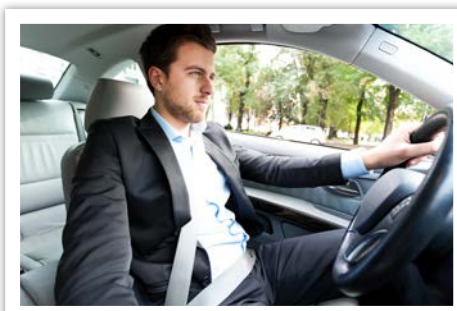


### HOW TO BUCKLE UP SAFELY.

- Place the shoulder belt across the middle of your chest and away from your neck.
- Adjust the lap belt across your hips below your stomach. Never put the shoulder belt behind your back or under an arm.

### FIT MATTERS.

- When buying a new car, check to see that the seat belts are a good fit for you.
- Look into buying seat belt adjusters which can help you get the best fit. If you need a roomier belt, contact your vehicle manufacturer to obtain seat belt extenders.
- If you drive an older or classic car with lap belts only, check with your manufacturer about how to retrofit your car with today's lap/shoulder belts.



### OCCUPANT PROTECTION IS FOR EVERYONE.

To find out how to secure your littlest passengers, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) website at [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov) and click on "4 Steps for Kids."

If you're expecting a little one, check out the NHTSA's brochure "Should pregnant women wear seat belts?" to learn how important it is for you and your unborn child to buckle up the right way.

For more information about seat belts, child safety seats and air bags, call the DOT Auto Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236 or visit [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov).

*Information for this article was provided by The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.*



# THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

BY DAVID NILLES

**T**HIS IS THE SECOND IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES THAT TAKES A LOOK AT OUR COUNTRY'S INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM. PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S VISION OF A BETTER SYSTEM OF HIGHWAYS FOR THE UNITED STATES BECAME A REALITY IN 1956 WITH THE NATIONAL INTERSTATE AND DEFENSE HIGHWAYS ACT. THE NEXT STEP WAS TO CONSTRUCT THE HIGHWAY SYSTEM.

### STANDARDS AND CONSTRUCTION

With funding in place, the focus turned to design and construction of the Interstate system. Technical standards for the highways were highly regulated. The system was to feature 4-lane roadways. The lanes had to be 12-feet wide with shoulders of 10 feet. Bridges on the Interstate system had to have 14-feet of clearance. Grades had to be less than 30 percent and the highway had to be designed for travel at 70 miles an hour. One of the most notable features of the system was its concept of limited access. Access to the 46,000-mile system is limited to approximately 16,000 interchanges.

Each state transportation department managed its own program for location, design, right-of-way acquisition and construction. The states also were responsible for the ownership and maintenance of the system, and in 1981, they began receiving federal funds for maintenance.

Two states can claim the first project, depending on how "first" is defined. The first project to go to construction with Interstate Construction funds under the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act was in Missouri. The project on U.S. 40 (later designated the Interstate 70 Mark Twain Expressway) in St. Charles County got underway on August 13, 1956. Officials erected a sign stating, "This is the first project in the United States on which actual construction was started under provisions of the new Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956."

Kansas had begun a construction project on U.S. 40 (Interstate 70) west of Topeka before the

1956 Act, but awarded the final paving contract under the new legislation. Because this was the first paving under the 1956 Act, Kansas erected a sign claiming, "This is the first project in the United States completed under provisions of the new Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956."

It should also be noted that Arkansas was the first state to complete all of its original allotment of Interstate miles. ■

*In the next Arkansas Highways, we will look at Interstate numbering and mile markers.*

MORE THAN ANY SINGLE ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT SINCE THE END OF THE WAR, THIS ONE WOULD CHANGE THE FACE OF AMERICA WITH STRAIGHTAWAYS, CLOVERLEAF TURNS, BRIDGES AND ELONGATED PARKWAYS. ITS IMPACT ON THE AMERICAN ECONOMY — THE JOBS IT WOULD PRODUCE IN MANUFACTURING AND CONSTRUCTION, THE RURAL AREAS IT WOULD OPEN UP — WAS BEYOND CALCULATION.

— Dwight D. Eisenhower  
"Mandate for Change  
1953-1956"

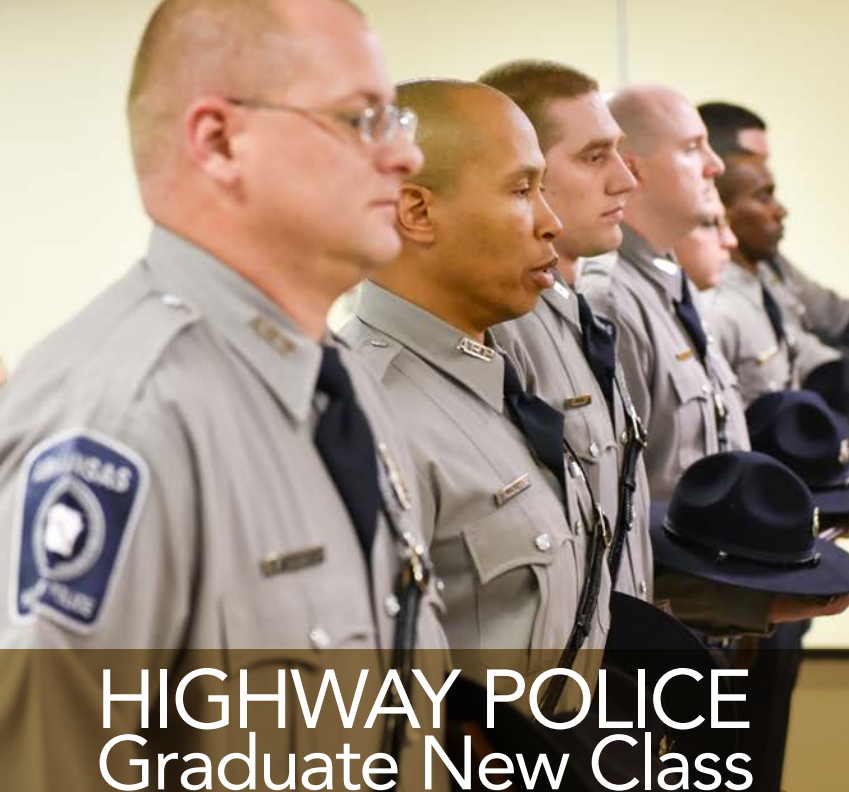


Missouri claims the first interstate highway project to begin construction after the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956.



Kansas claims the first interstate highway project completed under the provisions of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956.





# HIGHWAY POLICE Graduate New Class

BY DAVID NILLES

**DECEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> WAS AN IMPORTANT DAY FOR THE GRADUATING CLASS OF THE ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE (AHP) RECRUIT TRAINING PROGRAM. A TOTAL OF 13 NEW PATROL OFFICERS WERE RECOGNIZED AT A GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR RECENTLY COMPLETING THE PROGRAM.**

Family and friends gathered at the AHTD Central Office to pay honor to the newest members of the Highway Police family.

AHP Chief Ron Burks welcomed attendees to the ceremony.

"I congratulate each of our graduates and I thank their families for the sacrifices they have made and will continue to make," Burks commented.

"This is a noble and honorable profession and one our society demands. To our graduates, hold your head high and wear your uniform with pride. Uphold your principles on a daily basis."

Burks recognized Sergeant William Scott, Corporal Greg Massey and Captain Jeff Bickerstaff for development of the academy curriculum.

Class spokesperson Patrol Officer Rogan Ross had an opportunity to address his fellow graduates at the event.

"Today represents the accomplishment of our goals," he told the group. "I'm proud of these guys and I speak for the group when I say we are ready to get to work."

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.

"The Arkansas Highway Police and the Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Department have a history that dates back over 80 years," stated AHTD Director Scott Bennett when he addressed the group. "Today, we have a group of graduates



AHP Major Jay Thompson

# READY TO SERVE

2015 Graduating Class of the AHP Recruit Training Program



that will become a part of that history. I appreciate what you do and who you are, as does the traveling public."

Jokingly, Bennett added, "Your biggest challenge is yet to come. That will be when Major Thompson asks you to ride a bull for the next Cops on Bulls event. I challenge you all; I did it two years ago and survived."

During the ceremony, the Firearms Award for top gun in marksmanship was presented to Rogan Ross. He also received top academic honors.

"This is the first time ever that a graduate has achieved top honor in every test taken," Major Thompson said of Ross' accomplishments.

