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Arkansas HIGHWAYS

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

Senator Bill Sample Talks Transportation

Commissioner
FRANK SCOTT
Bids Farewell

**DIGGING IN
THE DIRT TO**
Preserve the Past

A NEW
Striping Strategy
for Highways

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



The Challenge Remains the Same

THE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE IN THE INSET APPEARED IN THE SPRING 1980 ISSUE OF ARKANSAS HIGHWAYS MAGAZINE. THE THOUGHTFUL WORDS WERE WRITTEN BY THEN DIRECTOR HENRY GRAY.

Reading Gray's message, it may remind you, ironically, of something you might find in print today, 37 years later.

We've experienced many noteworthy improvements in the transportation industry since that letter was written. Longer lasting pavements, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), high friction surface treatments, video traffic modeling, total stations for surveying and virtual weigh stations are just a few advances that have improved our highway system.

However, the more things change, the more they stay the same. The one thing that has remained constant over the years has been the need for additional revenue. Unfortunately, we aren't able to raise revenue ourselves. For that, we rely on our elected officials both at home and in Washington, D.C.

What we are able to do is the best job we possibly can with the funding that we have. I believe the effort each employee at the AHTD puts forth every day is the reason we are one of the most efficient agencies in the State, and one of the most efficient transportation departments in the country. We are successful because of the hard work of each of our employees. As for funding, it always seems to come through due to the hard work of our officials at the Capitol in Little Rock and in Washington, D.C. Although it never seems to be enough, we are thankful for what we have and will use it as wisely and efficiently as possible. The efforts of our elected officials and the hard work of our employees are the key elements to keeping Arkansas' highway system the best it can possibly be.

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

A Message from the Director



As we move into the 80's, highway use is increasing, revenues are going down, Construction and Maintenance costs are continuing to rise, presenting many new challenges and problems. Today, the major challenge is revenues. It is costing more than twice as much to build a job today as it did in 1967.

All state revenues except for highway funds have moved upward with the inflationary trends of our economy. Highway revenue sources have not. The fixed tax per gallon is today's problem, reflecting the improved fuel economy of the small and lighter cars, carpooling and other important energy conservation measures. And, while the Department is supportive of all such measures, we are also most cognizant of the present and future highway needs.

Our projections clearly point out that present highway revenue sources limit our ability to provide the transportation system necessary for the well being and support of our economy. A revenue source that will move up or down with the costs is a must.

Since the passage of the Mack-Blackwell Amendment to the state constitution in 1952, establishing the Department as a constitutional agency, much progress has been made. The ability to develop and carry out long range plans on a pay as you go basis has provided Arkansas with one of the finest highway systems in the country. The 1980's will demand that we protect that system and, at the same time, develop a more balanced transportation system for the future. Your Highway and Transportation Department is committed to doing just that. But, only through a concerned and dedicated public can our highway and transportation needs be met.

Henry Gray
Director of Highways & Transportation

FRONT COVER:
Senator Bill Sample on the steps of the Capitol in Little Rock.

BACK COVER:
The State Capitol building in Little Rock.

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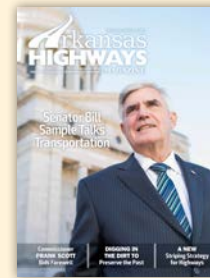
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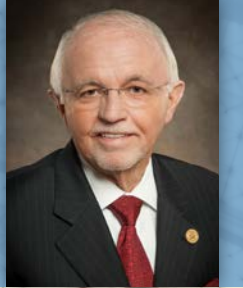
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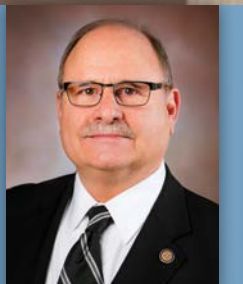
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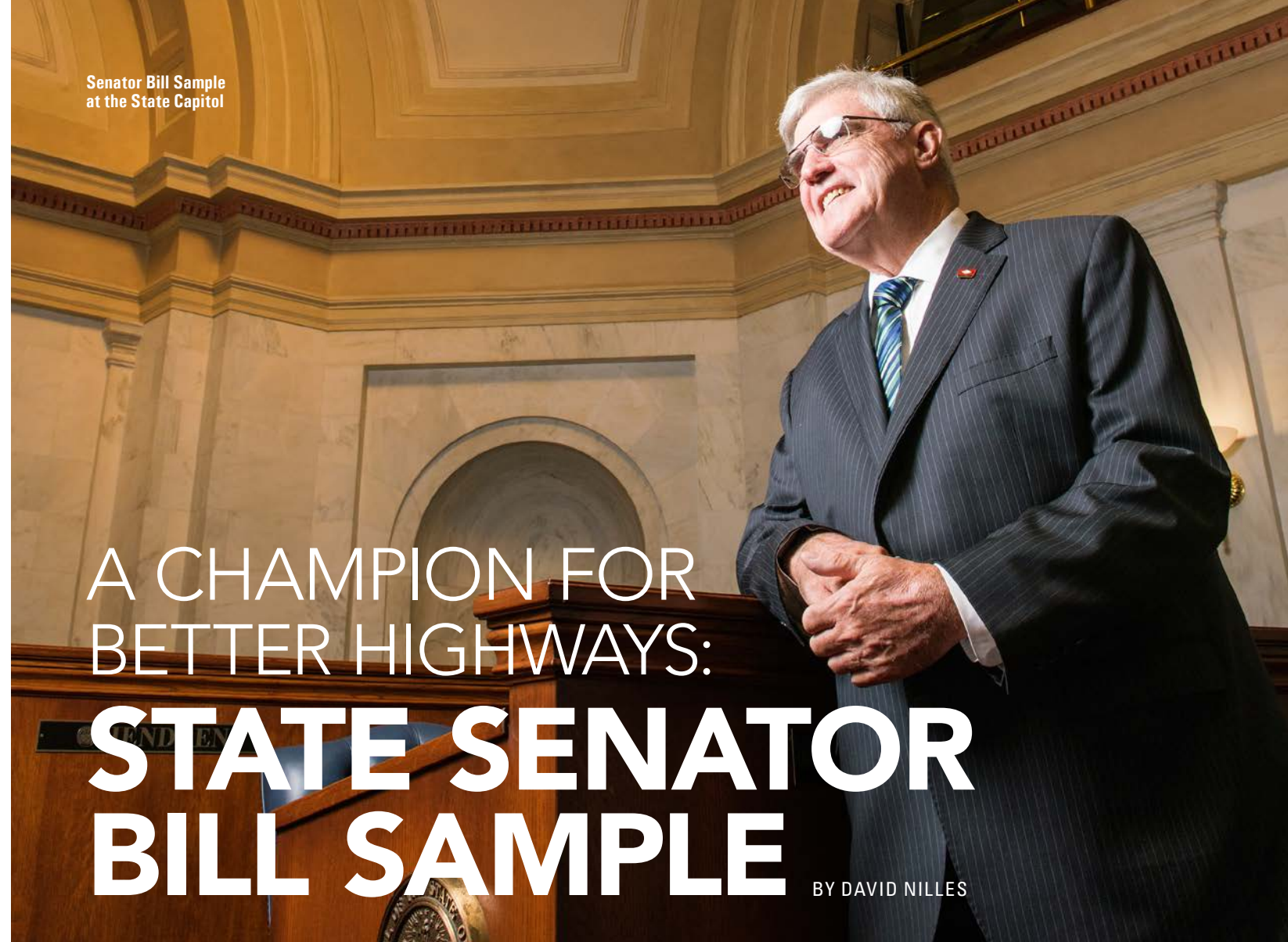
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Senator Bill Sample
at the State Capitol



A CHAMPION FOR BETTER HIGHWAYS: STATE SENATOR BILL SAMPLE

BY DAVID NILLES

YEARS BACK, BILL SAMPLE WAS BUSY OPERATING PESTCO, INC., HIS TERMITE/ PEST CONTROL COMPANY IN HOT SPRINGS. THE COMPANY WAS SUCCESSFUL AND HAD OFFICES ACROSS ARKANSAS AND INTO MISSOURI. THEN, IN 2003, THE THOUGHT CROSSED HIS MIND TO ENTER POLITICS.

"There was a special session at the Capitol that year that enacted legislation that would require the service industry to collect sales taxes from its customers and that directly affected my business," Sample recalls. "I've always said the legislation skipped over the alphabet a bit because they skipped accountants, attorneys and architects... and skipped barbers and beauticians, but then they got my business."

Sample didn't care for the legislation much because the sales tax

had to be collected at the point of sale and in his case, that made it difficult.

"As an example, we had an office in northwest Arkansas in the Rogers-Bentonville area," he explains. "You could have clients on both sides of a street with half of them being in Bentonville and half in Rogers. If you weren't cautious, you could be charging sales tax in the wrong area. I saw it as a big problem, so there and then; I decided to face the problem by becoming part of the solution."

A LEADER AT THE STATE CAPITOL

As a result, Sample entered politics in 2004 and was elected to the Arkansas House of Representatives, and the rest is history. Through the years, he has seen many changes at the Capitol.

"When I first came into the Legislature in 2005, I was the only Republican representative in the Fourth Congressional District,"

(continued on page 6)

“IN 2013, HE WAS NAMED ARKANSAS LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR BY THE ARKANSAS FORESTRY ASSOCIATION AND LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR BY THE STATE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.”



Sample recalls. “I could have held my caucus meetings in the bathroom. I served six years in the House, then I moved over to the Senate where, guess what, I was the only Senate Republican in the Fourth Congressional District. Two years after that though, we started seeing more Republicans. I went from being a minority of one to a super majority in six years’ time. So there has been a huge change. I jokingly worry about the change because there is nobody to blame anymore. We Republicans own this puppy. We can’t say, well, the other party did it. There is no more finger pointing because we have to look in the mirror and point the finger at ourselves now.”

It has been a successful political career for Senator Sample through the years. In 2013, he was named Arkansas Legislator of the Year by the Arkansas Forestry Association and Legislator of the Year by the State Chamber of Commerce. He serves on numerous committees, among them the Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs Committee where he serves as Committee Chair.

A CHAMPION FOR TRANSPORTATION

“My involvement in transportation just evolved,” Sample says. “When you are in the House and have a low seniority number, you get transportation as one of your committees. Well, for some reason I kind of liked transportation. I think I’ve been on the transportation committee ever since I’ve been here. Then, in my third term in the House, I was appointed the chair of the transportation committee. That was unusual for a minority party member to become chair of a standing committee. When the Senate changed to being a majority of Republicans, I was the only member that had ever served as chair of a standing committee.”

WORKING TO FIND TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

Over the years, Sample’s dedication to transportation has afforded him the opportunity to get to know and work with the staff at the AHTD and to understand the hurdles faced by Departments of Transportation across the United States. For most, the highest hurdle is finding a path to consistent and adequate funding for the long haul.

Sample shared his opinion on finding funding solutions for the country’s highway system.

“Across the nation, Congress has got to get more involved in the building of our highway infrastructure. They have to get back to earmarks. Our states cannot do it alone. We can’t do it with just the gas taxes. We’ve got to have a better system of funding transportation.”

Senator Sample went on to discuss the situation in Arkansas.

“We get hammered when we talk about raising the gas tax because people say we have the highest gas tax around,”

he comments. “But remember, we can’t use apples for apples because all of the taxes that are related to automobiles and the service of those automobiles do not come directly to the Highway Department. Some of it goes to education. That’s one thing that I have begun to work on and I think we are beginning to get some traction. We’re going to have to do something to move that money from education to highways without having education suffer.

What that means is that we have to pass a tax to generate more money. Arkansas and our other states are in trouble. We are striving to do our part, but the federal government has to do its part as well.”

As an example, Senator Sample focused on the issue of completing Interstate 49 in western Arkansas.

“The state of Arkansas cannot build Interstate 49 alone,” he states. “That is a vital piece of infrastructure that has a piece missing right now. The Panama Canal has just been expanded and we are going to start seeing bigger freighters coming in and we have no way for the freight traffic to move right now. Most of the traffic is going to go northward to Chicago and up into Canada. It should go up Interstate 49 but there is a section of it missing here in Arkansas so we have got to build that infrastructure. That would be my message to Washington D.C. We must have some help on this issue.

I’m really hopeful that our new President will do something for infrastructure. It’s been announced that he will.”

PROGRESS THROUGH PARTNERING

On the subject of seeing future projects completed, Senator Sample was asked his opinion on partnering with local communities.

“Partnering is one thing that has always been near and dear to my heart,” Sample shares. “I think it’s a great program. I know that northwest Arkansas has used it for some time. Cabot has used it as well. It is a great method of working with local communities and getting projects done.

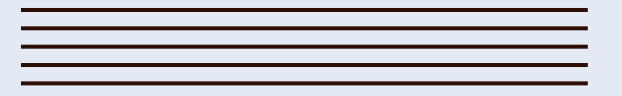
“I think that everybody feels better when they actually have skin in the game. And that’s what it is. It is local communities putting their skin in the game and matching the State funds. It’s the best and simplest way to have projects for local areas completed in a shorter amount of time.”

Sample used the example of the bypass extension in his home community of Hot Springs and the “Pay It Forward” campaign as an example.

“We have just come out of an election cycle where we passed a five-year, 5/8-cent temporary sales tax to build out this infrastructure extension that we badly needed to the north of Hot Springs. Some sections of the original project had been built by earmarks, but those earmarks dried up. Now just because the earmarks dried up didn’t mean the community’s need had dried up.

(continued on page 8)

TOP TEN AHTD PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS



PARTNER	TOTAL PARTNERING AMOUNT CONTRIBUTED
Bentonville	\$33,580,147.00
Garland County	\$30,000,000.00
Rogers	\$28,776,050.00
Fayetteville	\$25,641,902.00
Springdale	\$23,839,925.00
Conway	\$20,270,963.00
Cabot	\$10,538,723.00
Hot Springs	\$8,231,531.00
Jonesboro	\$8,110,000.00
Fort Smith	\$7,329,901.00

Garland County will contribute \$30 million towards project costs for an extension of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Expressway from Highway 70/270 to the junction of Highways 5 and 7.

The City of Fayetteville contributed 50% of construction costs (approximately \$6.3 million) to widen Highway 265 (Crossover Rd.) between Highway 45 (Mission Blvd.) and Joyce Blvd.

The City of Cabot contributed over \$10 million towards the cost of a project to create a new interchange on Highway 67/167.

The City of Conway contributed \$2 million towards a project to widen Dave Ward Drive and construct two roundabouts in the vicinity of Interstate 40 (Exit 129). The City paid for relocation of utilities and assumed maintenance of Amity Road.

THE MACK-BLACKWELL AMENDMENT

Amendment 42 sponsored by Senators Milton Mack and Lawrence Blackwell

Proposed by the 58th General Assembly of the State of Arkansas

Voted upon at the General Election of November 4th, 1952

For: 231,529 **Against:** 78,291

The amendment stated that a five-member Highway Commission was to be appointed by the Governor for staggered ten-year terms.

