



Arkansas HIGHWAYS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018

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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | MAGAZINE

Commissioner Philip Taldo

**HIS FIRST YEAR ON THE
HIGHWAY COMMISSION**

**NEW LIFE for an
Iconic Bridge**

**Delta Rhythm &
Bayous HIGHWAY**

**ArDOT's
MARATHON MEN**

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Packing ARDOT's Parachute

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT 2018 IS HERE ALREADY.

The holiday season — from Thanksgiving through New Year's — is always a good time to reflect on the past and look forward to things to come. In both looking back and looking forward, I'm reminded of a story that I read some time ago. I relayed this story a few years back at our annual service and safety awards events. It has such a good message, though, that I thought this would be a good opportunity to bring it up again.

Charles Plumb was a US Navy jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent 6 years in a communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and went on to lecture on lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!" Plumb asked, "How in the world did you know that?" The man replied, "I packed your parachute." Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, "I guess it worked!" Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb says, "I kept wondering what he had looked like in a Navy uniform: a white hat; a bib in the back; and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not said 'Good morning, how are you?' or anything because, you see, I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor."

Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent at a long wooden table in the bottom of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn't know.

Now, Plumb asks his audience, "Who's packing your parachute?" Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. He also points out that he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory — he needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute, and his spiritual parachute. He called on all these supports before reaching safety.

Sometimes in the daily challenges that life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please, or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment, or just do something nice for no reason. As you go through this week, this month, this year, recognize people who pack your parachutes.

Each of you — our staff, consultants, contractors, and probably anyone else just reading this great magazine — plays a role in packing my parachute and the many parachutes the Department has. Your role, no matter how large or small you think it might be, plays a huge part in helping the Department fulfill our mission and to be successful. Thank you for all you did to make 2017 a great year, and I wish everyone a happy, healthy, safe, prosperous, and even better 2018!

Scott E. Bennett, P.E., Director



FRONT AND BACK COVER:
The War Eagle Bridge on
County Road 98 in Benton County

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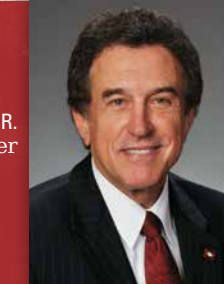
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Philip Taldo



A Year's Perspective as Commissioner

BY DAVID NILLES

Philip Taldo, of Springdale, was named to the Arkansas State Highway Commission by Governor Asa Hutchinson on December 19th of 2016. Taldo is broker and co-owner of Griffin Company Realtors Commercial Division and Weichert Realtors The Griffin Company. In addition, he is the President of One Springdale, Inc., a development corporation and Partner's Construction, LLC, a residential building company and co-owner of Colonial Properties, a real estate holding and management company.

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Governor Asa Hutchinson named Philip Taldo to the Arkansas State Highway Commission on December 19th of 2016.



“I’ve learned, in MY FIRST YEAR ON the Commission, that there are needs throughout OUR ENTIRE State and, as Commissioners, we have to **PRIORITIZE** those needs.

•••••
I FEEL A REAL responsibility to make sure that everybody IS TREATED FAIRLY when it comes to our roadways.”

SERVING AS A COMMISSIONER AT ARDOT

Governor Hutchinson had this to say as he introduced Taldo as the newest Arkansas Highway Commissioner.

“Philip has been in northwest Arkansas in good times and bad. He’s done well and worked hard. He understands growth and will make an outstanding commissioner.”

Almost a year into his term, Taldo recently shared his thoughts on his first twelve months as a Highway Commissioner.

“I was flattered to be asked to serve,” he reflected. “I had known several other individuals in northwest Arkansas that had served or are on the Commission now. I knew that they were leaders in the community. They are well thought of, and to put me into the same category as them was flattering for me.”

EXPERIENCE PROVIDES A SOLID BACKGROUND

Taldo has gained a great deal of experience working with others on numerous boards and commissions.

He is a Hope Cancer Resource Foundation Trustee and also serves as an Arvest Bank Director. He served as an Arkansas Economic Development Commissioner, is a board member of the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport Authority and serves on the UAMS Northwest Advisory Board.

“Serving in this capacity has really been valuable to me,” Taldo explains. “In these positions, I’ve learned to deal with the way governmental procedures work. Serving on these boards gave me the opportunity to deal with contracts, and also work with contractors, engineers and architects. We’ve handled budgets and worked with budget constraints. So that experience over the past 15 or 20 years has prepared me for my work on the Highway Commission. I’ve been a developer, and working on subdivisions and buildings gave me the opportunity to learn the lingo that you share with engineers and contractors. Things such as rights-of-way, floodplains and working with concrete and asphalt. It helped to be familiar with a lot of the language. The

new piece of the puzzle coming onto the Highway Commission was learning the ins and outs of raising the funding we have to spend.”

SEEING ARKANSAS’ HIGHWAY SYSTEM AS A WHOLE

Though Taldo lives in northwest Arkansas and is familiar with the highway system needs in that area of the State, his work on various boards and commissions has provided an opportunity for him to see more of Arkansas’ highways.

“I’ve really learned a great deal about our highway system by traveling our State,” Taldo shares. “Two years before being appointed to the Commission, I was on the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. We traveled all over Arkansas and had monthly meetings at different locations so I had the opportunity to look firsthand at places I had never been to. It made me realize that there were other areas in Arkansas that have the same congestion problems and need attention just as northwest Arkansas does.

“Vacationing with my family at the beach once or twice a year and comparing Arkansas’ highway system with states like Mississippi, Alabama and Florida has made me proud of the roads that we have here. I feel like our roads are in much better condition than some of theirs. I am proud of that fact because the condition of a state’s highways makes a big impression on people that are traveling on vacation there. They remember whether your roads are smooth or not.

“If you look at my area of the State up in northwest Arkansas, for example, the growth has been phenomenal. I was born and raised there and, today, we are up to approximately 550,000 people living in that area. We have about 26,000 students coming to school every semester. They are traveling to and from northwest Arkansas on our highways. If our State had not been progressive in building Interstate 49 and four-laning Highway 412 in the past 10 or 15 years, we would never have been able to have the growth that we have today. It’s important that every geographic corner of Arkansas has a highway system that can handle the volume of traffic in the area.”

Traveling, whether for business or pleasure, has allowed Taldo to observe the needs on Arkansas’ highway system in all areas of the State.

“I’ve learned, in my first year on the Commission, that there are needs throughout our entire State and, as Commissioners, we have to prioritize those needs. Our Commissioners don’t advocate for one particular area. I appreciate that we advocate for the entire state. I pay close attention to what goes on not just in Washington and Benton Counties, but in other areas as well, whether it is central Arkansas, southwest Arkansas or southeast Arkansas. I feel a real responsibility to make sure that everybody is treated fairly when it comes to our roadways. Now obviously, if you have a highway that has 20,000 vehicles a day on it, it is going to take more attention than one that has 1,000 cars a day.”

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“I WILL SAY THAT I FEEL LIKE THE FAIREST THING FOR EVERYONE IS USER FEES. IF YOU DRIVE A VEHICLE AND YOU USE THE HIGHWAYS, YOU SHOULD PAY FOR THEM.”

CONSIDERING OUR SYSTEM'S NEEDS

“I believe that as Arkansans, we should expect a minimum standard for our highways,” Taldo shared. “I don’t care if there are 1,000 motorists on it a day or 10,000. There should be a good condition on that highway that motorists can come to always expect. All of the needs of the Department that I have seen so far deal with capacity. For example, the amount of time to get to Memphis or the amount of time it takes to leave Little Rock at 4:30 in the afternoon. How about getting home to Bentonville at 5:00 in the afternoon? It can be an hour and a half drive when it should be a half hour drive. Capacity is the thing that gets people talking and I think those are the issues that we have to address.”

SAFETY: ALWAYS A TOP PRIORITY

Another area that Commissioner Taldo thinks is extremely important is safety. The Department makes safety high on the list of priorities.

“Safety is one thing that I know the Department really focuses on, but I don’t think the general public is aware of how big a role safety plays,” Taldo explained. “The Commission has a big responsibility to provide a highway system that is safe for all of our motorists. Yes, it needs to be smooth, and it needs to be wide enough, but the highway needs to also be safe. There are a lot of little details that go into safety on our highways. The components include signage, the width of the lanes, proper drainage and appropriate speed limits. All of these things and more play a role in the safety for our motoring public.”

“You don’t really realize it until somebody that you know has an accident or gets injured. We want to be sure it isn’t caused by some kind of maintenance issue. I have a 17-year-old granddaughter that started at the University this fall. She is driving on the highways and it makes me nervous thinking about her getting on that roadway. I think about everybody else that has young people in high school or college who are just beginning to drive. I really

like to focus on doing everything we can to make it a safe place for them.”

FINDING A FUNDING SOLUTION

There is a great deal of discussion on the Commission about the gap that exists between the needs on our highway system and the funding that is available. In his first year on the Commission, Taldo has had time to form an opinion on the subject.

“I will say that I feel like the fairest thing for everyone is user fees,” he stated. “If you drive a vehicle and you use the highways, you should pay for them. That would include things like registration fees, in the future, it might also involve toll roads. There are a variety of possible solutions. People have floated the idea of tracking the vehicle miles each of us travel and then paying a fee on how many miles that is. With technology the way it is today, that can be accomplished. I can see the apprehension out there on that idea. Nobody likes to think that somebody is tracking them, even if they don’t have their

name. At this point, we are looking at and discussing several different options.”

LISTENING TO THE NEEDS OF MOTORISTS

Since coming on the Commission, Taldo has heard from many people in his area of the State regarding highway issues.

“It has just been amazing to me,” Taldo shares. “I do hear from many individuals and groups about different issues. In northwest Arkansas, we have a lot of motorcycle riders. They are the one single group that I’ve heard from more than any other. They call and ask me about the addition of shoulders on some highways. They are leery sometimes when we do an overlay and there may be the possibility of gravel on the road. It has amazed me that they have been the number one group I’ve received phone calls from but I’m glad they are in communication with us.”

“I also have heard from individuals who have right-of-way questions when the Department is purchasing a portion of their land. They may ask about relocation or compensation. I get calls about that on a pretty regular basis.”

“One thing that I have found is that people are really grateful that you stopped and listened to them. I’ve had one or two that were a little upset, but after we talk it through, they are really appreciative that we visited. They just wanted to have their opinion heard.”

IMPRESSIONS OF ARDOT IN THE FIRST YEAR

When asked what has impressed him the most about ARDOT and how it operates, Taldo had this to say.

“I was really amazed at the number of individual road projects that we are involved in and the coordination that it takes to get all of this accomplished,” he adds. “There is so much more to an individual construction project than just saying we need a new highway so let’s bid it and start to work. It takes two or three years of intense planning and design work before you even think about hiring a contractor and moving equipment in. I am really impressed by the coordination that it takes.”



(L. to R.) Commissioner Philip Taldo and Chairman Dick Trammel talking with Mike Fugett, Assistant Chief Engineer - Design.

“I WAS REALLY AMAZED at the number of individual ROAD PROJECTS THAT we are involved in and the COORDINATION THAT it takes to get all of THIS ACCOMPLISHED.”

“Another thing that really impresses me here at the Department is, in my talking to Department employees over the past year, I’ve never heard one negative word spoken about the Department. It is really encouraging when people have a great attitude about the place they work. That says a great deal.”

WORKING TOGETHER AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE

“You know, we have a great group of Commissioners here to work with and I’m

looking forward to it,” Taldo adds as he considers the next nine years. “They are all successful business people in their own right outside of ARDOT and they are well thought of in their communities. I think all of our Commissioners take the same view in that we are advocates for all of the transportation needs in Arkansas, not just one particular geographic area. This makes it easier to get work accomplished. This first year has been a real pleasure as I work with them and I feel like it’s going to continue and just get better!”