The 2015 graduating class includes the following new Patrol Officers: Jimmy Barker, Joseph Beggs, Randy Couch, Seth Debord, Zachary Emrick, Josh Graves, Duane Grice, Sevelta Mackey, Nicholas Owens, Rogan Ross, Oakley Vanderlinden, Barry Winfrey and Benjamin Wood.



(L. to R.) AHP Chief Ron Burks, Patrol Officer Rogan Ross, and AHTD Director Scott Bennett



(L. to R.) Patrol Officers Sevelta Mackey and Jimmy Barker

The *Arkansas Highways* staff spent a few minutes with two members of the graduating class to get their thoughts on beginning their new roles.

**JIMMY BARKER** was a civilian technician for the Department of Defense. He retired from there and attended the police academy at Pochontas before working for the Poinsett County Sheriff's Department as a Deputy Sheriff. His next stop was the Arkansas Highway Police.

**SEVELTA MACKEY** served in the National Guard for 15 years including one year on active duty before coming to the AHP.

## WHY THEY JOINED THE ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE:

**BARKER:** I knew a couple of officers before coming here so I was somewhat familiar with what they did. I want to get involved in drug interdiction and assist in providing safety for truckers on the highways. This seemed like a way I could help and do both.

**MACKEY:** When I was growing up, my dad was in law enforcement in Marvell, Arkansas. It's always been something I've thought about doing but I was involved in the military at the time. When I was released from active duty, I knew it was something I wanted to try.

## HOW THEY DESCRIBE THE AHP TRAINING PROGRAM

**MACKEY:** I was very surprised at how much knowledge you have to have to begin as a patrol officer. The training has lived up to what I had heard about it!

**BARKER:** I've really been impressed with the quality of the instructors and the training here. I had no idea how much went



AHP Academy Cadets in class

into being an officer for the Highway Police. There are so many rules and regulations we have had to learn in the academy.

## THE MOST ENJOYABLE PART OF TRAINING

**BARKER:** I enjoyed the Emergency Vehicle Operators Course (EVOC). That's training for driving in all types of conditions.

**MACKEY:** I liked EVOC as well. They teach you how to maneuver your vehicle at high speeds. A driving course is set up with cones and you must keep your vehicle within the course laid out.

## THOUGHTS ON GRADUATING AND GOING OUT INTO THE FIELD

**MACKEY:** I am ready to use what I have learned out on our highways. I'm very excited to get started.

**BARKER:** I'm ready to go to work. I'm looking forward to the truck inspections and getting into drug interdiction. Those are both big problems today. I'm ready to do whatever I can to help the Department. ■





**Arkansas**  
THE NATURAL STATE

# Davies Retires from ARKANSAS PARKS & TOURISM

BY DAVID NILLES

**R**ICHARD DAVIES, longtime executive director of the Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism (ADPT), retired at the end of 2015 after 21 years on the job as Director and 42 years with the the ADPT.

Davies was appointed to the position by then-Governor Bill Clinton in 1990. In the years that followed, he was reappointed by Governors Jim Guy Tucker, Mike Huckabee, Mike Beebe and Asa Hutchinson.

The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department has enjoyed a long and successful partnership with Parks & Tourism during Davies' years of service and before, dating back to 1937.

## WELCOMING VISITORS TO ARKANSAS

The two agencies have worked together for years making the State's Arkansas Welcome Centers the success they are today. Thirteen Welcome Centers are strategically located across Arkansas providing tourists with local information and a break from the road. Twelve of the 13 Centers are owned and maintained by the AHTD while staffing is provided by the Department of Parks and Tourism.

Richard Davies speaks at the opening dedication ceremony for the Helena-West Helena Welcome Center in November 2013 along with AHTD officials.



(L. to R.) AHTD Director Scott E. Bennett and former Director of ADPT Richard Davies.

The two agencies have seen eight of the Welcome Centers replaced with brand new buildings over the past twelve years in a program kicked off by Governor Mike Huckabee. In late 2013, the ribbon was cut on the last of the eight Centers to be rebuilt over that period. The new facilities are located in Helena-West Helena, Texarkana, Corning, El Dorado, Fort Smith/Van Buren, Lake Village, Blytheville and West Memphis.

New buildings are also planned for the Red River Welcome Center near Texarkana and at Harrison in 2016.

The Department has also worked with the ADPT on converting some of the State's rest areas into Tourist Information Centers. Work gets underway soon at the Big Piney and White River locations, and plans for Social Hill will be let to contract in February.

## THE FIGHT AGAINST LITTER

The AHTD has also teamed up with the Department of Parks & Tourism in the fight against roadside litter, working together on the Keep Arkansas Beautiful campaign. The AHTD is one of the sponsors of the annual Great Arkansas

Cleanup, the annual fall statewide litter pick up campaign.

Keep Arkansas Beautiful and the AHTD also provide a 24-hour, toll-free litter hotline that has seen successful results since it began in 2005.

## BLAZING A TRAIL IN SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS

The AHTD and the ADPT have partnered to extend the Delta Heritage Trail State Park in southeast Arkansas.

The trail is a "Rails to Trails" conversion of an abandoned railway line and is intended for bicyclists, walkers and joggers. The State of Arkansas, through efforts by both agencies, acquired the abandoned right-of-way corridor in 1992 through a land donation from the Union Pacific Corporation. Currently, the trail right-of-way extends 73.2 miles from Helena Junction southward to Cypress Bend. Approximately 21 miles of trail corridor have been completed from Helena

Junction to the community of Elaine.

The Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism extended the trail 14.7 miles on the southern end in 2010. A new extension will begin at the junction with Highway 1, in the vicinity of Rohwer, and continue southward to Arkansas City.

Under the partnership with Parks & Tourism, the AHTD oversees and inspects the construction and is responsible for maintenance once the new extension is completed. Funding for the project is provided by Parks & Tourism.

## ROADSIDE SIGNAGE

The AHTD and the ADPT have also worked together to provide roadside signage for travelers. Among those are tourist destination signs for motorists looking for attractions, restaurants, gas stations and hotels. One of the newest collaborations has been for signage on the Heritage Trail. The trail leads to

important sites that tell a part of the State's early history.

"Our partnership with Parks & Tourism dates back to 1937," AHTD Director Scott Bennett points out. "It's obvious that our work goes hand-in-hand, tourism is a huge part of Arkansas' economy, and our goal is to help our many visitors reach those attractions safely and efficiently.

"Richard has been a great leader and partner in those efforts over the years. We each have our own constraints to deal with and he was always good about explaining his side, listening to our side, and brainstorming about how to come up with solutions that were best for the many travelers and visitors we serve.

"I'm not sure that there is another partnership between two state agencies that positively affects as many people as the partnership between Parks & Tourism and the AHTD." ■



The Arkansas Welcome Center at Texarkana





Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art



The Bachman-Wilson House was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1954.



Crystal Bridges – Colonial to Early 19th Century Gallery



Crystal Bridges – 1940s to Now Gallery

WEEKEND

# ROAD TRIP:

# BENTONVILLE

BY DAVID NILLES

**W**HEN ARKANSANS THINK OF CITIES IN THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE STATE, THEY USUALLY THINK OF THE RIBBON OF TOWNS ALONG INTERSTATE 49... FAYETTEVILLE, SPRINGDALE, ROGERS AND BENTONVILLE. THIS MONTH'S WEEKEND ROAD TRIP FOCUSES ON JUST ONE OF THOSE TOWNS... BENTONVILLE, AND ALL THERE IS TO DO THERE.

For a leisurely route up to the northwest area, try traveling Highway 71 heading north out of Alma. The slower pace allows you to enjoy the scenery more and, at **Artists' Point** in Winslow, the view is spectacular. It's a great place to stretch your legs. Inside the store are all kinds of foods and gifts. Right up the road in Winslow, take in a meal at **Grandma's House Café** where you'll enjoy excellent homemade cooking and a fabulous pie buffet.

Follow Highway 71 on up to West Fork or Greenland then drive on Interstate 49 for the short ride on up to Bentonville.