Members would be selected from the State's Congressional Districts with no two members from the same Districts. *(As originally written, there was no member-at-large position as there is today.)*

The director of the Highway Department would be selected by the Commission.

Enactment of the amendment has allowed road construction in Arkansas to progress unimpeded for 64 years.

The good citizens of Garland County felt like we needed to build that infrastructure and to do that, they decided they had to chip in. The extension that we just passed and paid for is going to be a prime example of how well partnerships work between local communities and state government."

A NOD TO THE MACK-BLACKWELL AMENDMENT

After discussing a successful formula for construction of future highway projects, the conversation turned to the AHTD, its history and its future.

Looking back several decades to the 1950s, the people of Arkansas voted to pass the Mack-Blackwell Amendment which allowed for Highway Commissioners to be appointed by the Governor for 10-year terms and for the Commission to select a Director.

"I think the Mack-Blackwell Amendment has allowed for business to proceed successfully for the Department," Sample comments. "Every corner of the State has projects to be completed. The people down at Crossett need good highways just as the people in northwest Arkansas do. If there was ever legislative interference in the process of building highways, that could get out of whack in a big hurry. The Mack Blackwell Amendment prevents that. Being appointed by the Governor and having a 10-year term gives each Commissioner time to get familiar with the job and learn the infrastructure needs in each corner of the State. It takes a lot of pressure off the Commissioners when it comes to having local projects completed. And it takes some of the pressure off of our legislators. We can explain that it is a constitutional office out there and we only have limited authority over it. That helps us with our constituents because sometimes the Highway Department's timeline and their timeline don't always match."

OPTIMIZING THE AHTD'S PARTNERSHIP WITH LEGISLATORS

To bring about the most effective working relationship between the AHTD and representatives at the Capitol in Little Rock, the legislature recently asked for enhanced communication with the Department and its Commission. This prompted the creation of a new Government Relations Office at the Department. It has resulted in a more effective way for legislators to communicate with the AHTD.

"I think the new office is very good because it puts a face on who we at the Capitol need to contact at the AHTD," Sample comments. "I've always felt that AHTD Director Scott Bennett has a big enough job out there without having to stop every few minutes to answer phone calls from legislators. Now we have Gill Rogers representing the Department here at the Capitol and it gives us somebody to go to about transportation issues. Having that ability to communicate with the Department without worrying Scott all the time is beneficial because there are a lot of times when we need to get information. Now I can just call Gill up and say I have someone that has a question for an engineer, for example, and I get quick results. It was a good idea and it has turned out very well. We have a number of issues that we need to sit down and address and Gill is available. That's the way the Department and we here at the Capitol envisioned it and it is working."



One of Senator Sample's favorite items hanging in his office is a framed collage of "thank yous" from the students at National Park Community College in Hot Springs.

FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF ARKANSAS' HIGHWAYS

Those who know Senator Sample know he is an avid traveler who takes to Arkansas' highways in his RV in his spare time. In his travels across the country, he has been able to assess Arkansas' highways and compare them to roadways in other states.

"I would rate Arkansas' roads as good," he observes. "They are in good shape compared to those in other states like Illinois, Indiana, New York or Michigan. Those states need a resurfacing program similar to the one we have in Arkansas. Florida has probably got some of the better roads, but to get to Florida, you have to go across Mississippi and Alabama and their roads are not nearly as well maintained as ours. Overall, we're doing a good job. But we could do a better job on secondary roads that are neglected because of funding constraints."

CLOSER TO HOME

Looking at the collection of plaques and pictures on the walls in Senator Sample's

office, it doesn't take long to see his commitment to his job and the people of Arkansas. He is a friend to many.

"One of the most significant pieces of legislation that I ever passed had to do with removing the tax off of natural gas that was being charged to our power producers."

Another piece of legislation he introduced allowed the Forestry Commission to create its own fire departments and purchase new equipment to work with. Then there is the subject of the Firefighters Memorial on the Capitol grounds.

"They didn't have the money to build the monument and place it where it needed to be. So, I passed a piece of legislation that allowed them to sell specialty license plates of which they received ten dollars off of each plate. Not only did it build the memorial in two or three years, it also gave us enough money to maintain all of the monuments on the State Capitol grounds.

One of Senator Sample's favorite items hanging in his office is a framed collage of "thank yous" from the students at

National Park Community College in Hot Springs.

"The students had no safe way of getting onto the highway when leaving the campus. They needed a stoplight on Mountain Pine Road."

Senator Sample was instrumental in getting that stoplight installed.

"It was a pleasure to help them. We are proud of that college because it allows us to produce our own college graduates right there in Garland County. They can get their education, become professional business men and women, and gain employment there in Hot Springs rather than moving to other states."

Because of Senator Sample, Arkansas has a homegrown leader who is a friend to not just his constituents in Garland County but to motorists across the entire state as he works with the AHTD to make our highways the best they can be. The man who faced a problem and decided to become part of the solution has succeeded in bringing solutions to many Arkansans. ■



Bennett Receives TOP AASHTO HONOR

BY DAVID NILLES

ON NOVEMBER 14TH OF LAST YEAR AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING IN BOSTON, THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS (AASHTO) PRESENTED ITS TOP HONOR — THE THOMAS H. MACDONALD MEMORIAL AWARD — TO ARKANSAS HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR SCOTT BENNETT.

The association proclaims the McDonald Award goes to someone who has “rendered continuous outstanding service over an extended period of time or has made some exceptional contribution to the art and science of highway engineering.”

The award was established in 1957 in recognition of outstanding achievements of the late MacDonald, who served as chief of the Federal Highway Administration’s Bureau of Public Roads in the fields of highway administration, engineering and research.

At the presentation, AASHTO officials described Bennett as a visionary who has implemented many positive changes at the AHTD since becoming Director.

In his more than 28 years of employment at the Department, Bennett spent 22 of those years in the agency’s Planning Branch where he was responsible for envisioning and developing great planning tools such as the Arkansas Primary Highway Network (APHN). He was also responsible for the development of the Four-Lane Grid System, which identified a network of roads needed to stimulate economic growth in Arkansas.

In 2011, Bennett was named Director of Highways and Transportation by the Arkansas Highway Commission and has since emerged as “a respected liaison” between the AHTD and elected officials in Arkansas and at the national level. He has been successful in getting much-needed legislation passed for the AHTD during the past three State legislative sessions.

He continues to be a strong advocate for finding a solution to transportation funding problems at the State level. Bennett was the primary author/ editor of the *Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Highway Finance Report*, which was published in December of 2010. The report was the culmination

AASHTO Executive Director Bud Wright (right) and AASHTO President Paul Trombino (left) present AHTD Director Scott Bennett with the Thomas H. MacDonald Memorial Award. The award is considered the highest honor bestowed by AASHTO among its membership. In receipt of this award, Director Bennett is recognized for his outstanding public service contributions to the transportation industry at both state and national levels.



of an 18-month effort in research and information gathering that he facilitated and it serves as a framework for highway funding reform in Arkansas. Governor Asa Hutchinson appointed him as a member of the Governor’s Working Group on Highway Funding.

Bennett has also been successful in establishing strong and productive working relationships with groups such as Associated General Contractors of Arkansas, American Council of Engineering Companies of Arkansas, and the Arkansas Trucking Association (ATA).

At the national level, Director Bennett is a member of the AASHTO Board of Directors and is chair of the organization’s Standing Committee on Planning. He is also co-chairman of the AASHTO/Associated General Contractors/American Road and Transportation Builders Association Joint Committee, and is a member of the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee.

“I know it’s cliché to say I am humbled and honored by receiving this prestigious award, but it’s true,” Bennett commented. “To be recognized at this level is an awesome experience, but this award is about more than just me. It speaks volumes to me to be nominated by one of our own staff members. I appreciate all of the opportunities that I’ve been given to serve in this role, but I can’t do what I do without the support of the Commission and the entire Department. I love what I do, love this Department and love this State. I hope each and every member of the Commission and the Department can be proud of this award, because it is really for all of them, too.”

Bennett received a Bachelor’s Degree in Civil Engineering in 1989 and a Master’s Degree in Civil Engineering in 1994 — both from the University of Arkansas. During this time, he was named Mack-Blackwell Transportation Center Student of the Year. Director

“ I HOPE EACH AND EVERY MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT CAN BE PROUD OF THIS AWARD, BECAUSE IT IS REALLY FOR ALL OF THEM, TOO. ”

Bennett is a Registered Professional Engineer and has been appointed by Governor Hutchinson to the Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. He is also President of the Arkansas Academy of Civil Engineers. ■



Commissioner Scott's — TERM COMES — TO A CLOSE

BY DAVID NILLES

AS WE SAID GOODBYE TO 2016, FRANK SCOTT, JR.'S TERM ON THE HIGHWAY COMMISSION CAME TO A CLOSE. A bank executive with First Security Bank in Little Rock, Scott was appointed to the Commission in 2013 by Governor Mike Beebe in order to fill the unexpired term of John Burkhalter. Scott visited with Arkansas Highways editor David Nilles recently to discuss his time on the Commission and the state of transportation in Arkansas.

NILLES: *As you look at your time on the Commission, have you experienced what you expected you would when you first began?*

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: I don't know if I actually expected anything. I was so nervous at the time. I was a 29-year-old from southwest Little Rock and to be appointed by Governor Beebe to one of the most prestigious political appointments in the State, the gravity of the moment left no room for expectation. I just knew the shoulders that I stood on and the complete amount of humility that I felt. I was eager to get onboard the Commission, to listen and learn, and to be of service not only to my State but to the Commission as well.

NILLES: *How did your perception of how highways were funded and constructed change when you came onto the Commission?*

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: I knew I had a different perspective. While I was with Governor Beebe, I served as one of his senior advisors and focused a



Governor Mike Beebe announcing Frank D. Scott, Jr.'s appointment to the Commission in 2013.



Frank D. Scott, Jr.

THIS DEPARTMENT DOES A TRUE MINISTRY FOR THE STATE BY KEEPING OUR HIGHWAYS NOT JUST SAFE, BUT WELL MAINTAINED.

great deal on public policy, politics and intergovernmental relations. So I came in with a great understanding of the budgeting process and general revenue and what we envisioned the uses to be for our funding. I think my initial thoughts were well noted when I was asked how I felt about funding at the time. I do think everything is about perspective and I had a different perspective when I started. I came onto the Commission and began listening, learning and began to understand the inner workings of the Highway Department and how we fund and finance our roads. With that understanding, it allowed me to become more aligned with my fellow highway commissioners and Director Bennett and to gain insight. Then, with the highway

funding legislation that was passed, I was able to help be a part of that process and support it.

NILLES: *What are some developments that have occurred during your term that you consider major highlights or achievements?*

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: I can think of several things. Any positive developments that the Highway Department and its staff have accomplished can be considered highlights or achievements. This Department does a true ministry for the State by keeping our highways not just safe, but well maintained. In addition, the growth of our system creates economic development opportunities. And with those

economic development opportunities, individuals are able to secure jobs, and are able to pay taxes. So truly, I am a big proponent of transportation infrastructure being a gateway to progress and a foundation to economic development. That is a true ministry.

After paying homage to the team at the Highway Department for what they do on a daily basis, to answer your question, I can think of three hallmarks.

The first has been our improved response to winter weather and our preparation, beginning in 2014. We carved out \$18 million dollars in our budget to go towards more equipment and more manpower in order to be better prepared for winter weather and for taking care of our highways when snow and ice hit.

(continued on page 14)

Secondly, we worked with the Department's Finance Division and the Retirement Division to identify and select the minority, woman-owned investment firm of Garcia, Hamilton and Associates to manage funds for our retirement system. They are the first minority and woman-owned investment firm in the State to manage money for any of Arkansas' retirement systems. First, they were qualified, and second, they just happened to be a diverse company. They've done a great job for the retirees with the funds that they have managed and have proved to be great stewards.

And finally, getting substantial legislation passed that has allowed us to move forward has proved to be a hallmark of my term on the Commission. You consider the economic development projects that we have done such as the Dave Ward Drive expansion in Conway featuring the largest roundabouts in the nation. That project brought \$65 million dollars of economic development to the city. Then consider the things that we are doing not only in central Arkansas but in northwest Arkansas, southeast Arkansas and eastern Arkansas.

These have all been highlights and achievements I have been proud to be a part of during my time on the Commission. So, winter preparation improvements, the increase in diversity with Garcia, Hamilton and Associates with our retirement management funds and the highway funding legislation. Those are the hallmarks of my time on the Commission.

NILLES: *Looking back, what specific highway projects were you glad to see completed?*

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: As mentioned, the Dave Ward Drive - Highway 286 project. We were able to work with developers who were bringing a new \$65 million development to Conway, but they needed some highway improvements. We were able to work alongside them to see that development come to fruition. It is now

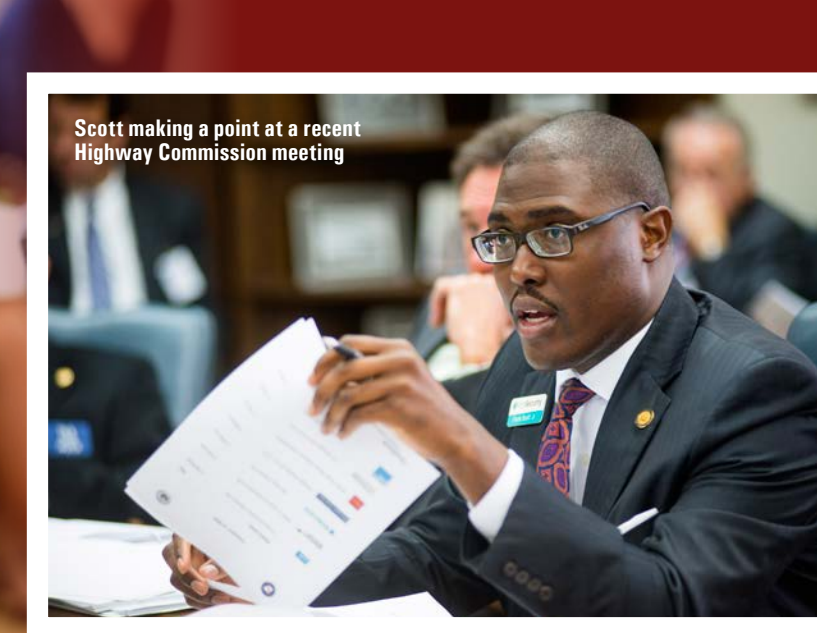
Commissioner Scott praises Conway area officials at a dedication ceremony in Conway



The new roundabout in Conway



Scott making a point at a recent Highway Commission meeting



operating and we had a ribbon cutting in December on that road.

I think about the de-commissioning of the Broadway Bridge over the Arkansas River between Little Rock and North Little Rock and how we are now seeing a new bridge going up. We have made improvements to our roadways in the delta in southeast Arkansas. Those weren't new roads, we just made much-needed improvements to existing highways and I thought it was heartfelt and meaningful to see that come to fruition.