AN ICONIC BRIDGE *Gets New Life*

BY DAVID NILLES

THERE ARE OVER 12,000 BRIDGES ON ARKANSAS' ROAD SYSTEM, BUT THERE AREN'T MANY THAT ARE AS RECOGNIZABLE AND DEAR TO PEOPLES' HEARTS AS THE WAR EAGLE BRIDGE IN BENTON COUNTY.

As a result, when the County Road 98 Bridge spanning the War Eagle River came due for some major repairs, the local community and the entire State turned their attention to the one-lane bridge sitting beside the War Eagle Mill. After all, the setting is one of the most scenic in Arkansas.

The bridge's history goes back 110 years to 1907. That's when the local community decided the time had come to construct a bridge in the exact location where travelers had forded the river since the 1830s. Move ahead to today, and the bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is one of only a few Parker through truss bridges still open to traffic in the State.

Benton County Judge Barry Moehring, who was heavily involved in the rehabilitation of the bridge, summed it up best on October 4th when a ribbon was cut to commemorate the reopening the bridge to traffic.

"This is a momentous day. This bridge represents our heritage, our history and our memories. This bridge just fits. It belongs here. And that's why it needed to be preserved."

In 2013, some deficiencies were found on the War Eagle Bridge and it became apparent that some work would have to be done to preserve it. With the help of a \$500,000 federal grant from the Federal-Aid Transportation Enhancement Program and the

Federal Highway Administration, as well as other funding sources, the bridge closed to traffic and the rehabilitation process started.

Great River Engineering of Springfield, Missouri, assessed the bridge and created a game plan for rehabilitation. Crossland Heavy Contractors of Columbus, Kansas, was awarded the contract and work got underway in June of 2017. The goal was to have the bridge reopened to traffic in four months, and that goal was met. In fact, completion came ahead of schedule.

The reopening ceremony for the bridge attracted a large crowd including several who grew up in the area, local dignitaries, as well as Lieutenant Governor Tim Griffin.

"I thank everyone who made the decision to preserve this bridge," Griffin told the crowd. "History doesn't preserve itself; you have to take specific steps. We want the next generation to value the bridge and this rehabilitation project is a live way of teaching them a history lesson. Projects like this just improve our quality of life."

Ninety-one-year-old resident Billy Sharp, whose uncle was on the crew that built the bridge, shared his memories of growing up near the bridge.

"I went to school nearby on top of the hill and, one day, I needed a pencil," he began. "They gave me a

The bridge's history goes back *110 years* to 1907. That's when the local community decided the time had come to construct a bridge in the exact location where *travelers had forded the river since the 1830s.*

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The War Eagle Mill is still in operation today.

nickel and told me to walk down here at recess to get that pencil. That was a memorable day because it was the first time I ever crossed the bridge by myself. I've spent a day or two around that bridge since then. I've been all over it. I don't know what our community would ever do without that old bridge. It's something to be proud of."

Fred Sutton and his family present the popular War Eagle Craft Fair each year at the mill.

"My grandparents bought this land west of the river in 1954 with the thought of presenting a craft fair," he shared. "The first fair that year attracted 2,000 people. In a few weeks, we will have the 64th War Eagle Fair. We will have thousands of people come to the area and most of those people will cross that bridge. If you think of all the people that have made that crossing over

"If you think of all the people that have made that crossing over the years, it's an amazing number. For those of us who live out here, the bridge is part of our everyday life. I'm so glad the citizens of this county saw fit to fund this project."

For those of us who live out here, the bridge is part of our everyday life."

the years, it's an amazing number. For those of us who live out here, the bridge is part of our everyday life. I'm so glad the citizens of this county saw fit to fund this project."

Indeed, many were involved in seeing that the bridge was rehabilitated. Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman Dick Trammel summed it up well.

"Partnerships are important on so many highway projects. I thank everyone who got involved with this one. This bridge represents our heritage, so today is a special day."

After a ribbon was cut symbolizing the reopening of the bridge, Fred Sutton climbed into a 1946 antique truck and became the first to cross over the newly rehabilitated War Eagle Bridge, a bridge destined to serve travelers well into the future in one of Arkansas' most scenic locations. ■



Eighteen new Patrol Officers graduated from the AHP Recruit Training Program.

HIGHWAY POLICE *Graduate New Class*

BY DAVID NILLES

THE ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE (AHP) WELCOMED THE ADDITION OF 18 NEW PATROL OFFICERS IN SEPTEMBER, AS A GROUP OF NEW RECRUITS GRADUATED FROM THE AHP RECRUIT TRAINING PROGRAM.

Family, friends and fellow members of the AHP gathered in ARDOT's Central Office auditorium September 1st to recognize the recruits' success.

AHP Chief Ron Burks welcomed those in attendance and addressed the group of new graduates.

"You have entered into a noble and honorable profession," AHP Chief Ron Burks told the class. "When you leave here, hold your head high and wear your uniform with great pride."

Patrol Officer Marc Winkler served as

class spokesperson for the new officers and took time to reflect on the group's accomplishments and what lies ahead.

"On day one of this program, we became one class, one family. Now on the final day, we are facing some of our greatest challenges yet. Let's come together and rely on each other."

Time was taken to present two special awards during the graduation ceremony. Patrol Officer Bradley Marion received the Firearms Award for being the group's top shooter. The Academic Award went to Patrol Officer Jacob McCollum.

Graduates from the 2017 Recruit Training Program included Patrol Officers Brandon Bybee, Keewyone Delaney, Abayomi Finnie, Russell Fitzgerald, Ronald Grace, Scott Kehner, Jeremy Lally, Bradley Marion, Jacob McCollum, Katherine McCollum, James Miller, Jennifer Peevy, Enmanuel Rodriguez, Cody Stell, Lisa Tucker, Marc Winkler, Rex Woods and Matthew Young.

"The long hours of work all of you have put in is about to pay off," ARDOT Director Scott Bennett told the graduates. "We thank you for what you have chosen to do and I know there will be many rewards. Here's wishing all of you a long and successful career."

Chief Burks closed the ceremony congratulating the class on their accomplishments.

"We look forward to seeing the fruits of your training and labors for years to come."

Today, the Arkansas Highway Police is a nationally recognized leader in the fields of drug interdiction, motor carrier safety and hazardous materials enforcement and training. Highway Police officers serve as instructors for the Criminal Justice Institute, National Training Center, Transportation Safety Institute, Drug Interdiction Assistance Program, Arkansas State Police Troop School and the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy. ■

The Old River Bridge over the Saline River near Benton

Providing Funds FOR THE ROUTE LESS TAKEN

BY DAVID NILLES

THE TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM HAS A TITLE THAT PRETTY MUCH SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. EVEN THOUGH WE ALL HAVE AN ONGOING LOVE AFFAIR WITH OUR AUTOMOBILES, THERE ARE OPTIONS FOR GETTING FROM POINT A TO POINT B.

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) plays a role in providing those options. It also provides options for how we spend our weekend free time. TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as “transportation alternatives” for pedestrians, bicyclists, safe routes to school projects and other non-motorized forms of transportation.

It is authorized by the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and is a reimbursement-type grant program that provides for an 80 percent federal share and a 20 percent local match from eligible applicants. Typically, applicants include cities, schools and some non-profit agencies.

Under the TAP program, eligible projects can include construction of on-road and off-road trail facilities that include sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure. Conversion of abandoned railroad corridors for pedestrian and bicycle trails is also eligible.

“For 2017, a total of 18 TAP projects were awarded in Arkansas,” stated Kim Sanders, Transportation Study Coordinator for ARDOT. “They totaled \$3.4 million.”

Among the larger TAP projects awarded were for a trail connecting downtown Jonesboro to Arkansas State University, additional funding for the rehabilitation of the Old River Bridge over the Saline River near Benton and for the Muddy Fork Park Walking Trail in Prairie Grove.

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

The Recreational Trails program is funded through a portion of TAP funds set aside specifically for recreational trails. These funds are eligible for maintenance and restoration of existing trails, development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages, and construction of new trails.

“Fourteen recreational trail projects were awarded this year totaling \$1,595,000,” Sanders added. “They included a connector trail to the Razorback Greenway in the city of Lowell, a shared-use path at Pinnacle Mountain State Park near Little Rock and Phase 1 of the Bluffton Preserve Multi-use Trail System in Van Buren.”

A news release listing all of Arkansas’ grant recipients can be found on the ARDOT website at www.ardot.gov under the “Archived News” section of the homepage. The release is listed under “October 2017.”

ARDOT AFTER-HOURS

FOR THE Love OF Running

BY DAVID NILLES

DANIEL ARNOLD HAS ENJOYED RUNNING SINCE HE WAS A KID. JIM TADEL STARTED LATER IN LIFE BUT HAS BEEN AT IT FOR EIGHT YEARS. BOTH WORK FOR ARDOT IN THE SURVEYS DIVISION IN LITTLE ROCK AND THEY SHARE A LOVE FOR RUNNING THAT HAS TAKEN THEM MANY A MILE.

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Daniel Arnold (left) and Jim Tadel (right) holding their medals from the 2017 Boston Marathon.



Arnold, 32 and a Photogrammetry Tech IV, has been at it since his youth.

"I ran track in high school but even as a kid I remember I would run down a gravel road we lived on and my parents would follow me in their car," he shared. "I would run until I got tired. I've always enjoyed it."

Tadel, 61 and a Staff Land Surveyor, has always had running a marathon on his bucket list.

"I wanted to run one before I got too old," he recalls. "My first one was in Little Rock in 2009. I started running just 30 days prior to that race. That's not the way to train!"

Today, both men have a collection of medals that can spread all the way across a kitchen table. Those medals may include any number of races ranging from 10Ks, to 20Ks, to marathons and, believe it or not, 100-mile races.

In fact, in 2014, both ran a total of five marathons that year.

TRAINING FOR THE WEEKEND

Needless to say, when you enjoy running and competing in marathons as much as they do, it requires strict training. Arnold and Tadel both run four or five times a week.

"We take a break from running on Mondays and Fridays," says Arnold. "If you look at training programs at various distances,

they recommend two days of rest. You normally do longer runs on the weekend so you rest the day before and the day after those long runs."

"Your races are usually on the weekend so Friday and Mondays are the best days of rest," Tadel adds.

You will find Arnold getting his training in at Mills Park in Bryant or at Hurricane Estates.

"They have bike lanes there so you don't have to worry about traffic as much," he adds. He also runs the Ouachita Trail and at Burns Park.

For Tadel, living out in the country allows him to run on back roads. He also runs trails at Cane Creek State Park.

Both put in up to six miles when they head out. If they are training for a race, it is more than that.

"If we are getting close to a race, we'll do maybe 20 miles on Saturday and 10 miles on Sunday," Tadel states.

A LONG LIST OF MARATHONS

Not only do Arnold and Tadel work together at ARDOT, for them, it's all in the family. Daniel married Jim's daughter Amy in 2015. Interspersed with family vacations, the two quite often take in races, and there have been many of them.

"We seem to always be training for a race," Arnold recalls.

"IF WE ARE GETTING CLOSE TO A RACE, WE'LL DO MAYBE 20 miles ON SATURDAY AND 10 miles ON SUNDAY."

"We've run the Boston Marathon, the Chicago Marathon, and we've run one in Salt Lake City."

"Someday we would love to run the New York Marathon," Tadel shares. "That would be fun. There is something called the Grand Prix of Marathons that includes Boston, New York, Chicago, London, Tokyo and Berlin. We've run two of them."