Bentonville is home to one of the most talked about attractions in Arkansas, the **Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art**<sup>1</sup>. The museum is a "must see" destination and the first stop on this road trip. Crystal Bridges was founded by Alice Walton and is located on 120 wooded acres that feature a natural spring feeding into the museum's ponds. The building

complex was designed by renowned architect Moshe Safdie, a recipient of a Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architects. Safdie's works are known for their dramatic curves, arrays of geometric patterns, use of windows, and key placement of open and green spaces. Opened in 2011, Crystal Bridges fits that description. Inside, there are six galleries, a research library, classrooms and grand hall for special events. There is also a full service restaurant named Eleven. The museum's permanent collection spans five centuries and features more than 400 masterworks by artists from Colonial times through today. Currently in the galleries throughout the spring is *Changing Perspectives of Native*

*Americans*. Visitors could spend an entire day looking at the works of art in the galleries.

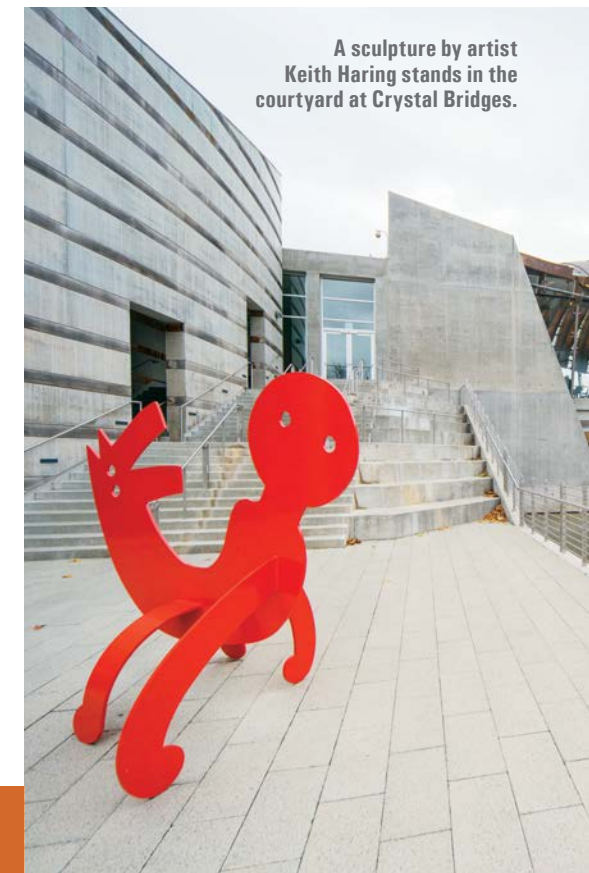
There's plenty going on outdoors at Crystal Bridges as well. The **Crystal Bridges Trail**<sup>2</sup> is a shaded 1.5-mile multi-use trail which ambles along the western edge of Crystal Bridges' park. While walking the trail, guests will enjoy beautiful sculpture as well as a Sky Space designed by James Turrell that allows the viewer to experience the ever-changing aspects of light and space. Other trails on the premises include the Art Trail, the Rockledge Trail and the North Lawn Trail. The trails connect to the City's wider network of trails as well.

Also on the grounds at the museum is

the newly opened **Bachman-Wilson House**<sup>3</sup>. This beautiful 1,800-square foot home was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1954 and was built on the banks of a tributary of the Raritan River in Millstone, New Jersey. Due to the threat of repeated flooding, owners Lawrence and Sharon Tarantino decided relocating the home was the best option. The home was taken apart piece by piece; everything labeled and was then rebuilt at Crystal Bridges. Admission is free to the home, however, advance tickets are required.

Crystal Bridges is located at 600 Museum Way. Keep in mind the museum and the Bachman-Wilson House are closed on Tuesdays.

(continued on page 18)



A sculpture by artist Keith Haring stands in the courtyard at Crystal Bridges.



One of the newest attractions in Bentonville, located just a block from Crystal Bridges, is the **Scott Family Amazeum**<sup>4</sup>. This interactive learning museum is a fun place for kids and adults alike. Learning takes on a hands-on approach as visitors discover all kinds of interesting exhibits. Discover the hands-on Hershey's Lab, the Market, Cloud Theater, Water Amazement, Homestead Cabin & Farm, the Cave and much more. Don't miss a chance to paint on the glass walls in the Art Studio or feel like you are up in the trees in the Canopy Climber. The Nature & Weather exhibit features a touchable tornado and a topographic sandbox. In addition to the permanent exhibits, a temporary dinosaur exhibition titled "Fossils Exposed" continues through March. Hours of exploration, learning and fun come together here so plan your trip accordingly. The Amazeum is located at

1009 Museum Way. Like Crystal Bridges, they are closed on Tuesdays.

On the subject of art and museums, there's one in Bentonville in an unlikely spot, it's the **21C Museum Hotel**<sup>5</sup>. Located near the town square, this boutique hotel includes a contemporary art museum that is spectacular. The museum is the only one in the country devoted solely to art of the 21st century. 21C features a rotating program of solo artist and group exhibitions guaranteed to capture the imagination. Exhibitions in January will include 'Duke Riley: See You at the Finish Line' and 'Blue: Matter, Mood and Melancholy.' Live art events are scheduled at times and the hotel also features a video artwork channel called Channel Two. It's available for viewing in all hotel guestrooms. Works from 21C have been featured in exhibitions across the U.S. and Europe. The 21C Museum

Hotel is a must see and is located at 200 N.E. 'A' Street.

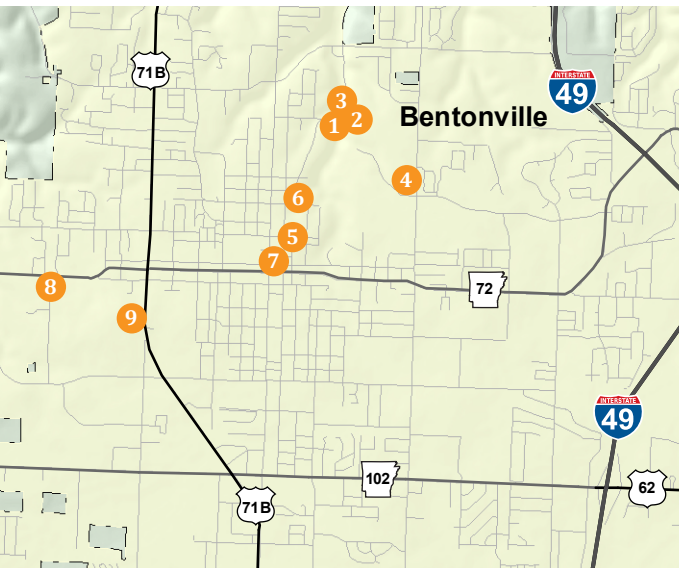
Just a few blocks from the hotel and the bustle of the downtown square is **Compton Gardens and Conference Center**<sup>6</sup>. The Center features a 6.5-acre garden that serves as a public park for Bentonville. The garden features paved pathways among native plants and trees, many labeled for identification. The accompanying conference center is the remodeled home of Dr. Neil Compton, a noted Bentonville physician, writer, photographer, founder of the Ozarks Society and savior of the Buffalo River. The center now serves as an ideal rental facility for conferences, workshops, private events and weddings. A trail beside the center takes bicyclists and walkers to the Crystal Bridges Museum. Compton Gardens is open daily from dawn until dusk. *(continued on page 20)*



"Fossils Exposed" at the Scott Family Amazeum



21C Museum Hotel's green penguins are relocated around the hotel each night.



**COMPTON GARDENS AND CONFERENCE CENTER** FEATURES A 6.5-ACRE GARDEN THAT SERVES AS A PUBLIC PARK FOR BENTONVILLE. THE GARDEN FEATURES PAVED PATHWAYS AMONG NATIVE PLANTS AND TREES.



The Conference Center is open Monday through Friday. Close to everything downtown, the facility is located at 312 N. Main Street.

The next stop on our road trip is Walmart. Not the store, but the **Walmart Museum<sup>7</sup>** located on the Bentonville Square. The museum carries on the mission to educate, engage and inspire visitors about the heritage of Walmart. The museum is housed in founder Sam Walton's 5 & 10 Store, originally Luther Harrison's Variety Store. It was the second store that Walton owned but the first to bear the Walton name. In the exhibit gallery, you'll learn how Walmart went from a handful of stores to the successful corporation it is today. While there, step back in time and visit the Spark Café Soda Fountain located next door, a tribute to Walton's love of ice cream. There's plenty on the menu! The Walmart Museum is located at 105 N. Main Street.