NILLES: *Are there some projects coming up that you are excited to see get started?*

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: I have put in a great deal of time and persistence on the 30 Crossing project for Interstate 30 in downtown Little Rock-North Little Rock. It's been my baby. It hasn't come to fruition yet, but we have seen Metroplan pass the six-lane waiver on the project. This project has taken a great deal of time and effort. We've had numerous public meetings in order to hear the ideas of the community. We've begun with an engineering framework and the goal is to have that framework match the community mindset and their needs while fitting into our funding framework at the same time. We've seen a number of changes and iterations of

the plan. I think moving forward we will see something that is going to be a safer highway with more efficient lanes, an improved highway that will connect our communities and allow for creating some nice new parks that have not been there before, thus increasing our quality of life.

NILLES: *What do you think the answer is to the funding question and how we solve funding issues in the future?*

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: I think, inevitably, we are going to have to increase taxes. In addition, we have to figure out how we expand what we have done with the newest highway bill. I think that's a great formula. We have to have a concerted effort in order to find dependable funding. Because, as I stated, good infrastructure and transportation systems are the foundation for economic development.

NILLES: *How often did you hear from people out in the community and across the State during your term?*

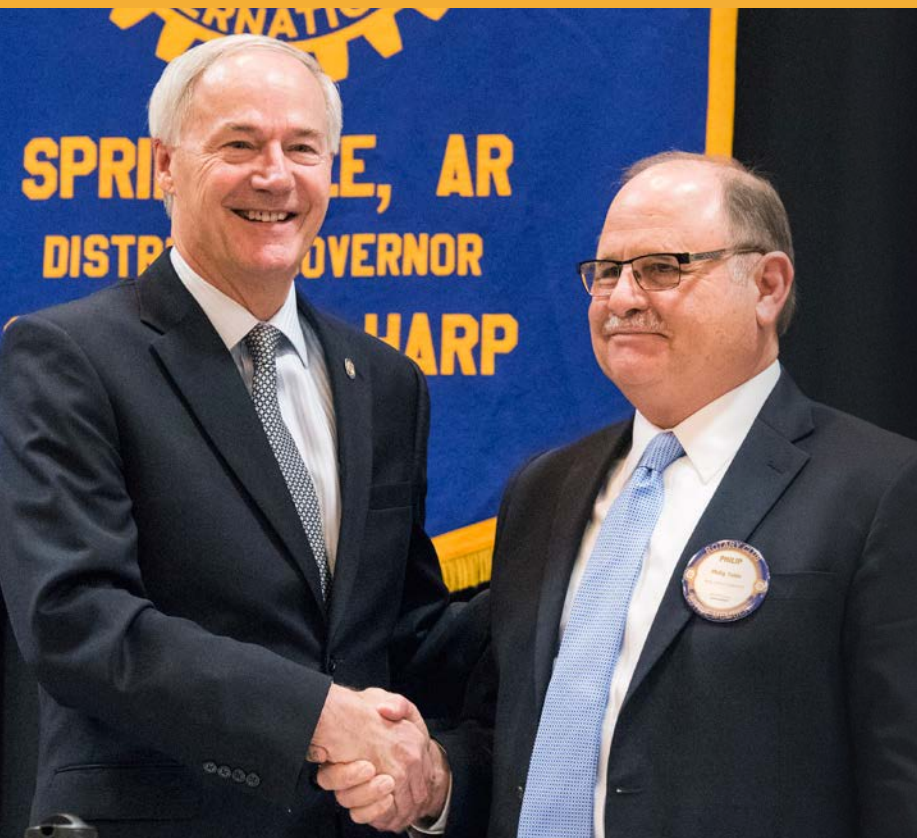
COMMISSIONER SCOTT: I would hear from people every other day. It might be phone calls from Dermott or phone calls from Harrison, for example. I was always glad to take time to listen to what they had to say.

NILLES: *What advice would you have for the next Commissioner coming on board?*

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: I would encourage that person to spend time with the Highway Department staff and appreciate the blessing that they have available. There is a great deal of institutional knowledge there and the staff is committed to our State. Also, spend time with Director Bennett and Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Director Lorie Tudor and all of our Assistant Chief Engineers to tap into that knowledge, in order to listen and learn. I would encourage them to be certain that they remain accessible to the community, to our stakeholders, to the staff and always be responsive. That's always the key.

NILLES: *Now that you've had an opportunity to get to know many of them, what is your overall impression of the AHTD staff?*

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: If I could give the staff a grade, it would be an A++. The AHTD staff operates with a spirit of love, integrity, humility and excellence. It is just a pleasure and a blessing to be able to work alongside them and I know our State is grateful for each member of the Department. ■



PHILIP TALDO NAMED NEW HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER

BY DAVID NILLES

GOVERNOR ASA HUTCHINSON ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTIONS IN MID-DECEMBER AND ON JANUARY 16TH IT BECAME OFFICIAL AS PHILIP TALDO, OF SPRINGDALE, WAS SWORN IN AS THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE ARKANSAS HIGHWAY COMMISSION.

Taldo replaces Frank Scott, Jr., whose term ended in January of this year. Taldo is Broker and Co-Owner of Griffin Realtors Commercial Division and Weichert Griffin Realtors. He is also the president of One Springdale, Inc., a development corporation, and Partners Construction, LLC, a residential building company.

"I am both excited and equally humbled by the opportunity and the trust Governor Hutchinson has given me," Taldo shared at the December announcement. "I understand the key role our highways play in the economic growth and overall future of our State. This connection is vitally important, and I look forward to working with this already stellar group of Commissioners to strengthen and improve

Arkansas' roadways, economy and quality of life for years to come."

Taldo is currently a commissioner on the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. He is a member of the Northwest Arkansas Council, Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport Authority and UAMS Northwest Advisory Board.

"Philip has served our state well in his current role on the Arkansas Economic Development Commission," Governor Hutchinson told the Springdale Rotary Club when he announced he had selected Taldo for the Highway Commission.

"Just as significantly, Philip has been involved in major infrastructure projects in Arkansas from his service on the Northwest Arkansas Council as well as the



Philip Taldo at one of his first Commission meetings

Northwest Arkansas Airport Authority. Our economy and our highways go hand-in-hand, and I have no doubt he will bring his experience and continue to provide the same thoughtful insight to this new role and responsibility."

Hutchinson named Taldo to his Governor's Working Group on Highway Funding in 2015.

Taldo's term on the Highway Commission will be effective until January 14, 2027. ■

AHTD AFTER-HOURS

FOR THE HUNT

BY DAVID NILLES

BRYAN CALDWELL CALLS HIMSELF A "CLARK COUNTY GUY." RIGHTLY SO, HE'S SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE WITHIN A HALF MILE OF WHERE HE CURRENTLY LIVES, WHICH IS ABOUT HALFWAY BETWEEN GURDON AND OKALONA.

It's here that he has made his career with the AHTD. He started with the Department in 1987 and is now closing in on 30 years. He worked in Clark County on a Maintenance Crew in the early years, but has served as Permit Officer in District Seven since 2010.

It's what Caldwell does after work that this story is about. He and his family have spent the past several years making duck calls. Not just one or two duck calls, many more than that. They own a family business called Arkie Mallard Calls that produces calls for hunters across North America.

"I grew up duck hunting in the Little Missouri and Ouachita River Bottoms," Caldwell recalls about his love for hunting. "I duck hunted a lot when I was younger, I love it. There aren't as many ducks in this area as there are in eastern Arkansas and today most of the land is leased out. It's hard to find a place to hunt now." When it comes down to it, he admits that turkey hunting is his real love today. But duck hunting is still a big part of his life, and Arkie Mallard Calls is why.



Bryan Caldwell

HOW IT ALL STARTED

"Ron Davidson was my brother's father-in-law," Caldwell shares. "He worked in the timber industry for 35 years and when he got ready to retire, he started making duck calls. Like me, when not working, he loves hunting. He also loves woodworking."

The love for hunting and woodworking led Davidson to start making duck calls as a hobby when he retired. He bought all the tools and equipment he needed to create some nice ones.

"People he knew wanted to buy some of them," Caldwell reflects. "Next thing you know, a lot of people were wanting to buy them."

That's when things got busy and

(continued on page 18)

Davidson realized he didn't need a fulltime job; after all, he was retired.

"As a result, my brother, Chad, and sister-in-law, Missy, got involved with him and they started a business called Arkie Mallard Calls," Caldwell explains. "Eventually Ron sold the business to them. It began to grow and became more than my brother could manage because he worked at Georgia Pacific as well. So in 2013, Chad asked me if I would be interested in getting involved. I said if he would set me up in my shop and I could do it at my leisure, I'd do it."

A FAMILY AFFAIR

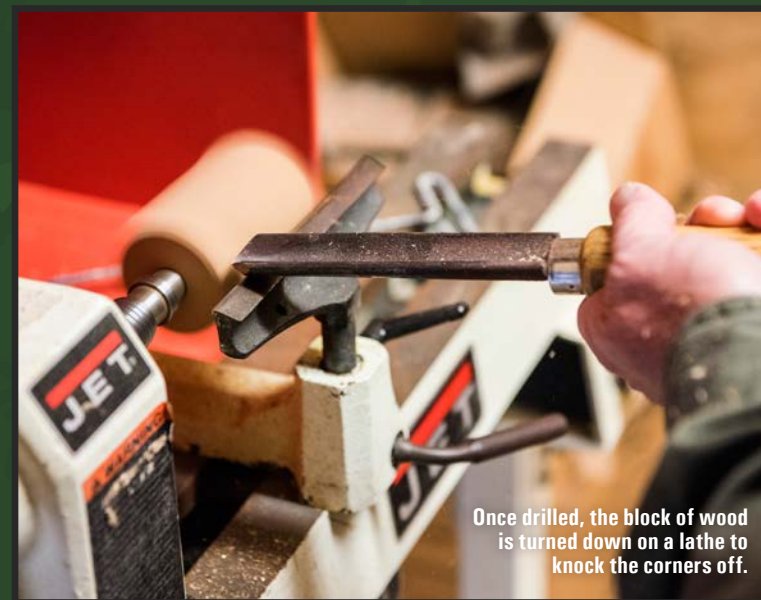
The business continued to grow to the point that today Caldwell's entire family is involved. He eventually bought the business.

"I knew we had a good thing going," Caldwell says. "I talked to my family and asked them if they would be interested in this if we could figure out some way to share the work. They joined in. My son, Cody, does part of the production at the shop at his house. My son-in-law and my daughter work at their shop. My wife, Debi, and I take it from there and finish them up at our house. Then we ship them out. Today, we are all busy and we all have a pretty good sideline job. The rest is history."



Producing Arkie Mallard duck calls starts with a good block of wood.

WHEN IT COMES TO THE ENGRAVING, THERE ARE MANY POSSIBILITIES. SOME CUSTOMERS KNOW WHAT THEY WANT ON THEIR CALL. THE ARKIE MALLARD CALLS WEBSITE OFFERS EVEN MORE OPTIONS.



Once drilled, the block of wood is turned down on a lathe to knock the corners off.



PRODUCING A TOP QUALITY, HANDMADE DUCK CALL

Producing Arkie Mallard duck calls starts with a good block of wood.

"We buy our wood from a sawmill in the northern United States," Caldwell explains. "We use black walnut, hard maple and American maple. I also have some wood that I went and got. I cut the tree up, carried it to a sawmill where they sawed it up for me. They say walnut has an extensive drying time so I'm a little hesitant on using my walnut yet because I don't know how long it has to dry. So I'm using the wood we purchase."

A hole is drilled in the wood for the reed to go in, which can be a single or

double reed.

"Single reeds carry better and have better volume," says Caldwell. "So they are ideal out in an open field like over in rice fields of eastern Arkansas. In my opinion, a double reed sounds more like a duck. The double reeds are more for flooded timber areas like Bayou Meto."

Once drilled, the block of wood is turned down on a lathe to knock the corners off. A second lathe is used to turn the wood down into the shape the duck call needs to be.

"We put a brass band on the back of it after shaping which has to be sanded down," Caldwell explains. "We buy our brass in six foot sticks and cut it into the size we want. We glue and pin the bands.

When it leaves my son's house it is already shaped and has the band on. My daughter and son-in-law sand and finish them with three coats of urethane finish for weather proofing. Its next trip is to me and my wife where we engrave the call, ink it and put another coat of finish on. We have a good system down."

When it comes to the engraving, there are many possibilities. Some customers know what they want on their call. The Arkie Mallard Calls website offers even more options.

Caldwell elaborated on the possibilities. "We've done volunteer fire department emblems, mascots for high schools, fraternities, hunting club logos and even

some branches of the military. If you can get it to us in the format we need, we can put it on there."

The website offerings include images of hunters, ducks in flight, ducks landing, hunting dogs, and the list goes on. Custom designs are also welcome.

SPREADING THE WORD THROUGH ADVERTISING

With the business doing well, part of the formula is getting the word out and offering their product to potential customers. Advertising is a major component. That is the role of the company website at arkiemallardcalls.com. The site offers information about the company, the

calls, the production choices available and engraving options.

"In addition to our website, we've done several shows like the Camden Barn Sale and Wings Over the Prairie in Stuttgart," Caldwell shares. "We took out an online ad with a group called Premiere Sportsman's Guide this year as well.

"I sat down with the family and asked them if they were prepared to handle increased sales if we increased our advertising and they said...let's do it."

Caldwell states that their busy season starts in October.

"Christmas is naturally a busy time. Spring months keep us busy too because

people will order duck calls as wedding gifts for their groomsmen."

The reputation of the company is growing geographically. Customers from across the United States are requesting the calls as are hunters across the northern border.

"We get more calls from out-of-state than we do within Arkansas. We even get a lot of orders from Canada," says Caldwell. "We've probably shipped to every province in Canada."

Judging from the popularity of Arkie Mallard Calls with hunters headed to the duck woods, it looks like Caldwell and his family have a bright future ahead of them in the hunting industry. ■

The Captain Henderson House



The Clark County Courthouse features Romanesque architecture and was built in 1899. The building includes a six-story clock tower.



"The Journey from a Dream to the Promise." A mural by Dave Loewenstien.



Clark County Historical Museum

WEEKEND ROAD TRIP: ARKADELPHIA

BY DAVID NILLES

LOOKING FOR A ROAD TRIP THAT PACKS IN A LITTLE HISTORY, A DOSE OF EDUCATION AND MILES OF OUTDOOR RECREATION ALL WITHIN THE SAME AREA? IF SO, MAKE PLANS TO VISIT ARKADELPHIA, A DESTINATION LOCATED RIGHT ON THE EDGE OF THE OUACHITA MOUNTAINS IN SOUTHWEST ARKANSAS.