The Boston Marathon is one that almost everyone is familiar with. Tadel has run it twice and Arnold ran his first one in 2017.

"I ran it in 2014, the year after the bombing," Tadel shares. "Boston had something to prove and there were so many people there it was unbelievable. The route goes past Fenway Park. They were having a game so the baseball fans were able to watch everyone run by. At Wesley College, all the students came out to greet us as we went by. We could hear them screaming from a mile away!"

"The day of the marathon is a holiday in Boston," Arnold states. "Everyone is off of work and schools are out so they pack the streets the entire route. There are thousands of people cheering you on."

According to Tadel, "When you run the Boston Marathon, you're going to see runners from Britain, Argentina, Germany, Mexico...it's international for sure."

To many, the opportunity to participate in the race is just as important as the amount of time it took to finish.

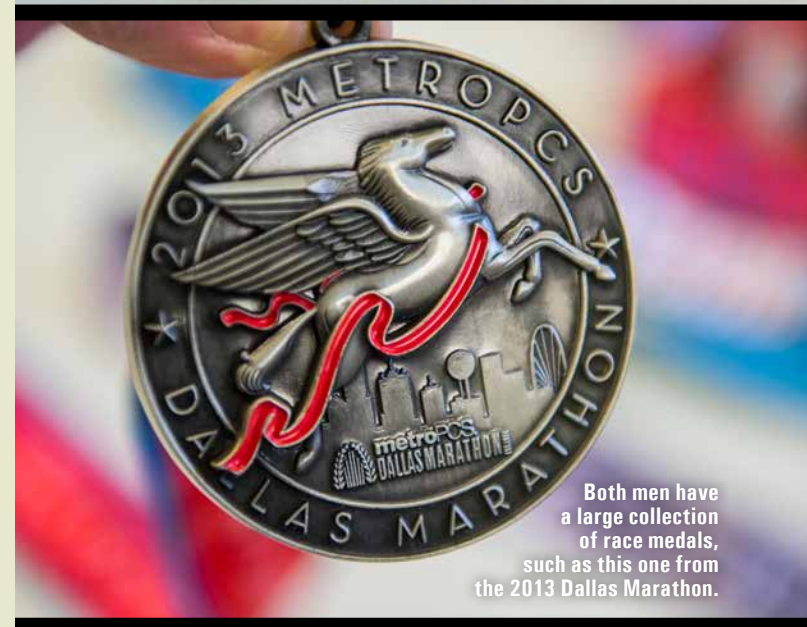
"It's pretty cool to be running in something that has that much history tied to it," Arnold reflected. "Qualifying was the goal and running was the reward."

Tadel has run 23 marathons. Arnold has done 19.

"When we ran the Chicago Marathon we went early and did the tourist stuff," Arnold explains. "By the time we raced, we were all kind of tired and dead-legged from walking around the city so much. We decided at that point we need to do the races first and then go sightseeing. For Boston, we wanted to get up there early to go to the expo and visit all the vendors. But this time, we stayed a few days after the race and enjoyed Boston and the sights."



The medal from the 2016 Little Rock Marathon



Both men have a large collection of race medals, such as this one from the 2013 Dallas Marathon.

"WE'VE RUN THE Boston Marathon, the Chicago Marathon, AND WE'VE RUN ONE IN Salt Lake City."

(continued on page 18)



Arnold (right) and Tadel (left) after successfully completing a 100-mile race.



Arnold (right) and Tadel (left) after the Big Cottonwood Marathon in Utah.

THE 100-MILE RACE

With so many road races under their belt, Tadel and Arnold are always pushing the limit. It led them both to enter a 100-mile race earlier this year.

“It’s all about the challenge,” Tadel says. “I wanted to see what my body could do. I wanted to test myself”

Arnold agreed when considering the reason why they entered.

“We’ve been steadily increasing our distances. If we can run 26 miles, let’s see if we can run 50. If we can run 50, let’s see if we can run 100.”

In order to receive a trophy for the 100-mile race, in this case a belt buckle, runners must complete their time on the course in under 30 hours. Both men were successful.

“After 40 miles of running, the thought of pulling out entered my mind but I pressed on,” Tadel recalls. “It took me a couple of weeks to recover.”

Arnold agreed with the amount of recovery time.

“I couldn’t even walk for a few days afterward.”

Both now have their eyes on the Western States 100 Endurance Run, the oldest, most prestigious 100-miler in the country. They will find out soon if they are selected in the lottery in order to enter what is known as the ultimate endurance test in the world.

“We ran Boston because it is one of the most prestigious runs there is,” Tadel states. “The Western States 100 is the ‘World Series’ of ultrarunning.”

TURNING THEIR ATTENTION TO TRAIL RUNS

Most recently, Tadel and Arnold have turned their attention to trail runs. To them, it represents a new direction in a hobby they love.

“We’ve done so many road races, this is another challenge,” Tadel explains.

“A guy I met is in the Arkansas Ultrarunners Association,” Arnold explains. “Since that was the only running club I knew of at the time, I joined. If I was going to be in the club, I thought I had better run some trail races so I don’t appear to be a poser. That is how I started trail running. I fell in love with it. It’s really like a different sport.”

Unlike road races on a paved surface, trail runs take you through the woods on a course that may include steep hills, rocks, exposed roots, low hanging branches and creeks.

One that Tadel experienced was the Athens Big Fork Trail Marathon west of Mena.

“It’s the hardest trail marathon in the U.S.,” Tadel explains. “It crosses over seven mountains, each with a creek in the valleys.

“When I got into the upper elevations it was snowing. Then, I was crossing creeks with water up to my waist. It was tough.”

A visit to the Athens Big Fork Trail Marathon website welcomes those considering entering with this warning... “This is a difficult event on a difficult trail that presents



many opportunities for one to get lost, injured, exhausted or incapacitated — with sparse access for rescue.”

A SPORT WITH MANY BENEFITS

For both men, running is definitely something they love. In addition, it doesn’t matter if they run with a group or alone. Both have their benefits.

“On the road races, I like company, but on the trails I am okay running alone,” Tadel states. “Because I live in the country, I do most of my running alone.”

Arnold prefers running with a group to take advantage of the social aspect of the sport.

“I enjoy going out with a group of friends on the trail. It’s an opportunity to have a good visit along the way.”

There are the obvious physical benefits to running, but both enjoy the mental benefits as well.

MOST RECENTLY,
TADEL AND
ARNOLD HAVE
TURNED THEIR
ATTENTION TO
trail runs.



“Running just refreshes you,” says Tadel. “It’s an opportunity to clear your mind and get away from the stresses of everyday life.”

Arnold had the same view of the mental benefits.

“It always rejuvenates you and gets the endorphins running,” Arnold adds. “If you run a little bit, you usually feel better.”

As to their accomplishments, they tend to play those down.

“We’re nothing special, anybody can do what we’re doing,” Tadel feels.

Arnold agreed and reflected on the first time he stepped out the door for a run.

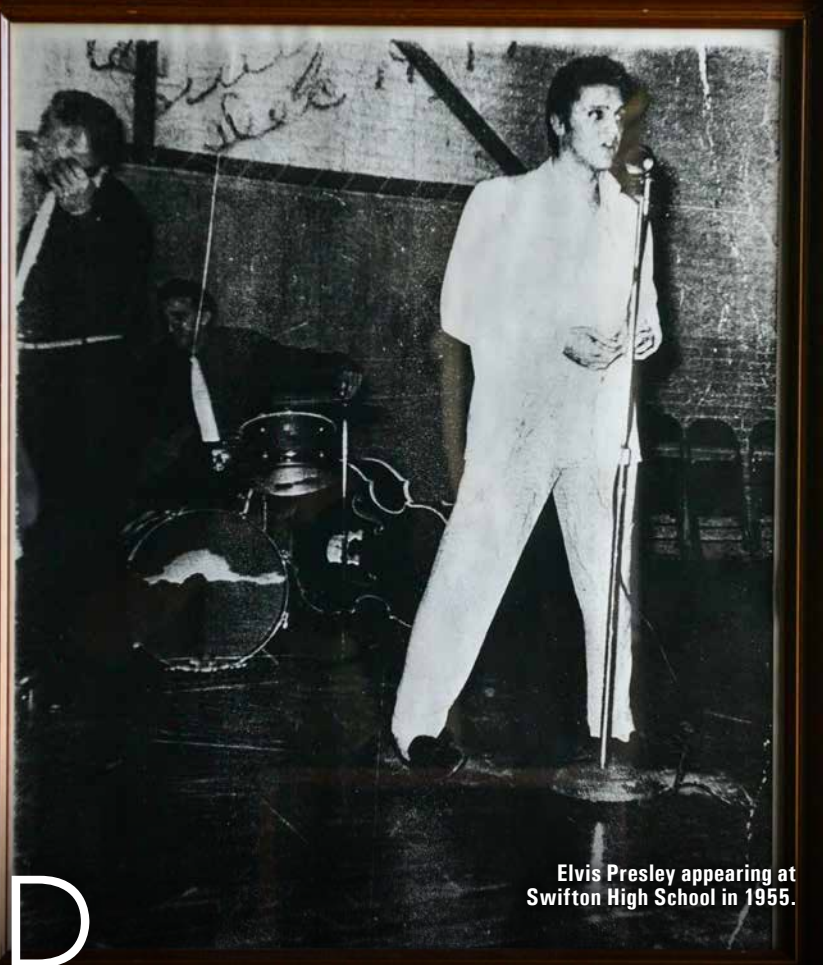
“I ran 50 yards down to the stop light and I had to stop. I was huffing and puffing. Anyone can enjoy the sport of running. You just have to slowly build up to it.”

At this point, it’s safe to say that both men have built up to it. Today, they’ve done that and a great deal more. ■

***As runners, we are fortunate to have so many races and awesome trails to run in this beautiful state we live in. If anyone needs encouragement or guidance, please visit <http://www.arkrrca.com/index.php?main=clubs>. Running clubs are listed and are linked to their web site. The running community is great and will be more than happy to help. Also, information can be obtained from any running store in Little Rock and at many across the State.



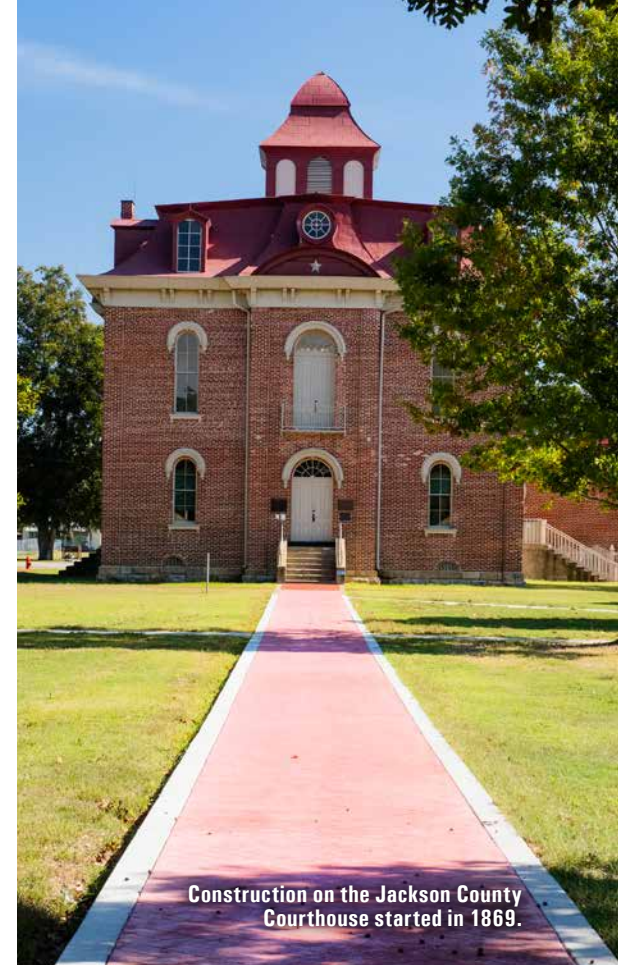
WEEKEND



Elvis Presley appearing at Swifton High School in 1955.