The next stop on our adventure is a Bentonville museum that takes us on a trip through our past. It's **The Museum of Native American History<sup>8</sup>**. The museum is divided into five different time periods that will guide visitors through the constant changing lives of Native Americans, as seen through their artifacts. The galleries feature a large and impressive collection of weapons, ceramics, bird stones, tools and many

other relics that date from over 14,000 years old to historic times. The museum is located at 202 S.W. 'O' Street and is open Monday through Saturday.

The last stop on our road trip takes travelers to the **Peel Mansion Museum and Heritage Gardens<sup>9</sup>**. In 1875, Colonel Samuel West Peel built a marvelous Italianate Villa style mansion on what was the outskirts of Bentonville. It was a working farmstead surrounded by 180 acres of apple orchards. Colonel Peel was the first native born Arkansan to serve in the United States Congress. He and his wife, Mary Emaline Berry Peel, raised nine children here. Today, the Peel Mansion site is also an outdoor museum of historic roses, perennials and native plants. Careful research over many months resulted in an extensive inventory of nineteenth century plantings. Go back in time by touring the mansion and strolling the gardens. Then, save time for the gift shop. The Mansion and gardens are located at 400 S. Walton Boulevard and are open Tuesday through Saturday, March through mid-December.

Bentonville is a town where you can spend two or three days seeing all there is to do. The same can be said of the other towns along Interstate 49 including Fayetteville, Springdale and Rogers. Those we will explore in a future issue of *Arkansas Highways*. ■



The Museum of Native American History



Peel Mansion Museum and Heritage Gardens

Trumpeter Swans are the largest waterfowl species in North America.



# 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](http://Arkansas.com/events).

❖ **VIEWING OF THE TRUMPETER SWANS:** Nobody is sure why this flock of Trumpeter Swans calls Arkansas home each winter, since these swans are usually found in the Midwest. Here's a chance to see the largest waterfowl species in North America. They weigh in at 30 pounds and have an 8-foot wingspan. View this flock of over 100 swans while they are here for the winter. Follow Highway 110 east out of Heber Springs. About four miles east of the intersection with Highway 25, look for Sovereign Grace Baptist Church and turn left onto Hays Road. Magness Lake is a half-mile down Hays Road. • JANUARY 1 – FEBRUARY 29

❖ **KINKY BOOTS:** See an exhilarating Broadway musical that will lift your spirits to new high-heeled heights! Winner of six Tony Awards including Best Musical, this inspirational story follows a struggling shoe factory owner who works to turn his business around with help from Lola, a fabulous entertainer in need of some sturdy stilettos. • JANUARY 19 – 24

❖ **QUILTER'S RETREAT:** For those who enjoy making quilts and others who enjoy seeing them, this will be the place to be. Three days of quilting, learning and admiring. Quilt classes will be held. • FEBRUARY 18 – 20

❖ **MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET:** Broadway's Million Dollar Quartet is the smash-hit musical inspired by the famed recording session that brought together rock 'n' roll icons Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins. On December 4, 1956, these four young musicians gathered at Sun Records in Memphis for what would be one of the greatest jam sessions ever. Hear rock hits including "Blue Suede Shoes," "Fever," "That's All Right," "Sixteen Tons," "Great Balls of Fire," "Walk the Line," "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," "Who Do You Love?," "Folsom Prison Blues," "Hound Dog" and more. • FEBRUARY 26

**JANUARY 1 – FEBRUARY 29** ❖  
VIEWING OF THE TRUMPETER SWANS  
Magness Lake  
Heber Springs, AR

**JANUARY 19 – 24** ❖  
KINKY BOOTS  
Walton Arts Center  
Fayetteville, AR

**FEBRUARY 2**  
ARKANSAS SYMPHONY CHAMBER MUSIC –  
MOZART & MENDELSSOHN  
Clinton Presidential Library  
Little Rock, AR

**FEBRUARY 5 – 21**  
MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT  
Arkansas Public Theatre  
Rogers, AR

**FEBRUARY 18 – 20** ❖  
QUILTERS' RETREAT  
Ozark Folk Center State Park  
Mountain View, AR

**FEBRUARY 20**  
THE TEMPTATIONS  
Hempstead Hall  
Hope, AR

**FEBRUARY 26** ❖  
THE MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET  
East Arkansas Community College –  
Fine Arts Center  
Forrest City, AR



The Walmart Museum and Spark Café Soda Fountain



Kinky Boots



Quilt Workshop



Million Dollar Quartet



# INTO THE RING

with  
AHTD RETIREE  
FRANK VOZEL

BY DAVID NILLES



FRANK VOZEL  
Retired AHTD Deputy Director  
and Chief Engineer

**A** GOOD MANY PEOPLE KNOW FRANK VOZEL, and that on any weekday before he retired as AHTD Deputy Director and Chief Engineer, he was likely to be involved in the latest plans for an upcoming construction project, tackling budget numbers or working closely with the Director.

What most people don't know is that in his off time, then and now, Vozel can be found in the boxing ring or training for the ring at Straightright Boxing & Fitness.

Arkansas Highways editor David Nilles sat down with Frank recently to learn more about his passion for boxing.

**NILLES:** *How long have you been boxing?*

**VOZEL:** Since the summer of 2004 and it's an interesting story how I got started because it was actually a mistake.

All of my life I've worked out doing some kind of sport like playing ball or running. Before boxing, I was running. I had been doing it for several years, but because I was out there by myself, it was becoming boring. I needed something else to keep me in shape.

One morning, I was watching an aerobics

class on TV and I thought that could be fun, I need to look into that.

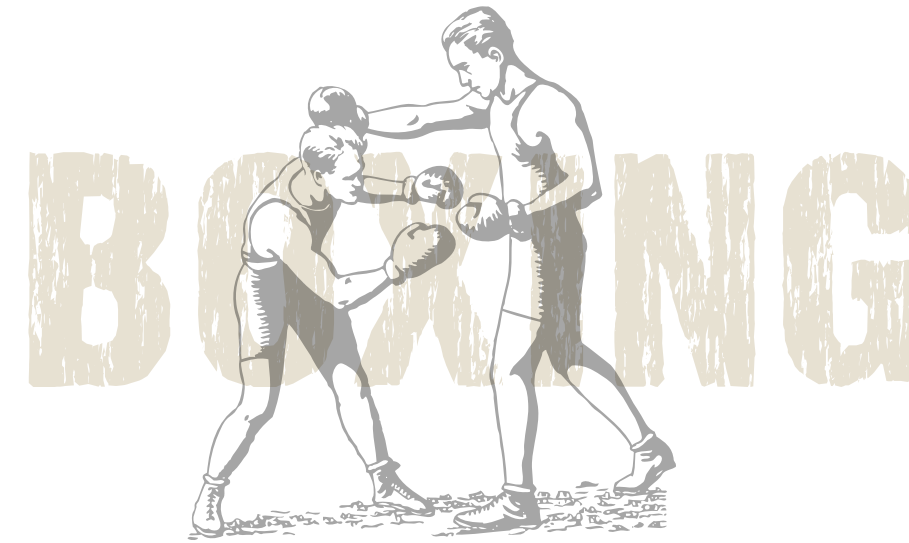
A week later, I saw an ad in the newspaper about Straightright Boxing and their aerobics class. I thought that may be what I'm looking for. So I called and talked to Kevin Lightburn, the guy that started Straightright Boxing. He told me to come join in.

When I walked into the gym several days later, Kevin said "You must be Frank." He said "go over there and Daryll will wrap your hands for you." I went over and said

"Daryll, why do I have to have my hands wrapped?" He told me "Even though you're going to be wearing gloves, you can still hurt your hands if you don't wrap them." And I said "Why am I going to be wearing gloves?" He asked, "Why are you here?" And I told him I was there for the aerobics class. Daryll replied "No, that's tomorrow. This is boxing." And I said "No, that's not what I'm here for." Daryll said, "Well your hands are already wrapped and it's free today so we will just go ahead and do it." And I've been there ever since. So it was by accident. I never did make it to that boxing aerobics class.

**NILLES:** *How long have you trained at Straightright?*

**VOZEL:** I've always trained there, so a little over ten years. They don't have many people in there my age, I guess I'm the exception.



Primarily what they're looking for are people that might become amateur boxers, participate in Golden Gloves or go on to box in the Olympics. For example, Kevin Lightburn, who taught me before going to manage their store in northwest Arkansas, trained Jermaine Taylor for a while when he was an amateur. I'd say they specialize in people between the ages of 15 and 30. They also let some kids come in around the age of 9 or 10 for an academy. They'll teach those younger kids or people that are older, and at the same time, they're concentrating on trying to develop amateur boxers.