Arkadelphia is easy to get to as it is located off of Interstate 30 in Clark County. A good place to start this road trip is the **Clark County Historical Museum**, where you can learn about the history of the Arkadelphia area. The museum is located in Arkadelphia's historic train station and presents the rich and diverse history of Clark County dating from prehistoric times to the present. Inside the museum are interpretive displays of Caddo Indian artifacts, the Civil War, World Wars I and II and information about improvements in education,

transportation and communication in the area. In addition to the museum, a Missouri Pacific caboose and an outdoor pavilion are found on the grounds. The museum is located at 750 S. 5th Street. With a population of just over 11,000, it may be surprising to know that there are two universities in town. Arkadelphia is home to **Henderson State University**, the second oldest public, four-year-degree-granting institution in the State, behind only the University of Arkansas. Founded in 1890,

Henderson State is home to approximately 3,600 students. The school offers 42 undergraduate degrees and 11 master degree programs in five distinct colleges and schools. Henderson State is known as the "school with a heart." The nickname dates back to 1914 when a fire destroyed the university. The students gathered under the pines and pledged their allegiance to "the school with a heart." Some believe that the ashes and wreckage of the old building buried at the foot of the pine trees is where "the Heart of Henderson" lies and that if a couple should discover the 'Heart' they will have eternal happiness. Many say that was the night that Reddie spirit was born. That Reddie spirit is on display in full during the biggest week of the year —

the Battle of the Ravine, the annual football game with "the school across the street." The rivalry game is tied for the oldest rivalry in NCAA Division II football. The visiting team simply walks across the street from their locker room to the other team's stadium. By the way, do you know what "the school across the street" is? It's **Ouachita Baptist University**, a leading liberal arts university with approximately 1,500 students. The university is a Christ-centered learning community that offers seven academic schools. It also has 15 study abroad opportunities around the world. The school was founded in 1886 and is the home of the Tigers. Both Henderson State and Ouachita Baptist are located on 10th Street (Highway 67) just north of the downtown area. While on the campus of Henderson State, be sure to see the **Captain Henderson House**. It is a beautifully restored Victorian-era home that today serves as a bed and breakfast. The Captain Henderson House

(continued on page 22)



Students on the Henderson State University campus

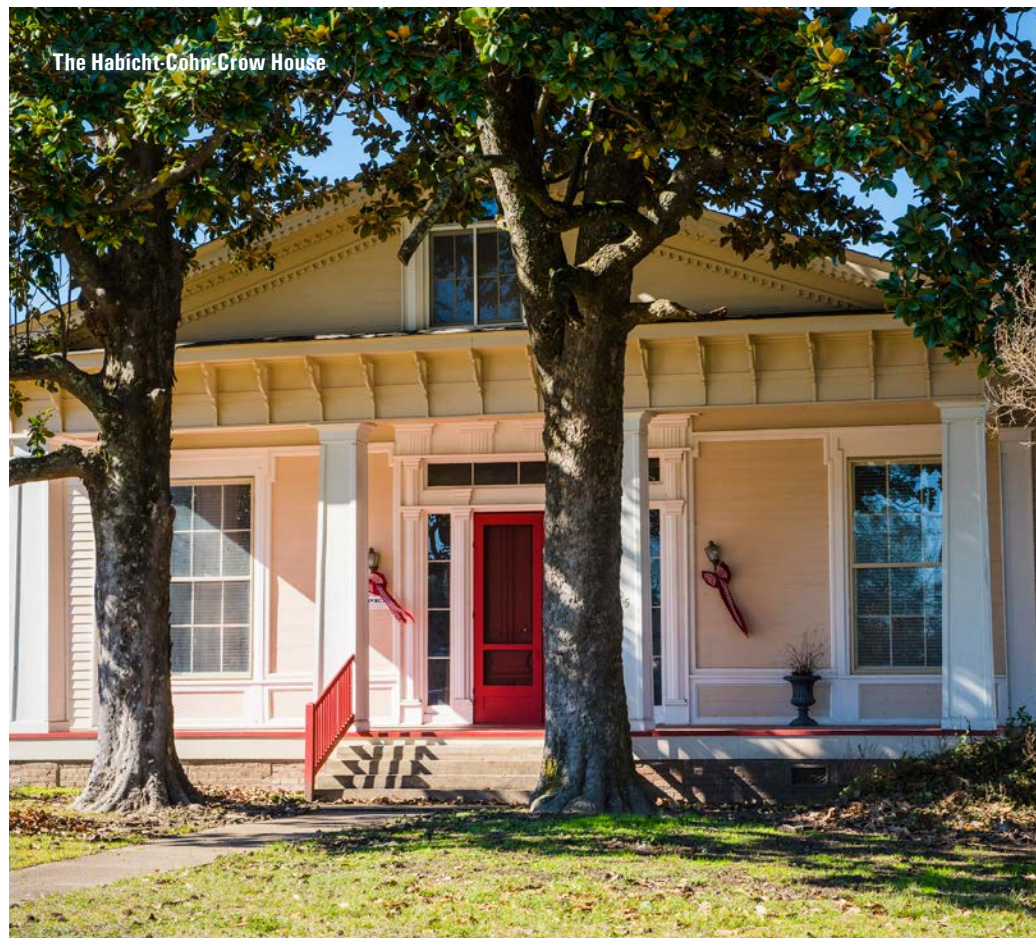
is named for Captain Charles Christopher Henderson, its former owner and namesake of Henderson State. The impressive 9,000 square-foot mansion began as a small cottage built in 1876. In 1906, Henderson incorporated the small cottage into what was then known as the "Big House." In the 1920s, the "Big House" was again expanded, creating the present structure. The house contains what is arguably the best collection of interior wooden fretwork, or ornamental detail, in the state of Arkansas. It truly is a must see. In 1998, the house was named to the National Register of Historic Places. Until its renovation in 1999, it served as the university's museum, showcasing the school's history. The most recent renovation has restored the mansion to its former majesty. The house is located at the corner of 10th and Henderson Streets.

There are several more historical homes in the area. Just across the street from the Captain Henderson House is the **Barkman House**. The home was owned by J.E.M. Barkman, son of early Clark County settler Jacob Barkman. The house was constructed in the 1860s and features Steamboat or Carpenter's Gothic architecture. The house was still under construction during the Civil War and legend has it that piles of lumber were taken from the front yard of the home to build Confederate fortifications. The home is now owned by Henderson State and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

One of Arkadelphia's oldest homes sits at the corner of Eighth and Pine Streets. Known as the **Habicht-Cohn-Crow House**, the building was constructed in 1870 for Captain Anthony E. Habicht, who came to the South during Reconstruction. Local legend says that Habicht patterned the house after one he had seen in Natchez, Mississippi, and its design was heavily influenced by the Greek Revival style. Habicht moved to Arkadelphia shortly before the completion of the railroad through Arkansas, and capitalized on the rapid economic growth that took place



The Barkman House



The Habicht-Cohn-Crow House



Shopping in downtown Arkadelphia



The Arkadelphia Arts Center



Juanita's Candy Kitchen carries a variety of brittles and fudge.

after its arrival. He left Clark County in 1875 and sold the home to M.M. Cohn, an Arkadelphia merchant who later moved to Little Rock and established the M.M. Cohn Company, a well-known and successful department store for many years. Cohn sold the residence to Albert M. Crow in 1880. Crow and his descendants owned the house for over 100 years. The Habicht-Cohn-Crow House was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

In addition to historic homes, one of Arkansas' most historic roadways passes through Clark County. The **Old Military Road** follows the route of the old Southwest Trail and served as a major transportation artery throughout Arkansas' early history. Confederate and Union soldiers traveled the route during the Civil War. A historical marker was erected in 2014 recognizing the significance of the roadway and can be seen at the intersection of Old Military Road and Highway 7/67 near the Caddo River Bridge.

While in the downtown area, art lovers will want to stop in at the **Arkadelphia Arts Center**. The Center offers a diverse selection of exhibitions and receptions in its galleries throughout the year. On view in April is an exhibition by students in kindergarten through 12th grade from around the region as well as a photography exhibition by students at Henderson State University. "Art on Main" comes to the galleries in May featuring art for sale by local artists. The Arts Center is located at 625 Main Street and is open Tuesday through Friday.

Anyone who knows about good peanut brittle from Arkansas is familiar with **Juanita's Candy Kitchen**. The candy has been made in Arkadelphia since 1974 when Juanita would cook up a batch of brittle in a building behind her home and sell it from her car as she traveled the State. A newer, larger building allowed her to add pecan and cashew brittle to the lineup and the rest is history. Juanita's also carries a

(continued on page 24)

wide variety of homemade fudge, as well. While in Arkadelphia, there's no better time to stock up on these sweet treats. The showroom is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is located just off of Interstate 30 at Exit 73. The address is 47 Stephenwood Drive, directly behind Walmart.

If outdoor recreation is on your agenda, one of the area's most popular outdoor destinations is **DeGray Lake**. It's a short eight-mile drive north of town on Highway 7. The lake is a perfect opportunity for outdoor fun including swimming, fishing, camping and boating. The 13,400-acre lake has 208 miles of shoreline and offers more than 700 campsites, ranging from full hook-ups to primitive. There are also 15 boat-launching ramps on DeGray's shores. Houseboating, sailing and scuba diving are also popular, as is observing the bald eagles that winter on the shores of the lake.

If camping indoors is more your style, the lake is home to Arkansas' only resort state park, **DeGray Lake Resort State Park**. The park features a 96-room lodge on its own island on the north shore of the

lake, perfect for overnight stays. The lodge offers a swimming pool, a playground, bicycle rentals and a day-use boat dock. There is also an 18-hole championship golf course and a marina nearby. The park also offers hiking trails, a swimming beach, camp sites and numerous interpretive programs. It's the type of place you could stay for days just to relax and enjoy the outdoors.

Outdoor lovers will also want to visit the **Desoto Bluff Trail**. This flat, quarter-mile trail takes hikers through a wooded area and ends up at a bluff overlooking the Ouachita River and views that stretch for many miles. Along the trail are interpretive panels that share information on the Caddo Indians that once lived in the area. Panels also tell the story of famous explorers George Hunter and William Dunbar who made their way to the bluff in the early 1800s during their journey as part of President Thomas Jefferson's Grand Expedition of Discovery. The parking lot for the trail is located just off of Highway 67, just north of the campus of Ouachita Baptist University. Watch carefully for the sign!

As we wrap up our tour of Arkadelphia, consider driving about 20 miles down Highway 67 to the town of Gurdon. That is, if you are into the supernatural. You'll want to wait until the sun goes down so you can look for the well-known Gurdon Light. Local legend has it that the Gurdon Light is a mysterious floating light seen above the railroad tracks near town. It was first sighted during the 1930s. Many theories and stories exist to explain the light, including one which connects it to the 1931 murder of a local railroad worker. The popular local legend drew national attention in 1994 when NBC's *Unsolved Mysteries* television show documented the phenomenon. Its a few miles walk to the exact location. Just ask around town for directions, and be sure to take a flashlight!

Arkadelphia offers so many things to do, all just a short drive from anywhere in south Arkansas. There is no better time of year to visit than now, so make plans soon! ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: Some information for this article was provided by the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture.



Boat dock on DeGray Lake



The Desoto Bluff Trail overlooking the Ouachita River

The Arkansas Folk Festival in Mountain View.

Photo Courtesy AR Parks & Tourism



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 what highway you take. For additional event listings, check Arkansas.com/events.

- * **HEARTBREAK IN PEANUTS:** This art exhibition features 50 high quality digital reproductions of original *Peanuts* comic strips focusing on narratives of lost love. These one-sided love stories include Sally and her "Sweet Babboo," Snoopy left standing at the altar, Lucy throwing Schroeder's piano in the sewer and Charlie Brown's mission to meet the Little Red-Haired Girl. • FEBRUARY 15 – APRIL 16
- * **ARKANSAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:** Join conductor Philip Mann for the 5th Annual Chamber Orchestra concert in Anthony Chapel at Garvan Woodland Gardens. Afterwards, walk the gardens and enjoy the Tulip Extravaganza. • MARCH 19
- * **NATURALLY 7:** Naturally 7 is an American music group with a distinct a cappella style they call "vocal play" which according to group leader Roger Thomas is "the art of becoming an instrument using the human voice to create the sound." • MARCH 31
- * **ARKANSAS FOLK FESTIVAL:** Mountain View is the place to be when this festival gets underway. Bluegrass music is the star of the event and can be heard on the square, on front porches or anywhere else musicians happen to gather. There will also be handmade crafts, frontier life demonstrations and dancing on the square. • APRIL 13 – 15

MARCH 1 – MARCH 31
39TH ANNUAL WYE MOUNTAIN DAFFODIL FESTIVAL
Wye Mountain United Methodist Church
Bigelow, AR

THROUGH APRIL 16 *
HEARTBREAK IN PEANUTS
Fort Smith Regional Art Museum
Fort Smith, AR

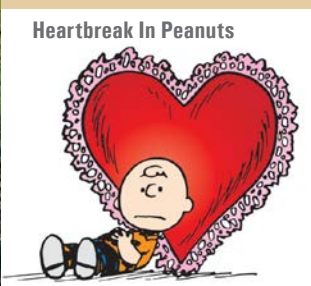
MARCH 19 *
ARKANSAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AT GARVAN GARDENS
Garvan Woodland Gardens
Hot Springs, AR

MARCH 25
27TH ANNUAL ART WITH AN ALTITUDE KITE FESTIVAL
Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge
Eureka Springs, AR

MARCH 31 *
NATURALLY 7
Walton Arts Center
Fayetteville, AR

APRIL 13 – 15 *
55TH ANNUAL ARKANSAS FOLK FESTIVAL
Downtown and on the Square
Mountain View, AR

APRIL 20 – 22
19TH ANNUAL HOT SPRINGS CORVETTE WEEKEND FOR CHARITY
Hot Springs Convention Center
Hot Springs, AR



NEW LOOK ON HIGHWAYS

BY DAVID NILLES

Means Safer Roadways

HIGHWAYS IN ARKANSAS ARE BEGINNING TO TAKE ON A NEW LOOK AND IT'S ALL IN THE STRIPING.

Research by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has indicated that widening center lane and outside stripes on our highways reduces the number of crashes on rural, two-lane roads, especially with regard to single-vehicle and run-off-the-road accidents.

For that reason, the Arkansas State Highway Commission recently voted to widen the striping on highways across the State.

"Currently, the yellow center line stripes and the white lane line and edge line stripes on our highways are four inches wide," stated John Mathis, AHTD Assistant State Maintenance Engineer. "With the new policy, new and repainted stripes will now be six inches wide."

According to the FHWA, the wider stripes will increase visibility of travel lanes and make them safer as a result. The improved visibility helps all drivers but especially older drivers who now will be able to see the wider stripes more easily.

The new policy goes into effect on all State highways.

WIDER STRIPES, DIFFERENT TECHNOLOGY

Not only will Arkansas' highway markings soon be wider, the AHTD is also changing the type of markings placed by contractors on the Interstates.