This piano was a part of Porky's Rooftop Club in Newport in the 1950s.



Construction on the Jackson County Courthouse started in 1869.

ROAD TRIP: NEWPORT

BY DAVID NILLES

U.S. HIGHWAY 67 IS SOMETHING OF A STRAIGHT SHOT AS IT MAKES ITS WAY BETWEEN NEWPORT AND WALNUT RIDGE IN NORTHEAST ARKANSAS.

We're not talking about the relatively new, four-lane Highway 67 that most travelers take through Jackson, Craighead and Lawrence counties. Rather, this trip explores the "old" two-lane Highway 67 that parallels the Union Pacific Railroad tracks as it stretches across the Delta. Today, it is signed on the map as State Highway 367.

This 30-mile section of the old highway has been designated "Rock 'N Roll Highway 67" because of its musical history. Governor Mike Beebe signed legislation in March of 2009 giving the highway its claim to fame.

This trip begins at Newport with an

explanation of how Highway 67 became the "Rock 'N Roll Highway." Rockabilly music, which can best be described as a mix of early rock & roll and country, was in its heyday in the 1950s. The list of musicians that played that type of music is long. Most grew up in this area of the south and many of those musicians played in the nightclubs, juke joints and roadhouses along Highway 67.

The most popular clubs hosted all of the major "Sun Records" recording artists including Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, Jerry Lee Lewis, Sonny Burgess, Billy Lee Riley and Conway Twitty. Presley played on

Highway 67 four times before being discovered by the rest of the world.

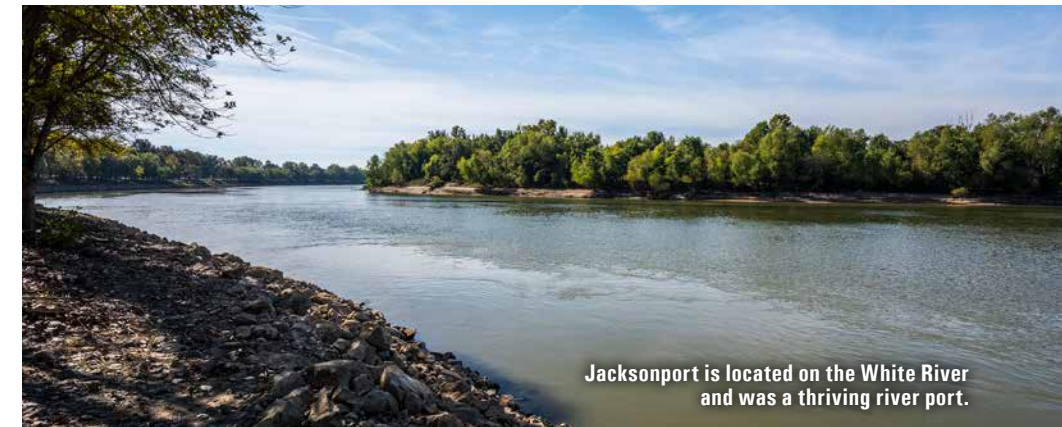
Most of the venues along the Rock 'N Roll Highway, with names such as the Silver Moon, Porky's Roof Top and the King of Clubs, are gone now. But visitors can relive the past at the **Rock 'N Roll Highway Museum** in Newport. The museum chronicles not only the music greats that traveled this area of Arkansas but also digs deeper into the local aspects of the growth of the musical genre we now call rock & roll. Items on view include vintage photos, musical instruments and memorabilia from the era.

The museum is located on the second floor of the Chamber of Commerce Building at 201 Hazel Street. It is open Monday through Friday.

The next stop on this road trip takes us out of Newport and down State Highway 69, which is located three blocks east of the museum.

It's just a three-mile drive over to **Jacksonport State Park**, located on the White River. In the 1830s, steamboats moving up and down the White River would stop at Jacksonport, making it a thriving river port. The community became the county seat in 1854 and construction of a stately, two-story brick courthouse began in 1869.

During the Civil War, the town was occupied by both Confederate and Union forces because of its crucial locale. Five Major Generals used the town as their headquarters. Jacksonport began to decline in the 1880s when it was bypassed by the Iron Mountain &



Jacksonport is located on the White River and was a thriving river port.

Southern railroad in favor of nearby Newport. The railroad planned to add a spur at Jacksonport, but the steamboat operators and townspeople would not pay a \$25,000 fee to have the spur access Jacksonport. The county seat was moved to Newport in 1891 and, as a result,

Jacksonport's stores, wharves and saloons soon vanished.

Today, visitors to the State Park can visit the grand old courthouse. Inside, exhibits illustrate the story of the building as well as historic Jacksonport in five galleries. Coming to the park soon

(continued on page 22)

Construction of the new Visitors Center at Jacksonport State Park



Rendering of the new Visitors Center that is scheduled to open in the spring of 2018.



At Clover Bend National Historic District, you will discover a "resettlement colony" where farmers received land, a four- or five-room house, a barn, a poultry house and various outbuildings.



is a brand new Visitors Center looking out over the White River. Camping sites, a swim beach on the river and the Tunstall Riverwalk Trail make for a great visit.

The park is located at 205 Avenue Street.

Leaving Jacksonport, this road trip travels north up the Rock 'N Roll Highway about 25 miles to the town of Clover Bend. After turning left at Minturn, it's a four-mile trip down State Highway 228 to the **Clover Bend National Historic District**.

It's here that you will discover a "resettlement colony" similar to the Dyess Colony featured in the last issue of *Arkansas Highways*. Both are part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deals program, created to combat the socioeconomic problems of the Great Depression era by providing local families farming opportunities. The Clover Bend program made 88 potential farming units available, each averaging approximately 45 acres.

Farmers received the land, a four- or five-room house, a barn, a poultry house and various outbuildings. They paid \$200 a year on a forty-year mortgage, but the leases were designed to allow the government to end the contract after five years if the farmers were unsuccessful. Families farming the land were encouraged to diversify their crops. As a result, the area produced cotton, clover for hay, sweet potatoes and other vegetables, dairy and beef cattle, hogs and poultry.

Clover Bend High School became the social center of the community. It opened in 1939 and graduated its first three students in May of 1940. An elementary school had opened the previous year. Both schools existed until 1983, averaging 350 students a year in grades kindergarten through 12.

When consolidation closed the Clover Bend school district in 1983, the Clover Bend Historic Preservation Association was formed to preserve the history of the area. The Clover Bend Historic District includes five buildings from the Clover Bend High School – a main building, a gymnasium, a cafeteria, a cottage devoted to vocational home economics and a vocational agriculture building. All are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Visitors will also see a farm house, a sorghum grinder, a chicken house, a smokehouse and an outdoor bathroom that were typical of the day and were moved onto the 13-acre site.

In front of the Community Center at Clover Bend is the **Alice French Bell Pavilion**. French was a nationally known writer of the time whose work was published in *The Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *Scribner's* and *Century* magazines. She wrote under the pen name of Octave Thanet and her stories became popular in the 1890s and early 1900s. She also wrote several books and became known as one of the greatest writers of her day.

(continued on page 24)

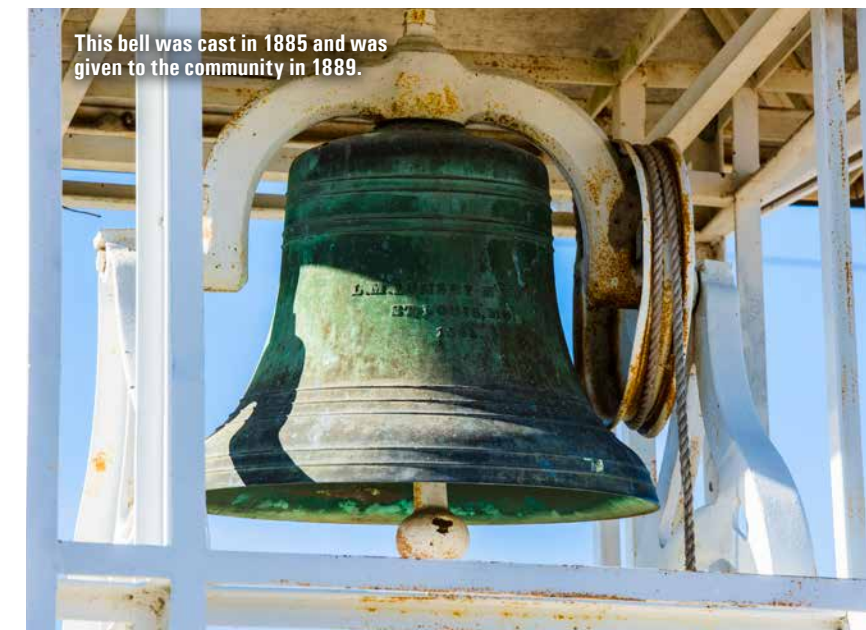
The Clover Bend Historic District includes five buildings from the Clover Bend High School.



The Alice French Bell Pavilion



This bell was cast in 1885 and was given to the community in 1889.



French originally spent her winters in a cabin at a Clover Bend plantation. She wrote about the area sharecroppers in her stories. When the cabin burned in 1895, she and her widowed friend, Jane Allen Crawford, built a magnificent three-story, 15-room house just down the road from the Community Center that they named "Thanford." The home's shrubbery was imported from England and the stables housed fine horses and an elegant carriage. The house was the setting for social activities and among the visitors to Thanford was Theodore Roosevelt. Unfortunately, Thanford is no longer standing.

The 500-pound bell in the pavilion was given to the Clover Bend Community School by French in the late 1880s.

To wrap up this trip down the Rock 'N Roll Highway, we travel south on State Highway 17 out of Newport to the town of Weldon. It's just a ten-minute drive to the **Weldon Gin Company**. The Weldon Gin Company Historic District encompasses a historic cotton gin complex with a history dating to 1833. The company was long a staple of the local economy providing ginning service to area farmers that shipped their cotton on the White and Black River Valley Railway. It was owned and operated successfully by Alvin McDonald and his son, Alvin, Jr. By 1929, the Continental Gin Company had introduced a gin made completely of steel. The new all-steel gin, combined with combination huller-extractor-feeder machines that the company began making in 1934 allowed gin operators to increase production, reduce maintenance, and lower operating costs. Today, the facility is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. If you go, take a peek inside one of the windows to see the mammoth machinery that helped to make cotton king for farmers in this area of Arkansas. ■

**Some information for this article was provided by encyclopediaofarkansas.net and wikipedia.org.*



The Weldon Gin Company Historic District encompasses a historic cotton gin complex.



Today, the facility is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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.