A number of their fighters have gone on to become professionals. I've sparred with some of them when they've come back by. I've been able to see a lot of good fighters.

One thing I enjoy is seeing people come in at a young age, like 16 or so, and spend three of four years becoming really good fighters. It's fun to watch how they progress. I've seen people in there that have never fought before in their life. It's enjoyable to get to see them develop into amateurs or professionals.

**NILLES:** *How often do you spar?*

**VOZEL:** We typically spar once a week, on Thursday, but I go to the gym every Monday through Thursday. Mondays and Wednesdays I work by myself on weight machines and punching bags. While I'm there, if there is somebody that needs to get into the ring, I'll get in and work with

them. I go for training on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Then on Thursdays we spar, and that's really the fun day for me. Most of the people that are really into the sport would rather spar.

**NILLES:** *Has it been beneficial for your fitness and health?*

**VOZEL:** It's the best exercise that I have ever done. I promise you if you ever had to go in and spar for one three-minute round, you would realize how much work is involved and how tiring it is. You have to be in great physical shape. You're moving around constantly and there is the mental aspect as well. If you are in the ring with someone that is better than you, it wears you out more than if you are better than your opponent. I can get into the ring with someone that is a lot better than me and I can get tired after one round. But if I get in there with somebody that is not my equal, I don't get tired.

You have to be in good shape. When you first start off, it's hard keeping your hands up all the time. People complain that their arms get tired and they can't keep them up. I tell them, just wait about 30 days and it will come to you. The most important thing is to keep your hands up because if they aren't up, you are going to get hit. You learn that real fast. In boxing, when you make any kind of mistake, you pay for it. So you really work on trying not to make a mistake. *(continued on page 24)*



Vozel sparring at Straightright Boxing

“ MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS I WORK BY MYSELF ON WEIGHT MACHINES AND PUNCHING BAGS. I GO FOR TRAINING ON TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS. **THEN ON THURSDAYS WE SPAR, AND THAT'S REALLY THE FUN DAY FOR ME.** ”

Vozel being declared the winner of a match during the 2015 International Ringside Tournament





**NILLES:** *What about the mental aspect?*

**VOZEL:** It makes me feel sharper. When you are in the ring, you have to pay attention. If you don't pay attention you may feel it. When you go in there, you do stay sharp.

One of the benefits I noticed, after a day working at the AHTD that may have been filled with pressure, I would go to the gym and after five minutes, that stress from work would go away. You're concentrating on what you are doing, and you forget what happened earlier in the day. When I was still working, I thought that was one of the biggest benefits. You get your mind off of all your cares and worries.

Another benefit is that you get to associate with some really nice people. You make new friendships and you meet people from all walks of life. It's just fun coming together and getting in the ring. I might get in the ring with somebody that's a senior in high school or somebody that is in college or a person who is a doctor here in town.

**NILLES:** *Were you nervous the first time you got into the ring?*

**VOZEL:** Very nervous. I began to spar after about five months of training. Now they get them in there a little quicker. Because you are very nervous, you forget to do things you think would come naturally. You forget to breathe, I would catch myself holding my breath. If you hold your breath you tire

out easily. One of the biggest challenges to coaches when they are teaching is to teach people to breathe when they are sparring.

**NILLES:** *Have you ever had any injuries?*

**VOZEL:** I've never been hurt badly and I've never seen anyone with a serious injury. I've had things like nosebleeds and I had a black eye one time. You might get a little sore where you have taken some blows to your body. But as far as being injured, I never have been. They try to watch that closely. They try to match you with people that are your equal. The worst injury I've seen is a broken nose. It wasn't mine though!

**NILLES:** *What about matches and competitions?*

**VOZEL:** The younger people at the gym are working to become Golden Glove fighters or Silver Glove, depending on their age. Within these categories there are divisions classified by how many fights you've had. The ultimate goal for them is to try and make it to the Olympics. For someone my age, I'm not expected to be as competitive as the younger ones.

**NILLES:** *You recently participated in a big competition in Kansas City. How did that go?*

**VOZEL:** The biggest annual tournament in the world is called the "International Ringside Tournament."



Vozel had the opportunity to spar with semi-professional boxers when he visited a boxing gym in Las Vegas.

Every year people at the gym would tell me I should go up there and fight in that tournament. There's a masters division for people 35 and above. I kept telling them, "I will one of these days."

A year ago, they were on to me about going so I told them that I would go next year because you'll agree to anything that's a year out. About six months before the event, they reminded me of what I had said. One of the mothers of one of our fighters said, "You said you were going and we are counting on you." So I signed up and went.

I didn't tell very many people I was going because I didn't think it would come out very well for me. Afterwards, I had people ask me what my goal was in competing there. Well, my goal was just to make it back! I wanted to be able to say I went, I competed and I made it back. I thought that would be a big deal.

As it turned out, I made it to the finals in my division. They group you by age and size.

You don't fight anybody more than ten years younger than you and you don't fight anyone more than ten pounds heavier than you. They try to match you up with other fighters based on what your abilities are.

The first guy that I fought was a Ukrainian that lived in the U.S. I won that one in a TKO. So I made it into the finals for my division. I was beaten by a guy from Toronto that was eight years younger than me. I asked him what he did for a living and he said he was a boxing coach! I received a medal for second place in my division and reached my goal of making it back home.

I got a bye on my first fight so I only had to fight two times. It was set up so no one had to fight more than three times that week. That would be asking a lot. You're pretty worn out after one match, you can't really fight more than once a day.

It was fun because I got to see a lot of fights. There were 1,600 fighters from all over the world. The building held six rings and they had six fights going on all day long.

I've thought about going again. The hardest thing about it is getting prepared though. For six weeks, I was working out twice a day, every day. I really got into great shape but it's pretty strenuous.

*(continued on page 26)*

(L. to R.)  
Trainer  
Anthony  
Tucker and  
Frank Vozel



## RINGSIDE CHAT WITH TRAINER ANTHONY TUCKER

"Frank has been at Straightright Boxing & Fitness for over ten years. He came in and, like a lot of people, he enjoyed the sport of boxing but didn't really understand the technical side of it. Over the years, he has come in, learned the sport and put the work in. His knowledge of what we do out here is unbelievable."

**TRAINING:** "Frank is the model on how you should do this. He is consistent, always willing to learn and he's always practicing things that we have taught him. He is here every day we are open for class. If he can't make a class, he will come in on another day and make it up. He is so consistent, it allows him to perform on a higher level. A good example is his participation in the International Ringside Tournament. He did fantastic there! We were very pleased with his performance."

**HELPING OTHERS:** "Frank gives back what he has learned. Since he's retired from the Department, he has put more time in with the kids here at the gym. He helps the kids with so many things. He'll find a student that may be lagging behind and he will step in and work with that student one-on-one. I can't say enough good things about him."

**BENEFITS OF BOXING:** "Is boxing a good way to stay in shape? The answer is yes! You can build muscle, burn body fat and really tone up. It's one of the most intense sports out there. We have football players, basketball players, soccer players who come down here and try a workout and they can't hang with us. It's that intense. Think about it like this... my students come in here to train for two hours, three or four days a week. It's all for those three minute rounds in the ring. That's where it all comes together. It is very challenging but when you get in the ring, you're ready! Frank is the perfect example of that."



“ONE OF THE BENEFITS I NOTICED, AFTER A DAY WORKING AT THE AHTD THAT MAY HAVE BEEN FILLED WITH PRESSURE, I WOULD GO TO THE GYM AND AFTER FIVE MINUTES, THAT STRESS FROM WORK WOULD GO AWAY.”



**NILLES:** *Any words of encouragement for people considering taking up boxing?*

**VOZEL:** I wouldn't worry about the age thing. I didn't start until I was 55. We have people down at the gym trying to get prepared for the Masters and they're 45 or so.

It's going to get you in shape because it's great exercise. And, it really takes your mind off of your worries.

You also get to meet a lot of really nice people. I enjoy associating with them.

Just getting in the ring with somebody gives you a degree of satisfaction. It's not like a team sport. It's just you in there and if you screw up, you're the one that pays the price. I really like that. It's been great for me! Since learning the sport, I've been to Las Vegas to see boxing matches. I also used to go to the Tough Man competitions here in town. We've had several in our gym that have competed in that.