The Department is moving away from the preformed "tape" it has been using in the past to mark travel lanes on the Interstate system.

"Not only is the tape expensive, when winter weather arrives and we have to use our snowplows to clear the roadways, the plows tend to scrape off the preformed tape lane markings," Mathis explains.

As a result, the contractors will begin using a less expensive marking

that should hold up better to winter weather operations. Not only will they be wider, the new enhanced thermoplastic markings used on the Interstates will contain a mixture of larger glass beads combined with the regular beads used in all of our striping operations, which will improve the retroreflectivity of the marking.

The term retroreflectivity describes the ability of an object to reflect a beam of light back to its source. In striping, this is accomplished with the use of glass beads imbedded in the paint or thermoplastic material. The light from a car's headlight hits the glass bead, picks up the underlying color and is reflected back to the source.

LOWER COSTS ALLOW FOR MORE CREWS

In addition to being brighter, reverting to painted striping will result in substantial savings for the Department. The preformed tape costs the Department approximately three dollars per linear foot. New enhanced thermoplastic striping will cost approximately 60 cents per linear foot.

"Currently we spend about seven million dollars a year on the profiled thermoplastic and preformed tape for our highways," explains Tony Sullivan, Assistant Chief Engineer for Operations. "Switching to a less expensive marking will allow us to take the savings realized on Interstate markings and invest it in improving the markings on the entire highway system by adding six additional pavement striping trucks plus the crews to operate them."

The Department currently has six crews. Doubling the number to twelve will allow the Department to re-stripe its 16,000 miles of state highways every two years rather than the four it currently takes, resulting in wider, brighter lines for the entire State. ■

KEN JORDAN:

CLOSING A CAREER ON JOB SAFETY

BY DAVID NILLES



SAFETY HAS ALWAYS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF KEN JORDAN'S CAREER AT THE ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT. Safety on the road, as a member of the Arkansas Highway Police (AHP). And safety on the job site, as Section Head of the Training and Safety Section. With the new year, Jordan is bringing his career to a close as he reaches 30 years with the Department.

PATROLLING THE HIGHWAYS

Jordan began his career at the AHTD in 1987 coming from Hot Springs where he was a Deputy for Garland County. He started as a Patrol Officer with the Arkansas Highway Police and was stationed in Brinkley. He was there for a year before getting re-assigned to Hot Springs.

"The work itself is enjoyable," Jordan shared as he reflected on his career on patrol. "I like meeting people and assisting them when I can. As a Patrol Officer you experience something different every day."

During his time with the Highway Police, the role of the position evolved.

"It has changed quite a bit over the years," Jordan shared. "We were spending the majority of our time weighing trucks when I started. Then we got involved in the Motor Carrier Safety Administration Program (MCSAP) which is a Federal program created in order to inspect trucks and their drivers. We would check equipment, driver log books and a variety of other items.

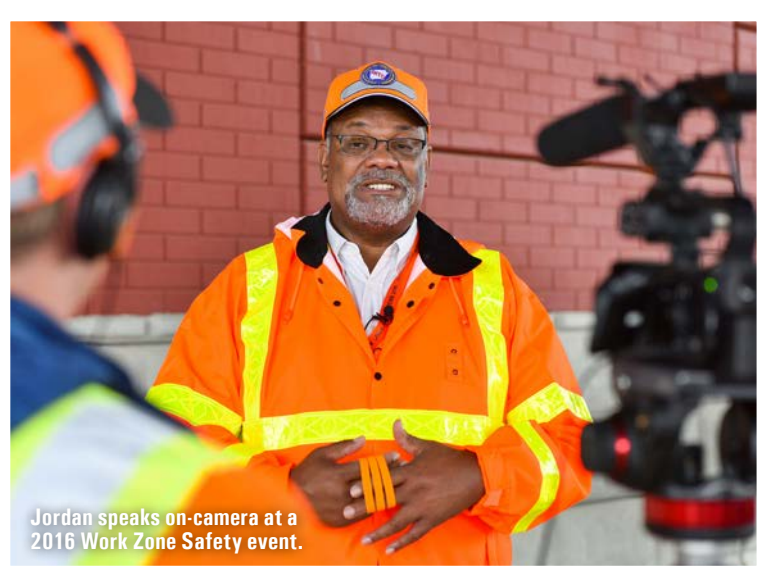
We then became more heavily involved in the prevention of drunk driving.

"Our role expanded when we got involved in the Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) program. We had instructors from across the country come to Arkansas and instruct us on how to recognize the signs that a motorist may be on drugs. It was the first DRE program in Arkansas. Between the DRE and MCSAP programs and other areas of the job, there was always plenty to do. If you became bored, it was your own fault."

In addition to learning the ins and outs of new programs, patrol officers require a special skill in dealing with people.

"There was one thing I always taught our officers when I was a member of the Highway Police," Jordan recalls. "I would tell new officers...if you are five-foot ten inches tall and weigh 125 pounds before you put the badge and gun on, don't become six-foot five inches and 500 pounds of nothing but ferociousness after you put it on. Remember when you stop the average person out there, they're going to be scared or mad, and either way,

(continued on page 28)



Jordan speaks on-camera at a 2016 Work Zone Safety event.



Jordan's retirement party



“ I THINK THAT WE HAVE PRESENTED SAFETY MEASURES IN A SUCCESSFUL MANNER AND PEOPLE BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT IT IS. ”

you don't want it to escalate. You want to keep everyone calm and composed. It's better to talk your way out of a situation than to have to shoot your way out of it.”

There were a few occasions when Jordan did have to draw his weapon while on patrol. One was when Arkansas State Police requested assistance with a robbery in Sherwood.

“They gave a good description of four guys that were involved in a robbery and they noted that they were armed,” Jordan recalled. “We had several AHP cars in the area so we stopped the suspects, circled the vehicle and got them out one at a time. They all went downtown. It was memorable because in all my years in law enforcement in Garland County and with Highway Police, I only had to pull my gun twice. And that was one of the times. I never had to use it, but the threat was there.”

FROM THE ROADWAY TO THE JOB SITE

In 1997, Jordan hung up his patrol hat when he was promoted to Safety Inspection Officer for the Department.

“There were five of us across the State and our role was to make sure construction crews carried out their jobs as safely as possible. That got down

to simple things such as wearing an orange vest on the job site. As a Safety Inspection Officer, we wanted to make sure each employee had the best chance of going home that afternoon in the same shape they came to work in that morning. The hardest thing to do is to meet with a family after they have lost somebody. We do everything within our powers to make sure that doesn't happen.”

Three years later Jordan became Section Head of Training and Safety.

“We are committed to moving our Department employees in the right direction when it comes to safety on the job,” Jordan states. “I may have an office but the action is out on the job site. That's where you learn the keys to successful job safety. I have flagged traffic, cut grass with a weed eater on the side of the Interstate and picked up trash. All to better understand our keys to safety. I know what our employees face every day.”

In addition to being on the job site, Jordan attends meetings of the North American Association of Transportation Safety and Health Officials, an organization that promotes and improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the occupational safety and health programs designed

for highway and transportation departments.

“We gain a lot of information in those meetings,” Jordan states. “It's an opportunity to see how other departments are doing things across the country and a chance to learn from their successes. That process of sharing moves our Department forward in many areas.”

A TEAM EFFORT WITH A GOOD TEAM

“Former Director Dan Flowers asked me three months into this job how I liked it and I told him I like it well because I am surrounded by people that are experienced and do a good job,” Jordan says of his team.

“The good days are when everyone is on board and we are all working to get something done and once it is done we can see where progress has been made,” he adds. “The bad day is when you have to carry a message to a family that has just lost a loved one and you have to tell them that family member isn't going to come home that evening.

“I've always said the biggest problem is not our workers doing their jobs in the work zone. The problem is the inattentiveness of a small percentage of drivers traveling through their work

zone. If someone hits a truck, we can replace that truck. But if someone hits an employee, we can't replace that person.

“I think that we have presented safety measures in a successful manner and people better understand how important it is. Our Department is moving in the right direction and I would like to see that continue.”

Jordan wasn't just talking about safety programs when referring to moving in the right direction.

“I'm glad to see the Department making some changes. The new Achieving Career Excellence (ACE) program is happening now and I think it is going to be for the better. If people are patient, they will see that this is going to be a positive change. Kronos is another perfect example. With time, people have learned how Kronos has made their job easier. I think they will be pleased with ACE as well.”

PLANS FOR RETIREMENT

On the subject of retirement Jordan shared a story. “I asked an acquaintance what he was going to do when he retired. He looked at me and said ‘yes’. I asked him three times and he said ‘yes’ three times. Finally, one of his co-workers said, ‘Ken, you haven't picked up on it yet?’

He's going to retire and that's it.' Well he kicked back for a week or two. A few weeks later I heard that he was working at a convenience store in Waldron.

“As for me, I plan on working around the house. I would also like to see more of Arkansas. I've seen it as I have traveled

for work, but I would like to see it more as a tourist, get off the beaten path and see things I haven't seen before.”

For someone that has spent as many years promoting safety on the roads as Jordan has, getting off the beaten path sounds just about right. ■



Kristina Boykin does tests (shovel tests) that run at 20 meters apart, 50 centimeters deep and 35 centimeters wide.

DIGGING INTO ARKANSAS' PAST

BY DAVID NILLES

ARKANSAS' LANDSCAPE IS DIVERSE. To the east is the flat, rich soil of the Mississippi Delta. The central area of the state features rolling hills, and to the northwest are the Ozark and Boston Mountains.

The history of the people that have lived here before us is rich. It's a land whose earliest inhabitants included the Caddo, Quapaw and Cherokee Indian tribes. Each area of our State contains hidden connections to the land's earliest dwellers.

As the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department designs and builds highways on new locations or expands existing highways, it is frequently in the position of being among the first to uncover evidence of our historic past.

The significance of these discoveries is important to the Department and falls into the hands of the AHTD Environmental Division's Cultural Resources Section.

EXAMINING A CONSTRUCTION SITE

"When a construction project is planned, our section is responsible for evaluating the site's impact to any archeological or historic resources that lay within that project's existing or proposed right-of-way, or what we call the area of potential affect," states Kristina Boykin, Environmental Scientist for the AHTD.

Within that right-of-way, a site may include more than just artifacts from days gone by lying under the soil. It can also include structures above ground such as buildings, roads, bridges, cemeteries, historic districts and burials.

"We take photos of buildings we encounter that are 50-plus years old and we do a Request for Technical Assistance (RTA)," Boykin adds. "We take photos of as many sides of the structure as possible. The RTA includes the photos and description of each structure. It is sent to our State Historic Preservation Officer and is reviewed to see if they think the structure is eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places."

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT

The Department is required to do the research on the majority of projects it begins in order to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. That Act was signed into law by Lyndon B. Johnson on October 15, 1966. The Act (Public Law 89-665; 54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.) is legislation intended to preserve historical and archaeological sites in the United States.

AN ARMY OF ARCHEOLOGISTS

The work of inspecting AHTD construction sites falls into the hands of the Department's Cultural Resources Section. Within that section are eight

archeologists including Diana Wilks, Jason Eads, Richard Jenkins, William McAlexander, Milton Hughes, Lane Shields, Scott Smallwood, Kristina Boykin, architectural historian Nikki Senn and intern Shelby Linck.

"Most archeologists study anthropology in college," Boykin explains. "There are very few schools that have a major in archeology. Within the anthropology programs there are five sub-fields and one of those is archeology. From there, it breaks down into numerous sub-fields of prehistoric archeology, historic archeology, bio-archeology, etc."

Bio-archeology is a specialty at the University of Arkansas. The school

has done research in places as far away as Egypt.

RESEARCH HELPS TO KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

"Most of the time, we have a fairly good idea what we may find on location," Boykin observes. "We always do record checks before we go out into the field. That work may include looking at historic maps, studying the topography of the area from topographic quadrangle maps or referring to Google Earth. We look at land forms to see what might be more conducive to holding a site. For example, a dry, flat landform with a nearby water source makes it a high probability area for either prehistoric or historic settlement/activity."

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The Arkansas Archeological Survey has a GIS system that has all the sites mapped into a database. We can look at it to see if any sites are already recorded within the project area or to get an idea from nearby sites of what might be found.”

The Arkansas Archeological Survey, located in Fayetteville, manages the State’s central database of archeological sites and serves as the State’s permanent curation facility.

“We have three directions we can take when we consider a site. One is to avoid the location and find an alternate route, a second is to minimize the impacts to it by shifting the alignment to one side or the other, and the third alternative is mitigation. We will fully excavate that site for our proposed route. That’s referred to as data recovery.”

OUT IN THE FIELD

“In most cases, when the Department has established proposed right-of-way for a new highway, a road widening or a bridge replacement, we start digging in the dirt,” Boykin explains.

The tools of the trade include shovels, screens, cameras, GPS units, tape measures and Munsell soil color books. Special cases for larger digs may include heavy machinery, but it’s very rare.

“I always tell people I’m going out to dig postholes,” Boykin jokes.

Standards on how big a space has to be dug to research an area are set by the Arkansas Archeological Survey. Tests (shovel tests) are run at 20 meters apart, 50 centimeters deep and 35 centimeters wide. Measurements may vary based on topography.

The field work involves several phases of investigation based on the site’s potential to be eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places.

“Phase One is our initial survey in order to identify what may be there and see what potential it has to be on the National Register,” Boykin explains. “In Phase Two, we go beyond shovel tests and do 1 x 1 meter test units to get more of a sample and determine if there are any associated features with the site. For example, we may be looking for hearths, fire pits or house posts. If the site is

determined to be eligible to the National Register, then we go to the final phase, Phase Three, which is the full scale excavation of the site within our proposed right-of-way.

DISCOVERIES FROM THE PAST

Most of what AHTD archeologists find in Arkansas in regards to historic sites dates from the late 1800s to mid-1900s. For prehistoric (or Native American) sites, the date range can vary from 10,000 B.C. to A.D. 1541. Prehistoric sites are divided into distinctive time periods, such as Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Woodland and Mississippian. One site, located near England, Arkansas, is Toltec Mounds. This site consists of several earthen mounds related to ceremonial and government operations during the late Woodland to early Mississippian Period (dating to A.D. 650 to 1050). This site is now a National Historic Landmark and is an archeological State Park.

“Prehistoric sites often contain lithics, or stone tools such as arrowheads and bifaces made by Native Americans,” Boykin explains. “The most common

items associated with Native American sites are flakes. Flakes are basically broken off small pieces of rock removed during the process of creating an arrowhead or tool. We find a great deal of Native American items across the State.”

For example, a prehistoric site was found in Montgomery County on a terrace above a creek. This site dated to the Archaic period (7,500 to 500 B.C.) and was a large tool manufacturing area with over 3,201 artifacts recovered during Phase II testing. This site was found not eligible despite the quantity of artifacts due to the lack of features at the site.

In addition, the team finds historic debris such as ceramics, glass or nails.