- * **THE VIEWFINDER:** Photographers of all ages submit their original images, captured with any camera and printed on varied media, for this bi-annual juried exhibition. • FEBRUARY 2 – 27
 - * **38 SPECIAL:** With three decades of southern rock under their belt, 38 Special brings their signature sound to Hope with hits such as "Hold On Loosely," "Rockin' Into the Night" and "Caught Up in You." • FEBRUARY 2
 - * **30TH ANNUAL HOME & GARDEN SHOW:** Visit 125 booths featuring lawn and garden equipment, tractors, plants, herbs, beekeeping supplies, honey, candles and more. There will also be seminars, how-to sessions and a quilt show. FEBRUARY 9
 - * **BIRD AND BAT HOUSE WORKSHOP:** Adults and children (8 and older) join park interpreters to build bird and bat houses for the backyard. Participants will learn about birds in the area and ways to attract them. A casual dinner wraps up this day at the park. • FEBRUARY 17
 - * **LAKE OUACHITA BICYCLE TOUR:** A three-day bicycle tour around the shores of Lake Ouachita with camping and limited cooking. Presented by the Arkansas Bicycle Club. • FEBRUARY 24 – 26
- FEBRUARY 2 – 27** *
THE VIEWFINDER – A PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION
South Arkansas Arts Center
El Dorado, AR
 - FEBRUARY 2** *
38 SPECIAL IN CONCERT
ARK-LA-TEX Expo – Hempstead Hall
Hope, AR
 - FEBRUARY 6 – 11**
AN AMERICAN IN PARIS
Baum Walker Hall
Fayetteville, AR
 - FEBRUARY 9** *
30TH ANNUAL HOME & GARDEN SHOW
Pine Bluff Convention Center
Pine Bluff, AR
 - FEBRUARY 17** *
BIRD AND BAT HOUSE WORKSHOP
Cossatot River State Park
Wickes, AR
 - FEBRUARY 24 – 26** *
LAKE OUACHITA BICYCLE TOUR
Hot Springs Convention Center
Hot Springs, AR
 - MARCH 1 – APRIL 14**
TULIP EXTRAVAGANZA
Garvan Gardens
Hot Springs, AR





Bike lanes on South Main
Street in Little Rock.

“Our new plan points us in the right direction as we work to provide a safe and convenient infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians.”

ARKANSAS *Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan*

RECEIVES RECOGNITION

BY DAVID NILLES

THE ARKANSAS CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION (APA) HAS AWARDED THE ARKANSAS BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PLAN WITH THE ACHIEVEMENT IN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DEVELOPMENT AWARD FOR 2016.

Recognizing ARDOT, Toole Design Group and Crafton Tull, the APA awarded the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan “for presenting transformative policies and network recommendations that have the ability to affect Arkansas’ health, safety, environment and economics for decades to come.” The APA also states, “It is a high quality plan that is innovative, transferable and comprehensive.”

ARDOT staff members began work on the new Bike & Pedestrian Plan in the fall of 2013. It was a two-year process that built upon and updated an earlier State plan.

ARDOT hired Toole Design Group, a consulting firm specializing in bicycle-and pedestrian-friendly development, to solicit public input and help in shaping the new plan. Crafton Tull, a local consulting firm, was active in making connections with the local cycling and walking community.

The new Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan addresses State policies related to bicycling and walking, as well as the development of roads, trails, sidewalks and other infrastructure that serve pedestrians and bicyclists. The Plan helps in charting a course making Arkansas a state that is known for great walking and bicycling opportunities.

“Like many of the products of the Transportation Planning and Policy Division, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is a crucial tool used to integrate all modes into the planning process,” stated Division Head Jessie Jones. “At the same time, it provides a framework within which local communities can advance their planning activities.”

“Arkansas is rapidly becoming a more bicycle-friendly state,” ARDOT Director Scott Bennett states. “Our new plan points us in the right direction as we work to provide a safe and convenient infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians.”

In February of 2017, Governor Asa Hutchinson named Arkansas Highway Commission member Robert S. Moore, Jr., of Arkansas City, to the Governor’s Advisory Council on Cycling. The Council was formed to promote the health benefits of cycling and the industry’s impact on the state economy, in addition to working to improve cyclists’ experience on Arkansas trails.

To view the Arkansas Bicycling & Pedestrian Plan, visit www.ardot.gov. An *Arkansas Highways* magazine article on development of the plan appeared in the July 2014 issue.



The American Planning Association provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in planning, promoting education and citizen empowerment, and providing members with the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change. ■

The Blytheville station was built along U.S. Highway 61, the bus line's primary north-south route between Chicago and New Orleans.



The Blytheville station is believed to be the only free-standing Art Moderne Greyhound station still in existence.



Going GREYHOUND FOR 80 YEARS

BY DAVID NILLES

“GO GREYHOUND AND LEAVE THE DRIVING TO US.” THAT WAS THE ADVERTISING SLOGAN THAT GREYHOUND BUS LINES USED BEGINNING IN 1956 AND CONTINUED TO USE FOR THE NEXT 40 YEARS. IT WAS USED IN TELEVISION AND RADIO SPOTS, ON BILLBOARDS AND IN MAGAZINE ADS.

In Blytheville, there is an even more effective promotional tool for “going Greyhound.” It is the historic Blytheville Bus Station and it was built by the Greyhound Bus Line in 1937.

The futuristic Art Moderne style station is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and it also happens to be one of the most frequently photographed buildings in Arkansas.

EARLY BUS TRAVEL

In the 1930s, before every family had two cars in the driveway, people often depended on trains and buses for long-distance travel. Following the Great Depression in the early 1930s, bus travel prospered. In 1934, intercity bus lines (of which Greyhound was the largest) carried approximately 400,000,000 passengers—nearly as many passengers as the Class I railroads. To accommodate the rapid growth in bus travel, Greyhound built many new stations in the period between 1937 and 1945, most of them in a late Art Deco style known as Art Moderne. By the outbreak of World War II, the company had 4,750 stations and nearly 10,000 employees.

THE BLYTHEVILLE STOP

The Blytheville station was built along U.S. Highway 61, the bus line's primary north-south route between Chicago and New Orleans. The route included the cities of St. Louis and Memphis. It was the first major stop north of Memphis, then a three-hour bus ride on the narrow two-lane highway. Sikeston, Missouri, then a three-hour trek to the north, was the next major stop.

Many service men and women used the station as their departure point during World War II. It also served as the arrival point for airmen headed to Blytheville Army Airfield, a bomber pilot training base. Later, the bus station welcomed service members headed to Blytheville Air Force Base, a Strategic Air Command B-52 bomber base in the second half of the twentieth century.

Many famous blues, jazz and rock & roll musicians are said to have also passed through the bus station. Located on the “Blues Highway” (U.S. Highway 61), legendary names like Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Sonny Boy Williams and Ike Turner followed the

route taking blues music from the Delta northward to Chicago.

The station was designed by Noland Van Powell and Ben Watson White. Because the building was constructed in an era of segregation in this country, it still preserves two waiting areas and two sets of bathrooms.

It is believed to be the only free-standing Art Moderne Greyhound station still in existence.



The station closed in 2001, but after being totally restored, reopened in 2010

STILL ALIVE AND VIBRANT

The station closed as a working bus station in 2001 and, unfortunately, fell into disrepair. However, in 2004, it was purchased by community effort, and after being totally restored, it reopened in 2010.

Today, the Blytheville bus station serves as a transportation museum. It is also headquarters for Main Street Blytheville. Understandably, it has become an important part of Blytheville's history.

Several years ago, it hosted a “Ghosts of Highway 61” festival that attracted more than 200 antique commercial buses to Blytheville. Indeed, a fitting location for such a nostalgic festival.

The station is located at 109 N. 5th Street and is worth visiting if you are in the northeast corner of Arkansas. ■

Meat smokers and grills filled the parking lot at the Arkansas Transit Authority.



Many cooks arrived before sunrise to get started in the competition.

AAPA BBQ COOK OFF *Brings Industry Together*

BY DAVID NILLES

THE WEATHER MAY HAVE BEEN A LITTLE COLD AND DAMP AT LUNCHTIME ON OCTOBER 27TH, BUT THE SMELL OF BARBEQUE WAS IN THE AIR ON WEST BROADWAY IN NORTH LITTLE ROCK.

The occasion was the 2nd Annual Arkansas Asphalt Pavement Association (AAPA) Young Leaders BBQ Cook Off.

Meat smokers and grills filled the parking lot at the Arkansas Transit Authority and, judging from the fine food being cooked, the barbeque teams had been hard at work for hours.

"Some of these teams were out here at 4:30 this morning to get things going," said Park Estes, Executive Director of AAPA.

This is the second year for the event hosted by the Young Leaders, and it's growing.

"Our first year we had 12 teams," Estes shared. "This year we have 18."

Governor Asa Hutchinson joined the festivities and shared in the ribs, smoked sausage, chicken and roasted peppers coming off the grills.

Trophies for first, second and third place were awarded in several categories. First Place for "Ribs" went to Forsgren Inc. Cashion Company won in the "Pork" category. Cranford Construction took first place in the "Chicken" category. A special prize belt went to Forsgren, Inc. as overall "Champion" of the cook off.

To kick off the event, a reception was held the previous night for cook off participants and sponsors.

The AAPA created the "Young Leaders Committee" in an effort to strengthen the industry,

its member organizations and their association by developing an organized path consisting of identifying, educating, developing and providing individuals opportunities to prepare themselves for future leadership within their careers.

The cook off was sponsored by Contractor's Specialty Service Company, Lion Oil Company, Pine Bluff Sand & Gravel, APAC, Delta Companies, Moore Contracting Company, Inc., Forsgren Inc, Cranford Construction, Kiewit, MS Transport, J & L Asphalt Paving, Coastal Energy Corporation, Heartland Asphalt Materials, Midwest Lime Company and Time Striping, Inc. Reception sponsor was Hugg & Hall Equipment Company.

The AAPA represents over 50 asphalt plants and over 97 percent of the hot mix suppliers and laydown contractors in Arkansas. The association was founded in 2000 to give Arkansas contractors a collaborative voice to promote quality asphalt work in Arkansas. ■

A New Welcome Center For Scenic Highway 71

BY DAVID NILLES

FOR MOTORISTS HEADING NORTH OUT OF TEXARKANA ON U.S. HIGHWAY 71, ONE OF THE FIRST SITES TO BE SEEN AS THEY TRAVEL UP THE WESTERN BORDER OF ARKANSAS IS THE RED RIVER ARKANSAS WELCOME CENTER. ON SEPTEMBER 18TH, A RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY OPENED A BRAND NEW CENTER, REPLACING THE ONE THAT HAD BEEN THERE FOR 30 YEARS.

"It's exciting to have this brand new Center open and to realize that we will be sharing it with thousands of motorists every week," ARDOT Director Scott Bennett told everyone gathered.

Since 2003, the Arkansas Department of Transportation has partnered with the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism to build new Welcome Centers across the State. In addition to the Red River facility, new Centers can be found in El Dorado, Texarkana, Van Buren, Corning, Blytheville, Lake Village, West Memphis and Helena-West Helena.

Highway Commissioner Robert S. Moore, Jr. told the crowd how inviting all of the new Centers have become.

"When you buy or sell a home, one of the first things you consider is curb appeal," he shared. "You want people to see it and get a good feeling about your home before they come inside. That's what all of these Welcome Centers have is good curb appeal. When visitors come into these facilities, they get a good feeling about being in the Natural State, knowing there are great

things to see and do within our borders."

The new 3,250 square-foot Welcome Center at the Red River includes an information desk staffed by employees of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, rows of display racks providing brochures on the many things to do in the area, a computer information desk, a coffee bar, sitting areas, restrooms and outdoor picnic tables.

"This is the latest example of what can happen when you think big," Highway Commissioner Philip Taldo told the crowd. "Each year more than one million visitors are helped in our Welcome Centers. We owe a great deal to the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism for the wonderful, helpful staffs that motorists find in each of these Centers."

"I can't say enough about the great partnership we have with Parks and Tourism," Bennett added. "ARDOT has supervised construction of these facilities and maintains them, and Parks and Tourism has staffed each of them. It's been a model of success."

Kane Webb, Director of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, shared that Arkansas welcomed over 29 million visitors last year and they spent almost 8 billion dollars. Vacation planning kits from his Department were sent to 79,000 prospective visitors last year.