One other benefit is... I used to watch boxing on TV and I didn't understand it. Now when I watch it, I have more appreciation for the sport. It's known as the "sweet science of boxing." It really is a science. When I first started with Kevin, he told me that boxing is like a chess match. You're not just out there throwing punches, what you're trying to

watch for is for the other guy to make a mistake. Every time he throws a jab you're watching his hands to see where they are. That might be your opportunity to throw a punch at him after he throws a jab because you've studied where his hands are when he hits. You're constantly watching and thinking of your strategy. You try to set somebody up.

When I'm working with new people trying to help them out, I always tell them they need to be thinking and to always keep their eyes on the opponent so they can plan their strategy. You want to catch the opponent making a mistake. You're not beating them because you're throwing punches faster and harder. You're beating them because your strategy is good and it's working.

There are people who probably think I'm nuts for doing this at my age but I will say this... I go for a physical every year and my doctor knows that I box. I always ask him if I should stop boxing and he says "No, you need to keep doing it."

I really enjoy it. You can tell I enjoy it because I keep doing it. If I didn't enjoy boxing I sure wouldn't have continued after that first class and I definitely would have stopped before now! ■



Retirees enjoy the Statewide annual retirees' luncheon.



BY DAVID NILLES

## RETIREES ASSOCIATION KEEPS EMPLOYEES CONNECTED

**AS** AHTD employees reach retirement age, it's only natural that they begin thinking about the changes looming on the horizon. Suddenly, there will be plenty of free time available for spending time with loved ones, traveling across the country and doing those long-awaited projects around the house. It's a big change from the daily 8:00 to 4:30 and something we all dream of enjoying.

At the same time, it's probably a little difficult to say goodbye to all of the friends made while on the job at the Department. Suddenly you don't see them as often.

The remedy to that problem is the Association of Retired AHTD Employees. Every employee who is about to retire, or already has, can join the association. It's a good way to stay in touch and to enjoy fellowship with other friends from work that have retired.

"Joining the retirees association is a good way to stay connected," states Larry Dickerson, Arkansas State Highway Employees Retirement System Executive Secretary. "Retirees tell me they love retirement but they miss the people. Joining the association gives them a chance to be around people they worked with. And it gives them a chance to meet people that they didn't know when they worked at the Department."

Dues to join the retirees group are just ten dollars a year. Half of that is returned to the local chapters. Members enjoy local chapter meetings held in each of the Department's ten Districts. Members also receive "The Connection", the groups' own newsletter with news from each chapter,

and the opportunity to attend the Statewide annual retirees' luncheon.

The local chapters get together for meetings several times a year. Those meetings often feature a meal and on numerous occasions include a visit or presentation by members of the Highway Commission, top staff at the Department or presentations by outside parties on topics of interest to retirees.

"The local meetings are a good way to keep up with the latest news on highway programs and Department budgets," Dickerson adds. "It's a great way to see folks on a social basis and everybody has fun."



Retirees tour the Big Rock Interchange construction site.

In addition, joining the association is a good way to keep up with important business news such as insurance and legislative developments. If the legislature is discussing items that may impact retirees, the Retirement Board members will be involved; and having a large retiree membership will help legislators realize that the board members are speaking, not for themselves, but for a large number of their constituents. By joining the Association of Retired AHTD Employees, members can help have an impact on legislation that could impact them personally.

"Membership gives them a seat at the table," Dickerson adds. "Not only that, they have the opportunity to get even more involved by serving as a Statewide officer for the group."

Those that are already members of the retirees' association will tell you what fun it is, and those that aren't members should consider joining. It's a great way to keep in touch and keep friendships alive. What better place to share stories about all the things retirees have been doing since retiring?

Joining the Association of Retired AHTD Employees is as easy as filling out the application form available from the Department. Call the Retirement Division at 501-569-2411 for more information or contact your local chapter. ■

JUST GETTING IN THE RING WITH SOMEBODY GIVES YOU A DEGREE OF SATISFACTION. IT'S NOT LIKE A TEAM SPORT. IT'S JUST YOU IN THERE AND IF YOU SCREW UP, YOU'RE THE ONE THAT PAYS THE PRICE. I REALLY LIKE THAT.





# Dear AHTD,

Just a quick note to let you know how helpful Laurel Young was in helping me decipher the routing for an oversize load across Arkansas. We received the permit but in mapping it out, there were a couple of areas of confusion. One phone call to your office and all questions were patiently answered. As an oversize load escort, it is so important to know ahead of time exactly where the turns are so we don't have to "figure it out when we get there!" It is especially nice to get to speak with someone in a government office who cares enough to be willing to take the time to answer questions. So many people are quick to complain but I wanted to be quick in offering a compliment.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Joe & Linda Head**  
 ASAP Professional Pilot Car Service, LLC

## EXCELLENT WORK APPRECIATED

I wanted to express our appreciation for the wonderful maintenance work that is being done along Highway 63, east of Hardy. Yesterday, the crew was digging gravel that had flowed into the ditches/culverts of driveways. They did such an excellent job on the apron of our driveway. Please pass our thanks along to that road crew. I realize that most people only make contact with complaints, but good work needs to be applauded as well.

Cordially,  
**Brenda Shields**  
 Hardy, Arkansas

## FLAT TIRE ASSISTANCE

Sonya Ellington from Dallas called and said on Sunday night between 8 and 9 pm, she and her daughter had a flat tire on I-30. She stated they called roadside assistance and after waiting for about an hour two officers pulled up to assist. She said they were very kind and told her to call roadside assistance back and cancel them while they changed her flat for her. She wanted to pass on her gratitude and let someone know how nice they were and that they went out of their way to be helpful. She did not know either of their names.

Thank you,  
**Sgt. Eric R. Henson**  
 Arkansas State Police

*NOTE: The AHP officers highlighted in the above letter were Corporal Robert Johnson and Patrol Officer First Class Doug Lafferty.*

## TEAMWORK AFTER ACCIDENT

The Arkansas State Police has a long history of cooperative working relationships with local public safety agencies and this showed in the teamwork displayed in the early morning hours of November 6, 2015, at the scene of a fatality bus crash.

The charter bus fatality crash on the above date was a tragic and stressful mission and I believe we witnessed a unified public safety team at work in Arkansas. I greatly value the support provided by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department.

I appreciate the extraordinary efforts by members of the North Little Rock Police Department, North Little Rock Fire Department, Pulaski County Sheriff's Department, Arkansas Highway Police, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, American Red Cross of Arkansas and the Homeland Security Investigations who answered the call during this tragic incident.

Again, thanks to the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department and for working alongside the Arkansas State Police during the initial investigation of this crash.

Sincerely,  
**Col. William J. Bryant**  
 Arkansas State Police

## THANK YOU TO DISTRICT 3

On behalf of the city mayor, city council, community development committee, and all of the people in our community — A BIG Thank You to the engineers and construction workers for a great job on the culvert at Highway 371 and County Road 337.

Respectfully,  
**Jerry Don Morton, President**  
 McCaskill Community Development Committee  
 McCaskill, Arkansas

## DISTRICT 6

# CONSTRUCTION



## CORNER

Construction continues in Pulaski County on the widening of Interstate 40 between the Interstate 40/430 Interchange in North Little Rock and Highway 365 in Morgan.

The five-mile section of roadway is being widened from two to three lanes in each direction. Also part of the project is the widening of two 40/430 Interchange ramps.

This is one of four projects that are widening Interstate 40 to six lanes between North Little Rock and Conway. The first of the projects began in early 2012.

This final project was let to contract in September of 2014. McGeorge Contracting Company, Inc. of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, was awarded the contract at \$38.4 million.

The project is far enough along that traffic is now utilizing all six lanes. The ramps being widened are the Interstate 40 eastbound to Interstate 430 southbound ramp and the Interstate 430 northbound ramp to the Interstate 40 westbound ramp.