“Of course, the more interesting finds are the earlier ones,” Boykin shares. “Recently, we were at a site and uncovered a rock foundation from a house, a well beside it and various out buildings that date to the late 1930s to early 40s. This is a fairly typical site in Arkansas.

“There was a site in Russellville where we were working around a fallen building of what we thought was a barn. It turned out to be a two-room dog trot home made of pine and oak sill logs with cedar shanks on the roof. This site dated to the early 1860s through the early 1900s and was later converted to a barn until it eventually collapsed. It was determined eligible to the National Register and was located entirely within the proposed alignment. Design plans could not be shifted, and therefore mitigation took place at this site in the form of data recovery. Phase III excavation was undertaken by one of our on-call archeological consultants. They discovered a detached kitchen and cellar, various chimney and hearth areas and a stone walkway. Various ceramics, glass medicine bottles, faunal remains (pigs, cows, etc.) and metal objects associated with agriculture were found across the site. This site was fairly unique compared to what you normally find on historic sites in Arkansas.”

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Prehistoric sites often contain Native American tools.



Kristina Boykin holding part of a jug discovered at a home site.



Construction crews unearthed a cistern spring surrounded by brick and mortar during the construction of the new Broadway Bridge.



The grave of a child that had died in the 1890s and was buried on the family land.



The grave after it was relocated.

BROADWAY BRIDGE DISCOVERY

A well-publicized discovery has occurred during the construction of the new Broadway Bridge over the Arkansas River between Little Rock and North Little Rock. Construction crews unearthed a cistern spring surrounded by brick and mortar on the Little Rock side dating back to the 1800s. The Department knew the spring was there by looking at old Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. John Fleming, head of the Environmental Division at the Department, told media that maps show that between 1889 and 1897, Edison Electric Light and Power Company had constructed a building over the spring, and likely used the spring for the company's boiler operations. Several brick foundations were located near the cistern and held some of the machinery necessary to operate the electric plant. A remaining wall from the old 1886 Pulaski County Jail was also found. This site was documented, reburied and preserved in place. Design plans were changed to avoid the features at this site.

A DELICATE FINDING

Work at another homestead built in the 1880s unearthed an old grave. The grave was identified by a noted difference in the soil color and texture in the immediate area and by the presence of coffin hardware such as nails and screws.

THE ENTIRE PROCESS OF CLOSELY MONITORING A JOB SITE TO DISCOVER ITS PAST ENSURES THAT THE HISTORY OF THAT AREA IS RECORDED AND PRESERVED FOR ALL TIME.

"The grave was located within our proposed right-of-way," Boykin recalls. "We consulted with the land owner as to what they would like to do about the discovery. If the alignment was shifted, our engineers stated that the Department could take the barn as opposed to the grave, but the owners didn't want that. So they decided to remove the grave."

The grave was that of a child that had died in the 1890s and was buried on the family land.

"We did all the proper paperwork and after consulting with everyone involved, the grave was relocated to a local cemetery and the child laid to rest beside the father," Boykin says. "The old grave was surrounded by native stone. We moved the stones and positioned them exactly the way they laid at the old gravesite."

We also bought a new headstone."

RETURNING FROM THE FIELD

Once items are found and removed from a site, they are brought back to the Department and washed in the Environmental Division lab.

"Our staff fills out a site form and then we turn it in to the Archeological Survey," Boykin explains. "I proceed to curate the artifacts for permanent storage. That process includes counting, weighing, labeling, tagging and bagging the items. If we find a site or a building will be impacted, we produce a report and it is sent to the State Historic Preservation Office. They have a Section 106 reviewer who concurs or disagrees with our findings about whether a site or structure is eligible or not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. If they concur with our findings, then the Section 106 process is complete and we follow all the steps stated in our report in order to fulfill our obligations."

The entire process of closely monitoring a job site to discover its past ensures that the history of that area is recorded and preserved for all time. Once that is done, plans are made for the future and the Department moves forward to improve the transportation system in the area. ■



A New Kind of Combat FOR MILITARY SURPLUS EQUIPMENT

BY MATT BARNETTE

IT WAS THE SHOT HEARD AROUND THE WORLD. Everyone was talking about an image posted to social media in early 2014, showing the Missouri/Arkansas State line after a winter storm – Missouri's side of the road free of ice and snow, Arkansas' side completely immersed in ice. The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department definitely heard about it.

That's when Director Scott Bennett and others assessed the state of the AHTD fleet and equipment used to combat ice and snow. The average age of the Department's trucks, normally used to haul equipment and loads of all kinds, was close to 20 years old. The AHTD's frugality and efficiency of keeping old vehicles functioning turned into a major deficiency.

Missouri definitely had the advantage at the time when the viral photo hit the internet. They had more road maintenance workers on standby, ready to assist when crises occurred. They also had the equipment and resources to attack before and after the weather event.

Key AHTD staff traveled to the "Show Me State" to compare and contrast the

differences in their winter responses, and upon return, they had a handful of new ideas and a fresh approach to providing Arkansans with clear roads.

Director Bennett instructed District Engineers to begin a mission to attack this head on; leading to some innovative ways the Department could treat winter weather going forward.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED IN DISTRICT 10

District 10 sits in the northeast corner of Arkansas. District Engineer Brad Smithee has only been at the reins since September of 2016, but he's long been a fixture at the Highway Department, reaching his 27th anniversary recently. He'd previously

served under former District 10 District Engineer Walter McMillan (see Walter's retirement profile in the September-October 2016 issue of *Arkansas Highways*). While District Maintenance Engineer, Smithee got the ball rolling for a giant change in how the AHTD goes after ice and snow on the roadways.

"They're called HEMTTs," Smithee says, referring to the giant fleet of comically large vehicles parked in rows measuring a football field long. "That stands for 'Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck.'"

The strange anagram name for the vehicles comes from their previous employer and the job they did: as Army equipment moving lots of heavy equipment across dangerous terrain

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“THE DEPARTMENT CURRENTLY OWNS FOUR HEMTT TRUCKS. THREE ARE ESSENTIALLY GIGANTIC FLATBED TRUCKS AND ONE IS A 2,000-GALLON TANKER.”



District Engineer Brad Smithee with one of the HEMTT trucks.

to the standard AHTD black and white. They look sharp now. My crew gets excited working on them. It's something new and they take the time, or make the time, to get under the hoods of them.”

As for naming the vehicles, Smithee had this to say, “When the HEMTTs were acquired, we called them our “snow monsters” and somehow the Disney movie *Monster's Inc.* came into play. Sully was the big blue character and was attached to the tanker, again due to the sheer girth. Then there is Mike, Randal, and in a slight departure from the movie, the Abominable Snow Monster, whom we call “Yeti” for short. It has been argued that it really doesn't take much to entertain us sometimes! It's probably a valid argument.”



Initially, the trucks were still covered in Army camouflage. A huge paint booth had to be constructed to repaint them.

in Iraq and Afghanistan, amongst other exotic locales.

Smithee explains how these unorthodox military vehicles made the transition into the AHTD fleet.

A NEW HOME FOR SURPLUS EQUIPMENT

“There are Federal Surplus auctions all over the place,” he comments. Look online and you can find them. I look at them all the time, watching and waiting for something that might be useful since the Army is eager to get rid of equipment they don't need. So, the first acquisitions of the unorthodox equipment were two M936A2 AM General 6X6 wrecker vehicles. They are essentially five ton trucks with large winches and 20,000-pound boom arms that are used for recovery of vehicles or large debris. They're really big, so our shop crew named them Tiny and

Tinkerbell! They're so creative in both their fabrication skills and imaginations!”

So how did the HEMTT trucks come into play?

“We saw the M936A2 wreckers available and we turned into a couple of six-year-olds at Christmas,” Smithee recalls. “We thought about how cool they would be to play with. So, I discussed with our District staff how we *REALLY* needed one of them. They listened, but then decided, at that time, it might not be the best idea. Then, one wintery night after working many hours during the previous couple of days, Jack Wolf, District 10's Equipment Supervisor, woke me up at 2:00 a.m. and started the conversation by asking “Can we go get your wrecker now?”

“We'd had a particularly bad winter event, and twenty-five percent of our fleet got stuck for one reason or another. I tried to hire wrecker services that

might help us get back to work, but no one was available. It took many hours to get our trucks into position to extract all these stuck vehicles. We were especially frustrated about the hours lost by both the stuck equipment and the rescue vehicles taken from their assigned duties.

After that, we went to look at the M936A2 trucks and justified our need to both Walter (the District 10 District Engineer at the time) and to AHTD administration for this first odd purchase. The HEMTTs were sitting in the lot and I asked Mr. Wolf if he thought we could mount some plows to those giant things. The more we looked and thought about the possibilities; we were convinced we probably could. I really thought the administration would tell us we had lost our faculties, but instead, State Maintenance Engineer Joe Sartini approved it and challenged us to continue

thinking outside the box making the best we could of all available resources.

CONVERTED TO COMBAT SNOW AND ICE

So, what's happened with the HEMTT trucks since being purchased?

“These vehicles were purchased cheaply, modified and efficiently adapted, and are now proving to be a great asset to our fleet,” Smithee boasts. “We continue to look at available equipment and have recently acquired eight 6 x 6 Freightliner road tractors, all purchased through Federal Surplus. We have one converted to a dump truck with a bed and plow. We, like many other Districts, have converted traditional road tractors in the past, but the 6 x 6 was a little concerning for various reasons. The one that is complete is proving to be a very promising vehicle. If all goes as planned, this addition alone

will convert approximately 16 percent of our aging fleet into good trucks that can be depended upon to function as needed.”

A NEW LOOK AND A NEW NAME

Smithee likes to give credit where credit is due when it comes to overhauling the new equipment.

“Our staff in the District Shop deserves much of the credit as they are the ones that succeeded with all fabrication and mechanical tasks and made this endeavor successful. These trucks are so big — when we first got them, they were still covered in Army camouflage. The trucks are too large to go into our paint booth here at District 10 headquarters. So, one of our shop guys constructed a huge paint booth just to take them from Army-ready

BEING PUT TO GOOD USE

“The Department currently owns four HEMTT trucks,” Smithee adds. “Three are essentially gigantic flatbed trucks and one is a 2,000-gallon tanker. Regarding buying more, if I found some for the right price, I would consider buying them. We have yet to experience a large winter event to really prove their worth and abilities, but the tanker was used extensively for brine application last year with good success and it also plowed during one moderate snow event. It out performed a great older truck running side by side with it on Interstate 55.” *(continued on page 38)*



Our HEMTT, Sully, hauls 2,000 gallons and has a large built-in pumping system.

FINDING ADDITIONAL USES FOR THE FLEET

As for non-winter times, District 10 has found many uses including hauling debris and using the winches and booms for beaver dam removal.

“We think we will continue to find new ways and areas where they can prove very useful,” Smithee adds.

Besides distributing brine that helps keep snow and ice off the roadways, and hitting the streets with plows — what else are these giant trucks doing to earn their keep? Their role is expanding.

“We were able to back one of the trucks into a low, wet, swampy area a while back,” Smithee recalls. “The trucks are configured with an articulating arm used for lifting/loading the truck. We were able to reach out beyond the end of a pipe that had been clogged extensively by a beaver dam. The pipe was four or five feet in diameter and was almost completely full. We fabricated a steel grapple, connected it to the winch on the boom, and were able to extract the debris pretty easily.”

Another benefit of these trucks not always being used in the daily routine has

come in another odd way.

“As we accumulate tires picked up from the roadway or other highway debris, we often load the material directly onto a HEMTT,” Smithee explains. “When it gets full, we haul the material off. This practice helps save time and manpower, since we can let it sit on the vehicle instead of piling the material on the District 10 yard, then having to re-load it when we’re finally ready to haul off.”

The HEMTT tanker is also being used to wash bridges with success.

“Most crews only have one-thousand gallon tanks for this job and spend a good bit of time planning and mobilizing in order to refill the tanks,” says Smithee. “But our HEMTT, Sully, hauls 2,000 gallons and has a large built-in pumping system that makes a great rig for this function. Mike and Randal have now been outfitted with two 1,000-gallon tanks as well. We

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acquired poly tanks and built frames for them as we do our chemical application tanks. They are now prepared for both brine application and will also be used as bridge washing devices when needed.”

STARTING A TREND

Some of Brad Smithee and his District 10 staff's innovations are already being picked up by other Districts throughout the Highway Department and Smithee vows to keep trying to keep his corner of the State on the leading edge of what can be done with heavy equipment and a little bit of imagination as the winter weather ensues. ■

Brad Smithee and his HEMTT trucks will also be featured in an upcoming documentary about winter weather that is currently in production at the Highway Department, currently scheduled for release in early 2017.

EVENTS



SPECIAL EVENTS

AROUND THE STATE

BY GLENN BOLICK

U.S. HIGHWAY 167 WIDENING COMPLETED South of Little Rock to Thornton

lected officials from Sheridan to El Dorado joined AHTD Director Scott Bennett, Arkansas Highway Commissioners Robert S. Moore, Jr. and Tom Schueck, and others on October 7th of last year to officially recognize the completion of another segment of widening on U.S. Highway 167 south of Little Rock.

“Today’s event celebrates and commemorates the completion of the widening of Highway 167 from Interstate 530 to Thornton,” said AHTD Director Scott Bennett. “To date, \$360.5 million of work has been completed on that section.”

“A four-lane highway from Little Rock to El Dorado and south to the Louisiana state line sounds like a pretty simple concept,” said Commissioner Moore. “The final estimated price tag to make that a reality is \$542 million.”

Work south of Thornton is underway with five contracts totaling \$97.8 million.

The final four projects within the Little Rock to state line corridor are scheduled for 2017 and 2018 at an estimated cost of \$83.6 million.

Former Highway Commissioner Madison Murphy, State Senators Bruce Maloch and Bobby Pierce, Representative Jeff Wardlaw, Dallas County Judge Jimmy Jones, Sheridan Mayor Joe Wise, Fordyce Mayor John MacNichol and El Dorado Mayor Frank Hash all attended the event.

Commissioner Moore noted that the beginning of the four-lane corridor actually got underway in 1965 with the completion of the Fordyce Bypass. He recognized several former area Highway Commissioners during that span, including Murphy, as well as Lawrence Blackwell (Pine Bluff), Patsy Thomason (Rison), John Harsh (Magnolia), James Branyan (Camden) and John Lipton (Warren). ■



(Above L. to R.) State Senators Bobby Pierce, Bruce Maloch and Representative Jeff Wardlaw address the crowd.

U.S. Highway 165 System Preservation COMPLETED IN DERMOTT

Highway Commissioner Robert S. Moore, Jr. was joined by Dermott Mayor Clinton Hampton, Chicot County Judge Mack Ball and others in order to cut a ribbon on November 10th of last year to signify the completion of a system preservation project on U.S. Highway 165 in Dermott. The \$3 million project by Pine Bluff Sand and Gravel was one of 107 anticipated system preservation jobs by the Department in 2016. ■



(Below Center) Dermott Mayor Clinton Hampton cuts a ribbon on Highway 165.