"Visitation to Arkansas equates into economic development and really revs up our economy," he added.

"Our State truly has one of the best welcoming center systems in the nation," Sash Goyal, Parks and Tourism Commission Chairman, told those gathered. "I have not seen a more friendly staff anywhere as I travel across the nation."

The construction contract for the Red River Welcome Center was awarded to Contech Contractors, Inc. of Texarkana, Texas, for approximately \$2.5 million. The Center is located at 12555 N. State Line Avenue.

Sheila Nichols, who manages the new Welcome Center says, "Anyone traveling in this part of the world should stop in and say hello!" ■



Jeff Venable

Jeff Venable retired as the District Seven Engineer

Venable has felt most “at home” in his career when he has been around construction projects. In particular, bridge projects.



A LOVE FOR CONSTRUCTION AND ARDOT

BY DAVID NILLES

ON DECEMBER 18TH OF 2017, JEFF VENABLE RECEIVED HIS 35-YEAR SERVICE AWARD DURING THE DISTRICT SEVEN AWARDS BANQUET IN CAMDEN. THE PRESENTATION SERVED AS THE LAST OFFICIAL DUTY OF THIS FORMER DISTRICT SEVEN ENGINEER AS HE ENDED A SUCCESSFUL CAREER WITH THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

Venable began his career with ARDOT in January of 1986 after graduating from Louisiana Tech University. His first role was as a Construction Field Engineer I at Resident Engineer Office #64 in

Hot Springs. He served the last four-and-a-half years of his career as District Engineer for District Seven.

“I still remember my first job,” Venable recalls. “It was an overlay

on Highway 53, from Rosston north to Highway 19.”

“As I look back, this has been a wonderful place to work and to build a career,” Venable shared as he reflected on his years at the Department

CONSTRUCTION SERVED AS A MOTIVATOR

Venable has felt most “at home” in his career when he has been around construction projects. In particular, bridge projects.

“I’m a bridge person,” he stated. “My

favorite part of construction is watching a bridge go together. When you start hanging beams in the air and bolting everything together, you see how everything fits and you see that structure coming up out of the ground. That’s what has motivated me over the years.”

For Venable, it is still just as exciting today as it was when he started his career.

“I still get a knot in my stomach when we pour a bridge deck because there are so many things that could happen. Every one of those projects has a little something different in it.”

ONE TO REMEMBER

In his years at ARDOT, Venable has been involved in the construction of well over a dozen bridges.

He recalls one project that stood out above all the rest.

“The one I go back and tell stories on are the bridges on Scenic Highway 7 South over Lake Hamilton as you come out of Hot Springs,” Venable recalled.

It was his first opportunity to learn how to construct a bridge in 80 feet of water.

“We worked with five different contractors on that job,” he shared. “That was the first job I did working with a set of consultant plans. I remember there were

some things that didn’t quite fit. As a result, we did some modifying to the plans and issued change orders. It was also our first opportunity to construct some reinforced earth walls. The job had many different aspects to it that had to have field decisions made, as opposed to what the plans originally called for. Once completed, we got to watch as they blew up the old bridge, dropping it into the lake.”

BUILDING BRIDGES, HIGHWAYS AND MEMORIES

Throughout his career, and no matter what the construction project, Venable has felt rewarded with a job well done.

“I’ve been fortunate to work with good people over the years, not just here in District 7, but in Districts 3 and 6 as well,” Venable explained. “We’ve been able to get the job done and I’m proud of our people. We have the right people in the right place that are good at what they need to be doing. They are the ones that have made my job so much easier.”

A NEW WAY OF DOING THINGS

Highway construction has gone through quite a few changes during the time that Venable has been at ARDOT.

“There has been a vast change because back when I started, we did all of the



Jeff Venable received his 35-year Service Award during the District Seven Awards Banquet.



Venable plays guitar at his retirement party.

“When you retire and move on, it’s kind of like leaving a family. But I know that everything is left in very capable hands.”



“I’ve been fortunate to work with good people over the years, not just here in District 7, but in Districts 3 and 6 as well.”

surveying, we had to go lay everything out and we kept everything with books and five- and six-copy forms,” Venable shares.

“There was no thought of computers. If you had a hand-held calculator, you were doing very well. Today, we can do so much more with what we have. This is a field of work in which you can’t stand still. You must keep learning because there are new things to learn all the time.”

For those engineering students just graduating from college, Venable thinks the Department is a great place to start a career.

“At ARDOT, there are so many opportunities,” Venable advises. “You have many opportunities to gain different experience depending on what your skill set is. It is a terrific career waiting for you and, at the same time, you get to perform a public service. There is a great deal of satisfaction and accomplishment when you look at what you can be involved in.”

A GREAT PLACE TO RETURN

Venable left the Department for a few years to go into the consultant business but returned in 1986. He has been at ARDOT ever since.

“I’ve stood on both sides of the fence searching for where the grass is greener,” Venable reflected. “I learned that the grass may look greener on the other side of the fence, but then you find out you still have to mow it. It’s not all it’s cracked up to be. When I got a chance to come back to the Highway Department, it was the best thing that ever happened to me. It was like coming home.”

Venable feels that ARDOT was a fantastic place to build a career and is a workplace that offers great benefits.

“When you put the big picture together, I don’t think anybody beats the

Highway Department. There are so many opportunities here. This is a place where it would be difficult to get into a rut because every project is different. There are many surprises along the way.”

Venable has loved the work he has done. But, that doesn’t mean every day has been perfect.

“I’ve had some frustrating days,” he recalls. “In the long haul, when you get down to it... If you don’t have some struggle along the way, you probably aren’t accomplishing much.”

Throughout his career, Venable remembers those who contributed to his success at the Department.

“I’ve had the opportunity to work with some fantastic people,” Venable stated. “When I was in the RE office over at Hot Springs, I got the chance to work with Tommy Littleton and Tim Baber. They had a great work ethic and allowed you to go out and do your job. I also got to work with Jim Pound as an assistant over in Little Rock. Jim would tell us what we needed to do, he would go one way and we would

go the other and get right to work. The best way to learn and to run an office is putting the right people in the right spot and letting them do their job. That followed through when I came to Camden and worked with Carl Bachelor. I have known Carl since we were kids! That was a pleasant experience.”

WHAT’S NEXT?

With retirement comes more free time and the opportunity to make plans for the future.

“My wife and I like to travel and we have a cruise coming up in a few months,” Venable shared.

“We also hope to spend more time visiting our grandkids. We have a son that teaches high school in Florida so we’ll get to see him more.”

There is also a string of hobbies that may require some extra attention.

“I’ll probably take up golf again. I haven’t had time for golf in a long time. I never have had opportunities to fish much but that is something I may take up as well.

“My wife has put up with me for 45 years so she deserves the opportunity to do some things we want to do!”

Still, a part of Venable will miss the day-to-day at the Department.

“I’ve enjoyed 35 years here,” he concludes. “It’s kind of sad to say this is it. I look back and think of all the opportunities I have had and the people I have worked with. There is a lot of joy at this place. When you retire and move on, it’s kind of like leaving a family. But I know that everything is left in very capable hands. I know they aren’t going to board it up when I leave.” ■

Unveiling of the sign dedicating U.S. Scenic Highway 65 as the "Delta Rhythm & Bayous Highway."



Pine Bluff Mayor Shirley Washington (center) with special guests at the sign unveiling.



State Representative Vivian Flowers welcomes guests.

SCENIC HIGHWAY 65

THE *Delta Rhythm & Bayous* HIGHWAY

BY DAVID NILLES

SUMMER AFTERNOONS IN THE DELTA OF SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS CAN BE SUNNY AND WARM, BUT A STEADY BREEZE HELPED KEEP THE HEAT AWAY FROM ARDOT PERSONNEL, AREA RESIDENTS AND LOCAL DIGNITARIES GATHERED IN PINE BLUFF ON AUGUST 16TH TO DEDICATE U.S. SCENIC HIGHWAY 65 AS THE "DELTA RHYTHM & BAYOUS HIGHWAY."

The new designation is the result of Act 451 of the Arkansas Legislature, whose lead sponsor, Representative Vivian Flowers of Pine Bluff, spoke at the designation ceremony.

"I want to say thank you to the hands, the words and the heart of everyone that has

been involved in taking what started with an idea and resulted in the sign we see here today," Flowers shared with the crowd. "This is a wonderful opportunity for economic development through heritage tourism."

The Rhythm & Bayous Highway will begin at Pine Bluff and extend southward to the Louisiana state line.

Flowers went on to thank the members of the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Alliance for their vision and hard work on the project.

The bill, which was signed by Governor Asa Hutchinson, states that the southeast Arkansas Delta lowland has a rich culture due, in part, to its varied musical heritage and the ecology and folk life of Bayou Bartholomew, Bayou Macon and the many surrounding bayous in the region. Some of the most influential musicians, writers and producers in the development of blues, soul, country, rockabilly, rhythm & blues, gospel and folk music were from or achieved musical milestones in the Arkansas Delta lowlands. Some of those music legends include Big Bill Broonzy, Jim Ed Brown, Johnny Cash, Sam Cooke, Miles Davis, Freddie Fender, Elmore James, Jerry Lee Lewis, Charlie Patton and Bobbie Rush, among others.

As for the bayous in the area, Bayou Bartholomew is the longest bayou in the world and runs parallel to Highway 65 through Arkansas. It meanders for 364 miles within Arkansas and Louisiana. It has its beginnings northwest of Pine Bluff, near the town of Hardin, and travels through Jefferson, Lincoln, Desha, Drew, Chicot and Ashley counties before entering Louisiana and joining the Ouachita River near Sterlington, Louisiana. The bayou's waters are home to 150 species of fish and mussels, making it the second most diverse stream in North America and a promising place for anglers.

Bayou Macon is the second longest bayou in the United States. It begins in Desha County and flows southward to Delhi, Louisiana.

As for the bayous in the area, Bayou Bartholomew is the longest bayou in the world and runs parallel to Highway 65 through Arkansas.

The combination of musical heritage and bayou folk traditions in southeast Arkansas make the region an ideal tourist destination for music, nature and history lovers alike.

"This designation was the brainchild of Jimmy Cunningham, Jr." Flowers told the crowd as she introduced him. Cunningham serves as Board Director of the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Alliance. The purpose of the Alliance is to develop museums, exhibits, murals, and/or centers of culture in seven cities which share the common story of the music/art achievements and bayou culture related to the Arkansas/Louisiana/Mississippi corridor along Highway 65 South and Bayou Bartholomew.

"I talked with a lot of folks about this

idea because we have something going on here," Cunningham shared. "We're not just putting up signs, we are linking together communities in this area of the State as we begin to develop and build interpretive venues that have a common motif that connect us all together and bring tourists inside our corridor.

"Big Bill Broonzy had a song that said 'I have the key to the highway.' Today, we have the key to our economic ills, the key to coming together and the key to bringing a great force together. We are going to do this, so let's get that key, start that engine and make this highway run."

"I give accolades to Jimmy for his hard work," said Pine Bluff Mayor Shirley Washington. "The Delta is getting the prominent position that it has so long deserved in this community. When I talked to people about this idea, it was all hands on deck. We look forward to what's coming down the Rhythm & Bayous corridor."

Among those hands on deck that were recognized for their hard work were Senator Trent Garner, Representatives LeAnne Burch, Mark McElroy and Chris Richey. In addition to Mayor Washington of Pine Bluff, other mayors on board include Mayor Essie Cableton of Gould, Mayor JoAnne Bush of Lake Village and Mayor Johnny Brigham of Dumas.