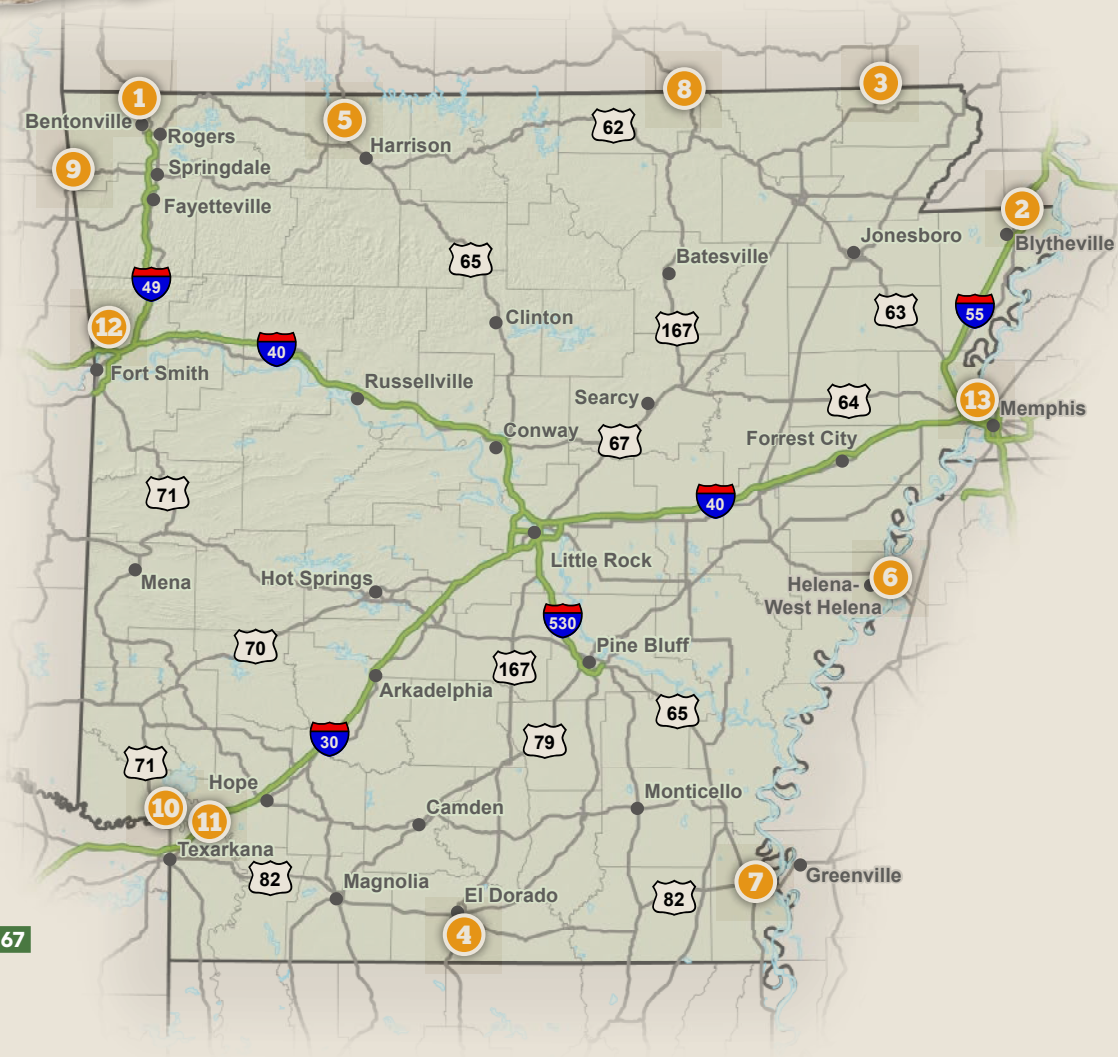
Work on the improvements is just over 80 percent finished. Completion is expected in the summer of this year. Once the project is finished, it will complete the widening of Interstate 40 to three lanes in each direction from North Little Rock to Conway.

The project is part of the 2012 Connecting Arkansas Program that is improving 200 miles of Arkansas' highways and Interstates in the coming years. ■



# ARKANSAS WELCOME CENTERS

**T**hey're positioned at strategic locations across the State, welcoming motorists to Arkansas. Attractive and inviting places to take a break from the road. They are the State's thirteen Arkansas Welcome Centers (AWC). Each Center is open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily (6:00 p.m. during summer months). Restrooms are available at all hours. An interactive map of AWC locations can also be seen at [IDriveArkansas.com](http://IDriveArkansas.com). Just click the "Traveler Information" tab.



## 1. BELLA VISTA — HIGHWAY 71 B

13750 Visitors Center Drive  
Bella Vista, AR 72714  
Phone: 479-855-3111

## 2. BLYTHEVILLE — INTERSTATE 55

5241 Interstate 55  
Blytheville, AR 72315  
Phone: 870-762-2512

## 3. CORNING — HIGHWAY 67

6717 Highway 67  
Corning, AR 72422  
Phone: 870-857-6014

## 4. EL DORADO — HIGHWAYS 82 & 167

3315 Junction City Highway  
El Dorado, AR 71730  
Phone: 870-881-9160

## 5. HARRISON — HIGHWAY 65 N

3391 Highway 65 N  
Harrison, AR 72601  
Phone: 870-741-3343

## 6. HELENA-WEST HELENA — HIGHWAY 49

1506 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive  
Helena, AR 72342  
Phone: 870-338-7602

## 7. LAKE VILLAGE — HIGHWAYS 65 & 159

3697 S. Highway 65 82  
Lake Village, AR 71653  
Phone: 870-265-5832

## 8. MAMMOTH SPRING — HIGHWAY 63 N

17 Highway 63 N  
Mammoth Spring, AR 72554  
Phone: 870-625-7364

## 9. SILOAM SPRINGS — HIGHWAYS 412 W & 59

2000 Highway 412 West  
Siloam Springs, AR 72761  
Phone: 479-524-4445

## 10. TEXARKANA — HIGHWAY 71

12555 Highway 71  
Texarkana, AR 71854  
Phone: 870-772-7511

## 11. TEXARKANA — INTERSTATE 30

10000 Interstate 30  
Texarkana, AR 71854  
Phone: 870-772-4301

## 12. VAN BUREN — INTERSTATE 40

2915 Interstate 40  
Van Buren, AR 72956  
Phone: 479-474-9515

## 13. WEST MEMPHIS — INTERSTATE 40

704 East Service Road  
West Memphis, AR 72301  
Phone: 870-735-3637

# 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

**BRIDGE** • Hussam Saleem, Engineer I

**CONSTRUCTION** • Christopher Hewitt, Construction Helper; Michael Burroughs, Construction Helper; Joe Cliburn, Construction Helper; James Wright, Construction Helper; Cameron Young, Construction Helper

**ENVIRONMENTAL** • Nathaniel Goddard, Environmental Scientist II; Nikki Senn, Environmental Analyst I

**LEGAL** • Ginger Cook, Legal Aide

**MAINTENANCE** • Robert Blakeley, Sign Erector; Connor Bunton, Sign Erector; Jacob Romo, Sign Erector; Benjamin Swafford, Striping Helper; Francis Wade, Striping Helper

**STATE AID** • Eleanor Goins, Design Engineer

**SYSTEM INFORMATION & RESEARCH** • Ross Maestas, Research Assistant

**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & POLICY** • James McCaleb, Staff Planning Engineer

**DISTRICT ONE** • Aaron Ward, Skill Trades Trainee; Marilyn Wilkins, Maintenance Aide II; Terry Wofford, Maintenance Aide I; Jessie Haggins, Maintenance Aide I; Dustin Hill, Maintenance Aide I; Glenn Wilson, Maintenance Aide I; Johnathan Sanders, Maintenance Aide I; Jimmy Aldridge, Maintenance Aide I; Marvin Casey, Maintenance Aide I; Brandon Carter, Maintenance Aide I

**DISTRICT TWO** • Kenneth Haire, Maintenance Aide I; Jarrod Wilson, Maintenance Aide I; Allen McWhorter, Jr., Maintenance Aide I; Paul Allen, Maintenance Aide I; Jared Smith, Maintenance Aide I; Matthew Chancellor, Maintenance Aide I; Darwin Lain, Maintenance Aide I

**DISTRICT THREE** • James Williams, Mechanic; Antonius Hayes, Maintenance Aide I; Japheth May, Maintenance Aide I; Robert Hignight, Maintenance Aide I

**DISTRICT FOUR** • James Elliff, Maintenance Aide I; James Mirus, Maintenance Aide I; Zachary Scroggin, Maintenance Aide I; Jeremy Risner, Maintenance Aide I; Kara Wallace, Maintenance Aide I

**DISTRICT FIVE** • Mark Crider, Maintenance Aide I; Randall Dillinger, Maintenance Aide I

**DISTRICT SIX** • Michael Nelson, Maintenance Aide I; Dylan Randleas, Maintenance Aide I; Eric Smith, Maintenance Aide I