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Dedication of State Highway 144 Bridge replacement project.

State Highway 144 Bridge Project COMPLETED NEAR LAKE VILLAGE

The \$2.8 million State Highway 144 bridge replacement project near Lake Village, in Chicot County, was officially dedicated on November 10, 2016. Highway Commissioner Robert S. Moore, Jr. joined Lake Village Mayor JoAnn Bush, Chicot County Judge Mack Ball and others for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Manhattan Road and Bridge was awarded the contract in April of 2015 to improve the roadway and replace two bridges between Lake Village and Chicot State Park. ■

U.S. Highway 65 Now Four Lanes IN BEE BRANCH AND CLINTON

Clinton Mayor Richard McCormac cut a ribbon on November 21st of last year and thanked the AHTD for the recently completed widening work on U.S. Highway 65 in the Clinton and Bee Branch areas. Just one 8-mile section between the two towns remains to make it a four-lane roadway from Conway to Clinton. That job is scheduled for later this year.

The town of Clinton also used some enhancement funds recently to install street lights on Highway 65 in the downtown area. ■



Mayor McCormac cuts a ribbon on Highway 65.

STATE HIGHWAY 41 WORK Completed in Foreman

State Representative DeAnn Vaught, former State Senator Barbara Horn and Foreman Mayor Judy Adams joined AHTD officials on November 14, 2016, to cut a ribbon for the recently completed four-mile project on State Highway 41 in Foreman.

The system preservation job was part of the \$144.4 million program in 2016 for the Department. ■



Foreman Mayor Judy Adams cuts a ribbon on Highway 41.



AHTD staff and commissioners celebrate a CAP job completion.

First CAP Job Completed, CEREMONY MARKS THE OCCASION

After the November 30th Highway Commission meeting last year, Commissioners and staff gathered on a North Little Rock overpass above Interstate 40 to recognize completion of the first Connecting Arkansas Program (CAP) project.

The \$38.4 million job was awarded to McGeorge Contracting Company in September of 2014 and widened two Interstate 430/Interstate 40 interchange ramps and also widened 5.1 miles of Interstate 40 north of there to six lanes.

Combined with other recent projects, this CAP job completes the widening of Interstate 40 from North Little Rock to Conway at a final construction cost of \$174 million.

The CAP was passed in the November of 2012 general election and imposed a temporary, 10-year, one-half cent sales tax increase. It authorized the Highway Commission to issue up to \$1.3 billion in bonds for 36 scheduled projects. ■

AHTD and Area Elected Officials DEDICATE THREE COMPLETED PROJECTS

November 15, 2016, was a busy community relations day for AHTD District Three Engineer Steve Frisbee and Construction Engineer William Cheatham as they joined local elected officials and others to dedicate three separate projects recently completed in their District.

First, was a ribbon cutting in Murfreesboro with Mayor Rodney Fagan and Pike County Judge Dewight Mack for the \$1 million system preservation overlay work on State Highways 27 and 310.

The next stop was for a ribbon cutting on the recently completed \$1.7 million mill and inlay work done in Nashville on U.S. Highway 371 and State Highway 980. Nashville Mayor

Billy Ray Jones and Howard County Judge Kevin Smith thanked the AHTD for the work during the event.

The final stop was in Hope to recognize the recent completion of the \$8.5 million Interstate Rehabilitation Program job on seven miles of Interstate 30 in the area.

Hope Mayor Dennis Ramsey and the Hope Chamber of Commerce addressed a large crowd gathered for the event and thanked the Department for the Interstate improvement work. ■

HISTORIC WOOLSEY BRIDGE PRESERVED West Fork Takes Ownership

It was a Washington County bridge and now it belongs to the City of West Fork thanks to the efforts of Nikki Senn, Environmental Analyst in the AHTD Environmental Division.

On December 14th of last year, Highway Commission Chairman Dick Trammel attended a ceremonial transfer of the Woolsey Bridge with Washington County Judge Marilyn Edwards and West Fork Mayor Heath Caudle at West Fork's Riverside Park, which will be the bridge's new location. Judge Edwards presented the Mayor with a bolt from the bridge,

while Trammel presented the Mayor with a picture of the old structure – “just in case you forget how to put it back together.”

The historic bridge was built in 1921 and is a Camelback through truss structure, which is a Parker through truss with exactly five slopes on the polygonal top chord, according to Senn.

Approximately 300 feet long with two 150-foot long metal truss spans, the Woolsey Bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in June of 2009 for its properties that

embody the distinctive characteristics of type, period and method of construction. ■



Murfreesboro



Nashville



Hope



Commission Chairman Trammel passes ownership of the Woolsey Bridge.

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Highway Commissioner Scott PRAISES CONWAY AREA OFFICIALS

At a dedication ceremony held December 21st of last year in Conway for the \$9.4 million Interstate 40/U.S. Highway 65B interchange and State Highway 286 widening project, Highway Commissioner Frank Scott, Jr., praised outgoing Conway Mayor Tab Townsell, Faulkner County Judge Jim Baker, the Conway Chamber of Commerce and others for their leadership. He also commended their efforts in partnering with the AHTD on these and a number of other area jobs over the past several years that will enhance and improve transportation in the area.

The dedication was held at the site of the new Lewis Crossing shopping development. The City of Conway contributed \$2 million to the project,

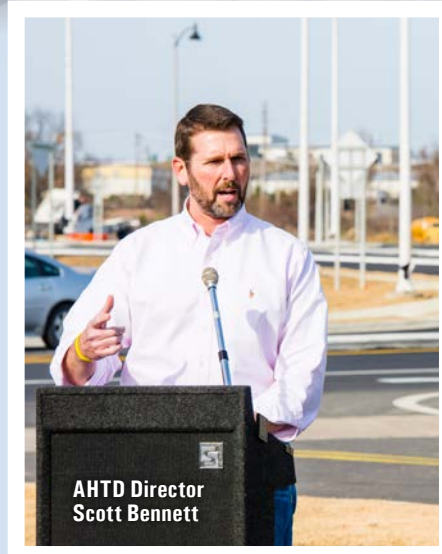
financed utility relocation and assumed the maintenance of Amity Road for the project.

The improvements feature relocated and widened Interstate 40 ramps at Highway 65B, and two roundabouts going east to Thomas G. Wilson Drive.

Director Scott Bennett noted that the City of Conway and Faulkner County have contributed financially toward the Conway South Interchange and Western Loop project, and the State Highway 25 relocation job. He also thanked Commissioner Scott for serving on the Highway Commission, as this was his last dedication event as a Commissioner.

Townsell had served as Conway's mayor since 1999 before accepting the job as Executive Director of Metroplan beginning in 2017. ■

Cutting a ribbon on progress in Conway.



State Highway 201 Widening COMPLETED IN MOUNTAIN HOME

Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman Dick Trammel was on hand September 29th at Pinkston Middle School in Mountain Home to help celebrate the completion of a State Highway 201 widening project.

Crews widened 1.3 miles of the two-lane

roadway to three lanes. Local contractor Dilbeck Excavation was awarded the \$4.5 million job in January of 2015.

Officials were greeted at the school by 600 Pinkston students and the school band. Students presented the colors and sang the national anthem.

Their participation was arranged by Superintendent Dr. Jake Long.

State Senator Scott Flippo and Representative Nelda Speaks joined Mountain Home Mayor Joe Dillard and Commissioner Trammel to officially cut the ribbon for the project. ■

Pinkston students at the celebration.



The ribbon is cut on the widening project.



Dear AHTD,

On Sunday, October 2, 2016, I was driving my 16-year-old daughter and her friend home to Little Rock from northwest Arkansas. We were travelling east on Interstate 40 between Fort Smith and Russellville when a burgundy sedan travelling west lost control and spun into the median. They hit the center barrier which stopped the car and kept it from crashing into our car. An 18-wheeler was to my right, and I was unable to change lanes. If it hadn't been for the relatively new barriers in the median, I am certain that we would have hit the oncoming car going 70 miles-per-hour, and the outcome would have been devastating.

Please accept my sincere thank you for installing those barriers. I know that you probably hear lots of complaints, and I wanted you to know that my family and I are grateful to the Highway Department for the job that you do.

Sincerely,
Julia M. Watkins, MD

WORK TEAM APPRECIATION

I would like to offer a compliment on the team that is doing the work on the four bridges on 67 South, just outside of Curtis, that have undergone replacement. I do not live in the area but travel this road headed to Gurdon several times a year. From the start my husband and I noticed how organized and efficient work on the temporary bridges went up and then how quickly the new bridges have gone up. Being an Arkansan and having experienced other long delays on replacements ... this road work and replacing the bridges was a great experience! I attribute this to the team working on this site. Please let them know that they are appreciated for their efficiency, organization and by all appearance safe work.

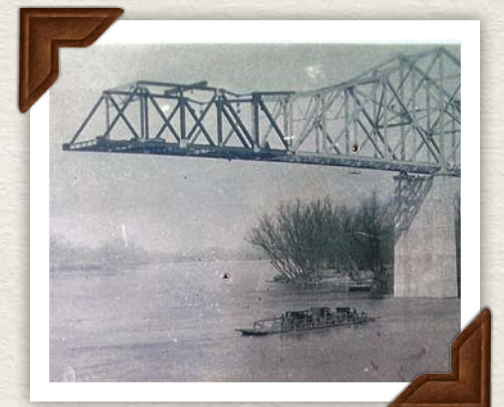
Theresa Bauman

This job was awarded to Manhattan Road & Bridge of Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 2015. Estimated completion is spring of 2017.

A PHOTO FROM NEWPORT'S PAST

I just read your article on Ira Hedrick and thought you might be interested in this picture. A Newport citizen gave this to us. He took it while the bridge was being built and occasionally comes by to see the progress on the new bridge we are building to replace it. Notice the Model T cars on the ferry crossing the river.

Thanks,
Joe Trantham, BSCE
District 5 Construction Engineer
Batesville, Arkansas



ARKANSAS WELCOME CENTERS

They'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. 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

10. TEXARKANA — HIGHWAY 71

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

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

11. TEXARKANA — INTERSTATE 30

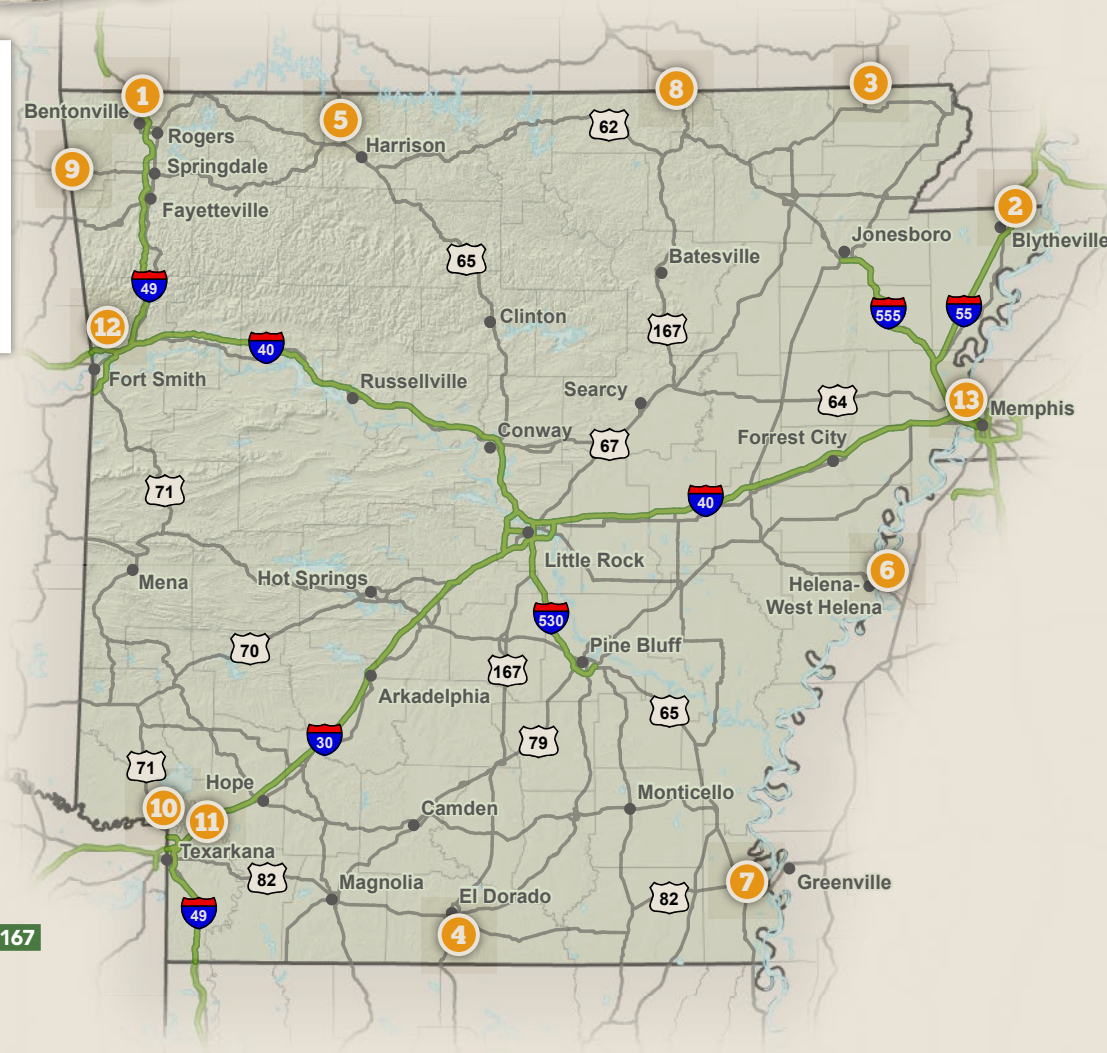
10000 Interstate 30
Texarkana, AR 71854
Phone: 870-772-4301