"This designation is the brightest reflection of community and citizen involvement," Flowers added. "It's all about regional partnerships. The best is yet to come and now the real work begins." ■

Dear ARDOT

My husband and I were blessed to be able to travel, recently, across the country, from New Jersey to California and back for an 8-week, 10,000-mile, and 31-state camping trip.

During that time, we saw all kinds of highways, large and small, and we believe in giving praise where praise is due. Nowhere did we come across highways that were better marked or better maintained than yours. Our time in your state was wonderful!

Kudos on a terrific job! Thank you for making our driving time in your state such a pleasure!

Sincerely,
Carole & Dan Baxter

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

Please pass along my sincere thanks to Brittney Wright and Holly Butler for their outstanding service and professionalism! We run a lot of trucks from Springfield to Memphis and we've been re-routing around the bridges and construction along Hwy 63 near Imboden. Yesterday afternoon I had the good fortune to call the ARDOT info line (501-569-2000) about bridge restrictions and my call was immediately answered (first ring!) by Brittney. What a breath of fresh air! She was super friendly and had a "happy voice" and JUST the kind of person we all want to speak with! She listened to my questions and knew where to send my call.

Holly quickly answered that transfer, and I got the SAME service! Holly looked up the bridge/construction restrictions and double-checked how we could route our trucks through Pocahontas and back to Hwy 63, and she even gave me the max weights (35 & 36-tons) for the 3 bridges on Hwy 63, so we could still cross those in case we were empty or lightlyloaded.

I couldn't have received better service if I'd written the script myself! Please pass along my thanks and this pat-on-the-back. It's rare to get outstanding service like they provided me!

Kindest regards,
Paul Higgins
Director of Fleet Maintenance, Prime Inc.

A BIG "THANK YOU"

On behalf of Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) and the Information System Committee, I would like to extend our appreciation and "Thanks" to Renee Hill for all her hard work on the 2017 CVSA Data Management, Quality and FMCSA Systems Workshop.

Renee worked with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), CVSA and the Information System Committee to develop a well presented and informative session for state personnel represented from nationwide. There is no question Renee performed above and beyond her normal duties to make this workshop so successful. Her dedication to data quality and motor carrier safety are to be commended.

Renee is truly a valuable asset to FMCSA, CVSA and the State of Arkansas. Again please give Renee our "Thanks" for a job well done!

Sincerely,
Holly Skaar
CVSA Information Systems Committee, Chair
Research Analyst, Sr.
Idaho State Police/Commercial Vehicle Safety

WORKING TOGETHER

I want to personally thank you and all the district personnel for the improvements happening in Jackson County. It takes us all working together to make Jackson County a better place to live. I know you have the State as a whole to worry about. The Batesville office and our local guys work hard to ensure that those improvements are met. Scott McCoy and his crew are exceptional.

Sincerely,
Jeff Phillips
Jackson County Judge

MARKING THE WAY

Thank you for your September 21, 2017, letter responding to my letter regarding the signs at Exit 85 on U.S. Highway 67 at Newport.

This past Sunday, my wife and I returned from out-of-state and travelled this stretch of highway, and the large "Chevron" signs along this curve were very obvious. Thank you very much for installing these signs. I sincerely believe these signs will help the drivers, particularly the after dark drivers.

By the way, the completed stretch of U.S. Highway 64 East, from Beebe almost to El Paso, is really a nice drive. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
David Jones

GARLAND & SALINE COUNTY IMPROVEMENTS

On behalf of the Governmental Affairs Committee of Hot Springs Village, we would like to say thank you to you and your department for the efforts on the various projects underway in Garland and Saline Counties. We applaud the excellent progress with each of these highway improvements.

Of particular notice to residents of Hot Springs Village are the paving, shoulder-widening and other rehabilitation work on Highway 5 between Hot Springs Village and Benton. Those ARDOT projects greatly improve the safety of residents who regularly travel to Benton and Little Rock for the many services available in those areas.

We continue to appreciate your ongoing support of the other major projects in Garland and Saline County on Highways 7, 70 and 270. Please let us know if those of us on the Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC) can assist you in any way as you continue your efforts to improve transportation in Arkansas.

With sincere appreciation,
Michael Dollar Richard Johnson David F. Whitlow
Chairman Vice Chairman Secretary

Governmental Affairs Committee Members
Hot Springs Village Governmental Affairs Committee

SUCCESSFUL RALLY

The 2017 Bikes, Blues and BBQ motorcycle rally turned out to be another successful, well-attended event. We know this success is partly due to the support received from other law enforcement agencies, such as yours. The presence of officers from your department reinforced the number of law enforcement officers available for crowd and traffic control.

Please accept our thanks for your continued support and for the manpower you furnished this year.

Sincerely,
Greg Tabor
Fayetteville Chief of Police



Phil Heath and Andrew



Arash Rahbar and Andrew

A GREAT MAKE-A-WISH TRIP

I thought I'd send a few pictures from Andrew's trip to the Olympia. We had such a great time! The highlight for him (and for us) was getting to meet his idols. He met several former Mr. Olympia's, and many more that were top place-getters. All were great to talk to. Phil Heath, the current titleholder, taught him how to out angle for photos. You need all the help you can get with these guys! HA! He's more motivated than ever to keep lifting. Our seats for the shows were great too. Thank you so much for all the work you and the Arkansas Highway Police do to raise funds for Make-A-Wish. We all had a fantastic time!

Michelle Haygood
Executive Assistant
Division of Medical Genetics
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

HELPING IN BATESVILLE

I represent a family who was injured in an accident occurring last March in a construction zone on Highway 63. Part of our investigation included interviewing several employees of the Arkansas Highway Department last week in Batesville at the Highway Department offices.

I want to extend my thanks and gratitude to attorney Bill Wharton for helping arrange those informal interviews in a quick and convenient manner. There were multiple witnesses and Bill arranged to have them appear at one time so multiple trips could be avoided. Bill was great to work with in scheduling, and patient when our travel arrangements caused us to be a little late for the meeting. Bill's presence during the interviews helped the process move quickly and cogently. We accomplished what we needed to in the shortest time possible. I also want to thank the Highway Department for accommodating us in the Batesville offices.

Thanks again,
Michael P. Healy
The Healy Law Firm

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

8. MAMMOTH SPRING — HIGHWAY 63 N

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

9. SILOAM SPRINGS — HIGHWAYS 412 W & 59

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

10. TEXARKANA — HIGHWAY 71

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

11. TEXARKANA — INTERSTATE 30

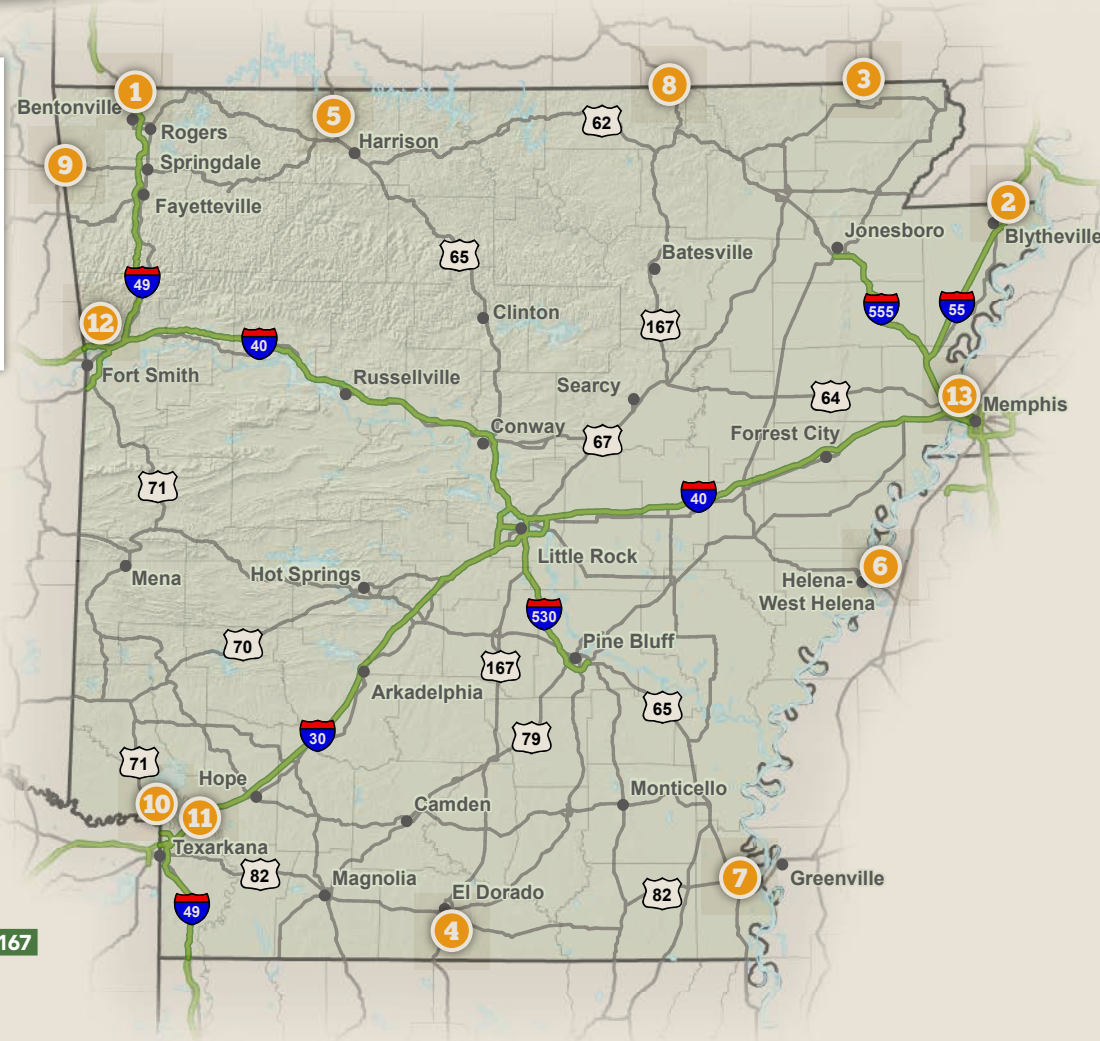
10000 Interstate 30
Texarkana, AR 71854
Phone: 870-772-4301