**DISTRICT SEVEN** • Joshua Lampkin, Maintenance Aide I; Jeff Tillman, Maintenance Aide I

**DISTRICT EIGHT** • Dylan Isom, Maintenance Aide I; Daniel Brinkman, Maintenance Aide I

**DISTRICT NINE** • Chad Ellis, Maintenance Aide I

**DISTRICT TEN** • John Johnson, Mechanic; Kenneth Allison, Maintenance Aide I; Kingston Edgar, Maintenance Aide I; Bobby Carthon, Maintenance Aide I; Tomorrow Love, Maintenance Aide I; Jamison Spears, Maintenance Aide I; Greg Robinson, Maintenance Aide I

## PROMOTIONS

**ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE** • Chrissy Williams, Division Office Manager

**CONSTRUCTION** • David Henning, Construction Engineer

**MAINTENANCE** • Henry Miller, Jr., Engineer I

**MATERIALS** • Pepper Hobby, Administrative Aide V

**SURVEYS** • Leslie Freeman, Surveys Aide I

**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & POLICY** • Gregory Cullum, Geospatial Applications Coordinator; Rebekah Longeway, Transportation Specialist

**DISTRICT ONE** • James Inman, Crew Leader; Roger Johnson, Senior Inspector; Charley Smith, Electrical Plumbing & Mechanical Repairer; James Stutts, Maintenance Aide II; Kenneth Watlington, Maintenance Aide II

**DISTRICT TWO** • Jake Johnson, Mechanic; Timothy Lovett, Construction Aide III; Jonathan Meurer, Maintenance Aide II

**DISTRICT THREE** • Brian Maroon, Maintenance Aide III

**DISTRICT FOUR** • Janelle Blair, Construction Aide I; William Morris, Maintenance Aide II; John Swaffar, Maintenance Aide II

**DISTRICT FIVE** • Will Brewer, Maintenance Aide II; Bryan Brown, Inspector; Jesse Davis, Maintenance Aide II; Brittany Freeman, Maintenance Aide II; Ronnie Mann, Maintenance Aide III; John Rodgers, Construction Aide I

**DISTRICT SIX** • Bobby Givens, Area Maintenance Supervisor; Carl McIlwain, Mechanic; Jeffery Moore, Area Maintenance Supervisor; Jeff Murray, Maintenance Aide II; Billy Otts, Construction Aide II; Jon Pearson, Maintenance Aide II

**DISTRICT SEVEN** • Chelsea Hawley, Maintenance Aide II; King Montgomery, Maintenance Aide II; Erin Seals, Construction Field Engineer I

**DISTRICT EIGHT** • Hershell Cotton, Construction Aide III; Blake Reed, Maintenance Aide II; Marvin White, Maintenance Aide III

**DISTRICT TEN** • Milton Bliss, Rest Area Attendant; Timothy Bohannon, Motor Patrol Operator/Finish; David Capps, Maintenance Aide II; Kevin Smith, Maintenance Aide III; Dalton Tate, Maintenance Aide II; Jeffrey Vance, Maintenance Aide II

**LEGAL** • Charles Dirden, Staff Attorney, 13+ yrs

**DISTRICT TWO** • Kenneth Edwards, Crew Leader, 28+ yrs; Bobby West, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 35+ yrs

**DISTRICT SIX** • Richard Mays, Maintenance Aide II, 6+ yrs; Harvey Peterson, Jr., Maintenance Aide I, 10+ yrs; George Bynum, Maintenance Aide I, 8+ yrs; Tim Baber, Resident Engineer, 35+ yrs

**DISTRICT EIGHT** • Holly Fowler, Field Clerk II, 15 yrs

**DISTRICT NINE** • William Grozis, Ferry Boat Supervisor, 34+ yrs

## SERVICE

**ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE** • Doug Jones, AHP Sergeant, 30 yrs; Cecile Knight, Division Office Manager, 15 yrs; John Clark, Jr., AHP Corporal, 10 yrs

**BRIDGE** • Philip Tanner, Senior Bridge Design Engineer, 5 yrs

**CONSTRUCTION** • Jeff Eckhart, Construction Project Coordinator, 30 yrs; Holly Fowler, Field Clerk II, 15 yrs; Joanna Stewart, Administrative Aide V, 10 yrs; Matthew Bearden, Inspector, 10 yrs; Ashley Blake, Advanced Estimates Technician, 10 yrs; Katrina Heaggans, Advanced Estimates Technician, 10 yrs; Ryan Watson, Construction Field Engineer II, 5 yrs; Colton Cowles, Construction Field Engineer I, 5 yrs

**E.E.O.** • Dana McClellan, External EEO Coordinator, 20 yrs

**EQUIPMENT & PROCUREMENT** • Albert Neighbors, Station Attendant II, 20 yrs

**MATERIALS** • Tony Thurman, Jr., Materials Technician III, 10 yrs

**PROGRAM MANAGEMENT** • Christopher Davis, Advanced Programs & Contracts Specialist, 10 yrs

**RIGHT OF WAY** • Gregory Davis, Reviewing Appraiser, 25 yrs; Dale Hodges, Right of Way Engineering Specialist, 20 yrs

**SURVEYS** • Kenneth Scott, Surveys Technician II, 20 yrs

**TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & POLICY** • Charles Brewer, Public Transportation Safety & Security Officer, 20 yrs

**DISTRICT ONE** • Cannon Callicott, District Construction Engineer, 20 yrs

**DISTRICT TWO** • Donald Earnest, Asphalt Tank Truck Driver, 20 yrs; Max Watts, Senior Body Repairer & Painter, 10 yrs; Charlie Gipson, Senior Mechanic, 5 yrs; Miguel Rios, Finish Carpenter, 5 yrs

**DISTRICT THREE** • Gregory Allen, Motor Patrol Operator/Finish, 20 yrs; Jimmy Rosenbaum, Crew Leader, 20 yrs; Selu Kelesoma, Maintenance Aide II, 10 yrs

**DISTRICT FOUR** • William Nixon, Senior Mechanic, 10 yrs

**DISTRICT FIVE** • Daryl Pitts, Crew Leader, 20 yrs; Robyn Freeman, Area Headquarters Attendant, 20 yrs; Donald Roach, Maintenance Aide I, 5 yrs; Austin Dillman, Maintenance Aide I, 5 yrs; Randy Brackenridge, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs; Diana Converse, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs

**DISTRICT SIX** • Derrick Marshall, Lowboy/Float Truck Driver, 20 yrs; Charles Mason, Maintenance Aide II, 10 yrs; Alton Pack, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs; Floyd Palmer, Motor Patrol Operator/Finish, 10 yrs; Harvey Peterson, Jr., Maintenance Aide I

**DISTRICT SEVEN** • Douglas Scharbor, Rest Area Attendant, 30 yrs; Robert Johnson, Maintenance Aide II, 10 yrs; Blake Jackson, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs; Alex Golden, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs; Ernest Jones, Lowboy/Float Truck Driver, 5 yrs

**DISTRICT EIGHT** • Paul Charton, Hydraulic Excavator Operator/Finish, 15 yrs; Adam Phlyer, Asphalt Tank Truck Driver, 5 yrs; Marvin White, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs

**DISTRICT NINE** • Stan Risley, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 25 yrs

**DISTRICT TEN** • Anthony Williams, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 25 yrs; Blake Meridith, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs; Jerry Yancy, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs

## RETIREMENT

**LEGAL** • Charles Dirden, Staff Attorney, 13+ yrs

**DISTRICT TWO** • Kenneth Edwards, Crew Leader, 28+ yrs; Bobby West, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 35+ yrs

**DISTRICT SIX** • Richard Mays, Maintenance Aide II, 6+ yrs; Harvey Peterson, Jr., Maintenance Aide I, 10+ yrs; George Bynum, Maintenance Aide I, 8+ yrs; Tim Baber, Resident Engineer, 35+ yrs

**DISTRICT EIGHT** • Holly Fowler, Field Clerk II, 15 yrs

**DISTRICT NINE** • William Grozis, Ferry Boat Supervisor, 34+ yrs

## MEMORIALS

**ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE** • Vernal Lee Spears, 12/02/15, retired

**PLANNING** • Joseph W. Briscoe, 11/27/15, retired

**DISTRICT ONE** • Janet P. Bondurant, 11/16/15, retired

**DISTRICT SEVEN** • Larry O. Castleberry, 12/08/15, retired

**DISTRICT EIGHT** • Lonnie D. Pitts, 11/18/15, retired







Arkansas State Highway and  
Transportation Department  
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Little Rock, AR 72203-2261

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