12. VAN BUREN — INTERSTATE 40

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

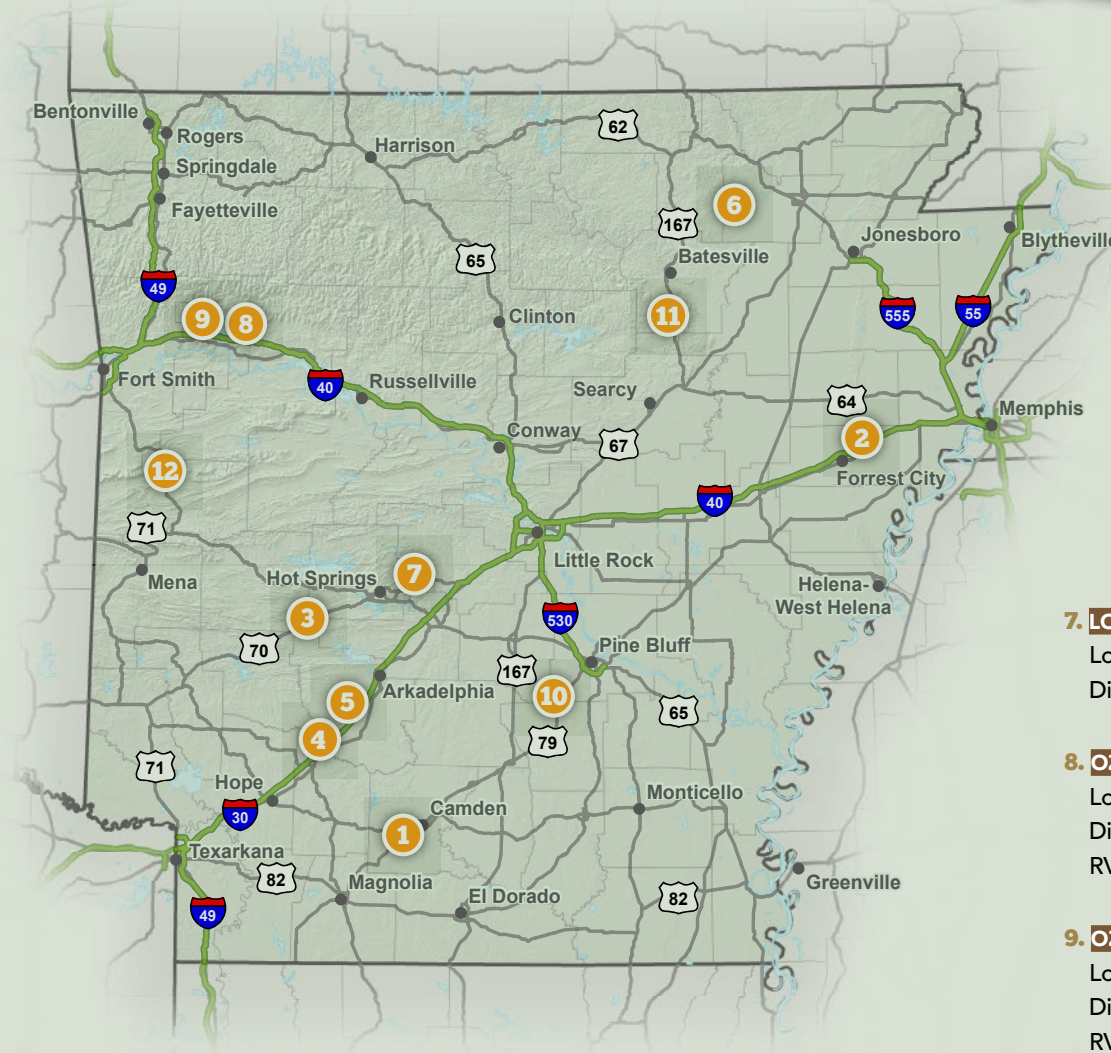
13. WEST MEMPHIS — INTERSTATE 40

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



In addition to Arkansas Welcome Centers, travelers will find Rest Areas at locations across the State. Each location offers restrooms and picnic tables and, like our Welcome Centers, is a great place to rest and enjoy some time off of the road.

ARKANSAS REST AREAS



1. BUENA VISTA — HIGHWAY 79

Location: 1 mile south of the intersection with Highway 376
Direction: Both

2. FORREST CITY — INTERSTATE 40

Location: Mile marker 242.6
Direction: Westbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending

3. GLENWOOD — HIGHWAY 70

Location: 1.8 miles east of Highway 70B
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking

4. GURDON — INTERSTATE 30

Location: Mile marker 57.5
Direction: Westbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending

5. GURDON — INTERSTATE 30

Location: Mile marker 56.1
Direction: Eastbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending

6. IMBODEN/BLACK ROCK — HIGHWAY 63

Location: 1.2 miles north of Highway 117
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking

7. LONSDALE — HIGHWAY 70

Location: 5.2 miles east of Highway 70B
Direction: Both

8. OZARK — INTERSTATE 40

Location: Mile marker 35.3
Direction: Eastbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending

9. OZARK — INTERSTATE 40

Location: Mile marker 36.5
Direction: Westbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending

10. RISON — HIGHWAY 79

Location: Intersection of Highway 79 and 212
Direction: Both

11. SALADO CREEK — HIGHWAY 167

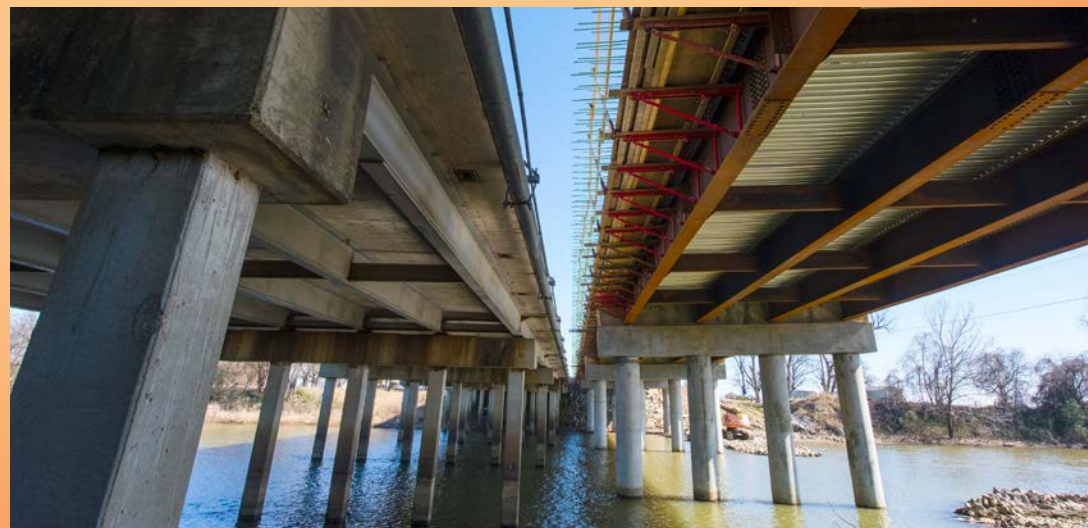
Location: 4.3 miles north of Highway 87
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking

12. WALDRON — HIGHWAY 71

Location: .8 miles north of Highway 71B
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking

DISTRICT 10

CONSTRUCTION



CORNER

Motorists in Craighead County are no doubt familiar with State Highway 18 as it heads east out of Jonesboro. The highway leads to all places east towards the Missouri bootheel and is the major connection between Jonesboro and Blytheville.

Among the towns Highway 18 passes through is Monette. It is here that construction crews are at work on a bypass on new location to the north side of town.

The contract for improvements was awarded to Robertson Contractors, Inc. of Poplar Bluff, Missouri, in late 2015 for \$13.7 million. In addition to 3.1 miles of travel lanes, the project also includes construction of four box culverts and a W-Beam bridge.

Crews are near the halfway point on the project and work is scheduled to be completed in mid-summer of this year. ■

AHTD PEOPLE

The AHTD employs approximately 3,700 people. We welcome our new employees, congratulate others on promotions and service, and say goodbye to those retiring.

NEW EMPLOYEES

CONSTRUCTION • Christopher Wise, Construction Materials Inspector; Megan Hays, Construction Helper; Jordan Wilson, Construction Helper

COMMUNICATIONS • Hope Whitten, Telecommunication Operator

COMPUTER SERVICES • Lawrence Stage, Lead Application Developer

LEGAL • Rachel Wilson, Legal Aide

ROADWAY DESIGN • Robert Sunta, Engineer

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & POLICY • Jeremy Plummer, Traffic Crash Analyst

DISTRICT 1 • James Matlock, Maintenance Aide I; Shannon Smith, Maintenance Aide I; Terry Warren Jr., Maintenance Aide I; Shantel Kenyon, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 2 • Clifton Brown, District Caretaker; James Hayes, Skill Trades Trainee; Larry Manning, Maintenance Aide I; Ricky Patrick, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 3 • Paul Cole, Maintenance Aide I; Delvin Flemons, Maintenance Aide I; Jordan Jester, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 5 • Carl Daugherty, Electrical Plumber & Mechanical Repairer; Josh Barnette, Maintenance Aide II

DISTRICT 6 • Christy Love, Maintenance Aide I; Spencer Erwin, Maintenance Aide I; Roger Hawthorne, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 7 • Tyler Gosvenor, Maintenance Aide I; Jack Martindale, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 8 • Fred Davis, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 9 • Joseph Mandella, Mechanic; Kelly Horton, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 10 • Edward Smith, Maintenance Aide I

PROMOTIONS

COMPUTER SERVICES • Charles Brown, Network Manager

DISTRICT 1 • William Linder, Crew Leader

DISTRICT 4 • Sarah Marker, Crew Leader

DISTRICT 6 • Stanley Giles, Maintenance Aide II; Stacey Grinnell, Maintenance Aide II; Hayden Hester, Maintenance Aide II; Bruce Woodruff, Maintenance Aide II; Thomas Nichols, Maintenance Aide II; Jenny Hitt, District Clerk

DISTRICT 7 • John Hughes, Construction Aide I

DISTRICT 8 • James Keys, Maintenance Aide II

DISTRICT 9 • Jerry Lyall, Mechanic; Kenneth Davis, Maintenance Aide II; Richard Martin, Maintenance Aide III; Curtis Bell, Maintenance Aide II; Joseph Coulter, Maintenance Aide III

DISTRICT 10 • Kenneth Allison, Maintenance Aide II; Paul Ervin, Maintenance Aide III; Larry Davis, Maintenance Aide II; Robert Lee, Maintenance Aide II; Brandi Davis, Construction Aide I

SERVICE

CONSTRUCTION • James Hays, Resident Engineer, 20 yrs; Lamark Hobbs, Construction Aide II, 15 yrs; Patrick Smith, Inspector, 15 yrs; Jeremy Thomas, Resident Engineer, 15 yrs; Jeffery Byerly, Senior Inspector, 15 yrs; Mack Scott, Construction Aide III, 15 yrs

COMPUTER SERVICES • Paul Dowdy, Network Technician, 20 yrs

FISCAL SERVICES • Marvlyn Underwood, Office Administrative Assistant II, 15 yrs

HEAVY BRIDGE MAINTENANCE • William Reed, Crew Leader, 20 yrs; Monty Frazier, Statewide Bridge Inspector, 10 yrs; Anthony Caudel, Crew Leader, 5 yrs

HUMAN RESOURCES • Eddie Tanner, Safety Inspection Officer, 25 yrs; Pamela Hickman, Assistant Division Head, 5 yrs

MAINTENANCE • Paul Forst, Striping Crew Leader, 20 yrs; Amanda Price, Office Administrative Assistant V, 15 yrs; Brandon Bird, Striping Machine Driver, 5 yrs

MATERIALS • Dawn Richards, Chemistry Lab Section Head, 25 yrs; Khari Withers, Laboratory Coordinator, 15 yrs; Deborah Tyler, Materials Technician IV, 15 yrs; Robbie Robertson, Laboratory Facility Manager, 5 yrs

PEEL FERRY • Andy Cagle, Pilot/Deck Hand, 5 yrs

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT • Corey Key, Federal Programs Coordinator, 15 yrs

SURVEYS • Michael Mohler, Surveys Specialist, 20 yrs; Gregory Gardner, Surveys Aide II, 10 yrs

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & POLICY • Michael Collins, Data Collection Technician, 10 yrs

DISTRICT 1 • Gerry Washington, Crew Leader, 20 yrs; Mark Ponder, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs

DISTRICT 2 • Sherman Ferguson, Bridge Repairer II, 15 yrs; Keith Etue, Maintenance Aide II, 15 yrs; Jeffery Power, Maintenance Aide III, 15 yrs; Jeffrey Johnson, Carpenter, 10 yrs; Bruce Smith, Bridge Repairer II, 10 yrs; Wayne Givens, Maintenance Aide III, 10 yrs; Paul Jackson, Mechanic, 5 yrs

DISTRICT 3 • Terry Hosey, Maintenance Aide III, 25 yrs; Kelly Alexander, Rest Area Attendant, 15 yrs; Nicholas Green, Maintenance Aide II, 10 yrs; Lyle Ferguson, Maintenance Aide II, 10 yrs; Michael Klein, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs; Terry Lowe, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs

DISTRICT 4 • Kenneth Gentry, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 30 yrs; Glen Beckner, Welder, 15 yrs; Bradley McCurry, Rest Area Attendant, 15 yrs; Billy Horne, Mechanic, 15 yrs; Tara Hollan, Area Headquarters Attendant, 15 yrs; Joseph Work, Maintenance Aide II, 10 yrs

DISTRICT 5 • Ruth Moody, Maintenance Aide II, 20 yrs; Sherman Rucker, Maintenance Aide III, 10 yrs

DISTRICT 6 • Deborah Mealler, Rest Area Attendant, 15 yrs; Norris More, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs; David Felts, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs

DISTRICT 7 • Randy Hopper, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs

DISTRICT 8 • Debbie Tolbert, Parts Runner, 15 yrs

DISTRICT 9 • Kelly Jurgena, Maintenance Aide III, 15 yrs; Abel Arellano, Maintenance Aide II, 10 yrs; Dennis Connors, Shop Supervisor, 5 yrs

DISTRICT 10 • Larry Harris, Crew Leader, 15 yrs; Jerry Crockett, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs

RETIREMENT

HUMAN RESOURCES • Wanda Ashley, Internal EEO Coordinator, 25+ yrs

MAINTENANCE • Bert Porterfield, Traffic Services Specialist, 35+ yrs

DISTRICT 1 • Wayne Hamilton, Mechanic, 30+ yrs

DISTRICT 3 • Teresa Willmon, Assistant Maintenance Supervisor, 29+ yrs; Homer Whatley Jr., Maintenance Aide II, 36+ yrs; James Marlar, Maintenance Aide II, 15+ yrs; Mack Scoot, Construction Aide III, 15+ yrs

DISTRICT 5 • Ruth Moody, Maintenance Aide II, 20+ yrs

DISTRICT 6 • Benjamin Franklin, Station Attendant II, 42+ yrs

DISTRICT 7 • James Woods, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 38+ yrs

DISTRICT 10 • Larry Ryan, Maintenance Aide II, 15+ yrs

MEMORIALS

ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE • CPL Harold Leon Godwin, 10/15/16, retired; CPL William R. Clark, 2/6/17, retired

PROGRAMS & CONTRACTS • Lonnie J. Parson, 1/12/17, retired

DISTRICT ONE • Ellard M. Foltz, 1/11/17, retired; Michael C. Gahr, Jr., 2/2/17, retired

DISTRICT TWO • Benny R. Henley, 2/14/17, retired

DISTRICT FOUR • John Frank Cheatham, 1/1/17, retired

DISTRICT FIVE • Andrew J. Duchanoy, 2/7/17, retired

DISTRICT SIX • Vance Moudy, 2/3/17, retired





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

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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