12. VAN BUREN — INTERSTATE 40

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

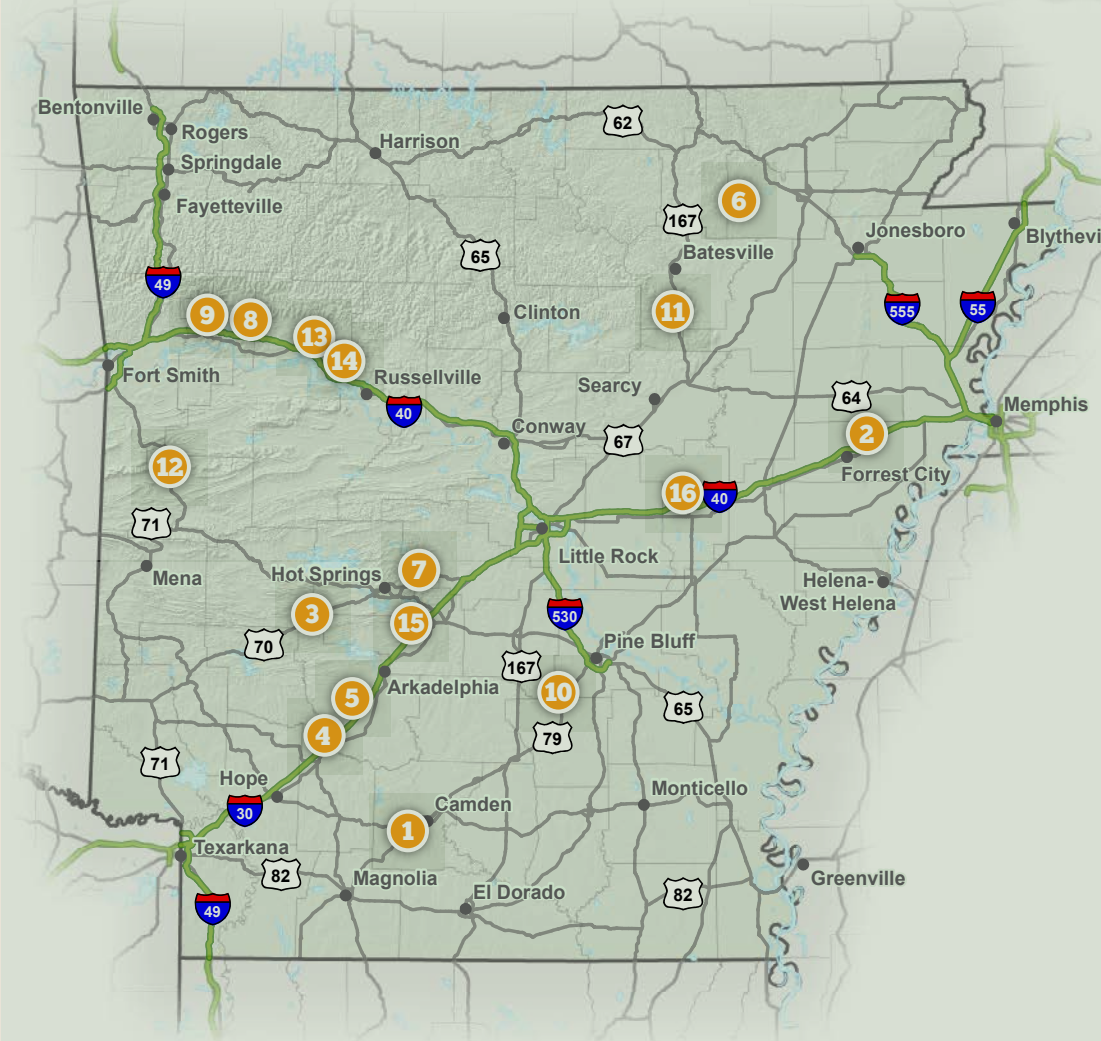
13. WEST MEMPHIS — INTERSTATE 40

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



In addition to Arkansas Welcome Centers, travelers will find Rest Areas and Tourist Information Centers (T.I.C.) at locations across the State. Like our Welcome Centers, each location offers restrooms and picnic tables and is a great place to rest and enjoy some time off of the road.

ARKANSAS REST AREAS



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

13. BIG PINEY T.I.C. — INTERSTATE 40
Location: Mile marker 67.5
Direction: Eastbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending

14. BIG PINEY T.I.C. — INTERSTATE 40
Location: Mile marker 72.5
Direction: Westbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending

15. SOCIAL HILL T.I.C. — INTERSTATE 30
Location: Mile marker 93
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking, Vending

16. WHITE RIVER T.I.C. — INTERSTATE 40
Location: Mile marker 198.8
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking, Vending

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

DISTRICT 6

CONSTRUCTION



CORNER

Motorists driving over the Union Pacific railroad tracks on Roosevelt Road in south Little Rock are now using the new Roosevelt Road (U.S. Highway 70) Bridge.

The new bridge is located near Barton Coliseum and the State Fair Grounds and was constructed next to the old structure so as not to have to close the heavily traveled east-west thoroughfare. Traffic was simply diverted to the new bridge when it opened this past summer.

Construction of the overpass was awarded to James Construction Group, LLC, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in December of 2014. The award amount was \$10.6 million.

Among the unique features on the bridge project are 28 light posts featuring a gas light adaptation. Eighteen of the posts are mounted on the bridge, four are positioned on the approach walls and six are ground mounted. In addition, the south facing wall of the bridge is designed to match the brick exterior on Barton Coliseum, located directly to the south. A decorative fence on the bridge is also part of the design.

The bridge was substantially completed in June of 2017 and carries approximately 10,000 vehicles per day. □

ArDOT PEOPLE

ArDOT 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 • Steve McKinney, Jr., Construction Aide

HEAVY BRIDGE • Brien Withers, Bridge Repairer

HUMAN RESOURCES • Ashley Felton, Workforce Development Specialist

MAINTENANCE • Michael Marable, Striping Helper; Sammy Reynolds, III, Striping Helper; William Roberson, Striping Helper; David Strano, Striping Helper

PERMITS • Dawn Waliski, Permit Technician

RIGHT OF WAY • Crystal Robinson, Right of Way Acquisitions Agent; Benjamin Sutton, Utility Coordinator; Sonya Washington, Abstractor

ROADWAY DESIGN • Essie Whitmore, Engineer

DISTRICT 1 • Christopher Smith, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 2 • Cody Hall, Maintenance Aide I; Eric Miles, Jr., Maintenance Aide I; Jaravien Huff, Maintenance Aide I; Jonathan Keaton, Maintenance Aide I; Kennard Lucas, Maintenance Aide I; Rikki Jones, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 3 • Steven Brzeski, Mechanic; Jamarcus Langston, Maintenance Aide I; Shane Harris, Maintenance Aide I; Steve Love, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 4 • A.J. Churchman, Maintenance Aide I; Gabriel Beville, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 5 • Byron Bristow, Mechanic; Seth Wortham, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 6 • Charles Krontz, Mechanic; Cordell Horton, Jr., Maintenance Aide II; Wess Western, Maintenance Aide II; Zachary Means, Rest Area Attendant; Maynard Smith, Maintenance Aide I; Matthew Beatty, Maintenance Aide I; Perry Donald, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 8 • Kelly Hill, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 9 • Travis Hayworth, Maintenance Aide I; Brian Skaggs, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 10 • Jimmy Jefferson, Maintenance Aide I

PROMOTIONS

CONSTRUCTION • Phillip Rook, Jr., Construction Project Coordinator

EQUIPMENT & PROCUREMENT • Shenika Wymes, Purchasing Clerk

MAINTENANCE • Latonya Braggs, Office Assistant

RIGHT OF WAY • Kate Zeno-Barnhart, Right of Way Acquisition Agent

DISTRICT 1 • Darlene Riley, District Bookkeeper

DISTRICT 2 • John Nelson, Maintenance Specialist; Eugene Ward, Maintenance Aide II; Kirk Howard, Lead Bridge Repairer; Larry Manning, Maintenance Aide II; Christopher Evans, Maintenance Aide II

DISTRICT 4 • Amy Smith, District Office Manager; Tyler Lincks, Assistant Bridge Inspector; Gary DeWitt, Crew Leader

DISTRICT 5 • Lori King, Maintenance Aide II

DISTRICT 6 • Jonathan Isbell, Maintenance Specialist; John Jones, Maintenance Aide II

DISTRICT 7 • Marquan Bulliner, Maintenance Specialist; David Archer, District Engineer

DISTRICT 9 • William Smith, Maintenance Aide II; James Jones, Maintenance Aide II

DISTRICT 10 • Nicholas Rosten, Lead Bridge Repairer; John Abanathy, Storeroom Assistant

SERVICE

COMMUNICATIONS • Jesse Bailey, ITS Specialist, 5 yrs

CONSTRUCTION • Kendall Stroud, Construction Project Coordinator, 30 yrs; Rebecca Wynn, Resident Office Technician, 20 yrs; Brandon Love, Staff Engineer, 15 yrs; Meredith Whittle, Resident Office Technician, 10 yrs

ENVIRONMENTAL • Bart Dudley, GIS - Data Management Specialist, 15 yrs; Matthew Strawn, Advanced GIS - Data Management Specialist, 10 yrs; Mary Pearson, Environmental Impact Analyst, 5 yrs

MAINTENANCE • Joshua Phillips, Sign Crew Leader, 15 yrs; Neil Austin, Pavement Profiler Operator, 10 yrs; Kris Treadway, Sign Shop Supervisor, 5 yrs; John Brown, Striping Crew Leader, 5 yrs

MATERIALS • Nick Holt, District Laboratory Technician, 15 yrs

RIGHT OF WAY • Floyd Rippond, Jr., Lead Right of Way Plans Designer, 40 yrs

ROADWAY DESIGN • George Davison, III, Senior Engineer, 5 yrs

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & POLICY • Douglas Beatty, Geospatial Specialist, 10 yrs; Glenn Alkire, Crash Data System Administrator, 5 yrs

DISTRICT 1 • Nancy Jumper, Bookkeeper, 35 yrs; Kenny Smith, Crew Leader, 30 yrs; Brenda Grubbs, Area Headquarters Attendant, 25 yrs

DISTRICT 3 • Jeremy Taylor, Area Headquarters Attendant, 15 yrs; Rodney Stone, Maintenance Specialist, 15 yrs; Eddie Nailon, Maintenance Specialist, 15 yrs

DISTRICT 4 • Jeffrey Jones, District Bridge Inspector, 30 yrs; Ronnie Stout, Maintenance Specialist, 30 yrs; Adam Wyers, Maintenance Aide II, 10 yrs; Joseph Parrish, Maintenance Specialist, 10 yrs; Nannette Billing, District Clerk, 5 yrs; Truman Sanford, Rest Area Attendant, 5 yrs

DISTRICT 5 • Marcus Watson, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 25 yrs; Ricky Stevens, Maintenance Specialist, 15 yrs; Jeffery Gillihan, Maintenance Aide II, 15 yrs; Blake Smith, Mechanic, 15 yrs; Josh Higginbottom, Crew Leader, 15 yrs; Michael Bassham, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs; William Miller, Maintenance Specialist, 5 yrs

DISTRICT 6 • Kevin Pfeiffer, Maintenance Specialist, 10 yrs; John Parks, Assistant Bridge Inspector, 5 yrs

ArDOT
PEOPLE

DISTRICT 7 • Wayne Greer, Jr., District Maintenance Superintendent, 40 yrs; David Archer, District Engineer, 30 yrs; Donny Berg, Crew Leader, 15 yrs

DISTRICT 8 • Raymond McCoy, Maintenance Specialist, 15 yrs; Rickey Garrett, Sr., Area Headquarters Attendant, 15 yrs; Gregory Konkel, Maintenance Specialist, 15 yrs; Joseph Shamsie, Maintenance Specialist, 10 yrs; James Wells, Mechanic, 10 yrs

DISTRICT 9 • Chester Lawrence, Maintenance Specialist, 25 yrs; Tracy Wynn, Welder, 10 yrs; Kenneth England, Maintenance Aide II, 10 yrs

DISTRICT 10 • Calvin Foster, Lead Storeroom Assistant, 30 yrs

RETIREMENT

LEGAL • Lillian Williams, Legal Technical Support, 12+ yrs

MAINTENANCE • Ronnie Romine, Striping Machine Driver, 14+ yrs

DISTRICT 1 • Terry Harris, Maintenance Specialist, 16+ yrs

DISTRICT 5 • David Smith, Lead Station Attendant, 25+ yrs; Johnny Kimbriel, Crew Leader, 17+ yrs

DISTRICT 7 • Jeffrey Venable, District Engineer, 35+ yrs; Billy Thrower, Maintenance Aide II, 14+ yrs

DISTRICT 10 • Loyd Lanz, Parts Runner, 12+ yrs

MEMORIALS

DISTRICT 1 • Charles Fowler, 12/16/17, retired

DISTRICT 2 • Lamark Hobbs, 12/4/17, retired

DISTRICT 5 • Marion Brecheen, 12/5/17, retired





Arkansas Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 2261
Little Rock, AR 72203-2261

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Little Rock, AR 72203
Permit No. 2556

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

