

SPRING 2020

# Arkansas HIGHWAYS

A PUBLICATION OF THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | MAGAZINE



## 9 Years in the Chair An Interview with Scott Bennett

**A RIVER RUNS UNDER IT:**  
Bridge Construction  
over the Buffalo

**A CLOSER LOOK**  
at Environmental Justice  
and Transportation

**QUIET PLEASE...**  
Traffic Noise  
Analysis and Abatement

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear ARDOT Family,

The first COVID-19 case was reported in Arkansas on March 11. And, I am writing this message on April 11. It is hard to fathom what all has transpired in just one month.

When I took over as Director on March 23, and every day since, I have earnestly prayed for wisdom, strength, courage, peace, discernment, clarity and guidance to lead the Department.

I have surrounded myself with trusted and knowledgeable advisors. Together we have worked hard to determine the best course of action to take each step of the way to ensure everyone's protection and safety while providing essential services to Arkansas' motorists. The job we do to ensure truckers, health care workers, grocery store workers, pharmacists, etc., can stay mobile is invaluable, although sometimes it goes unnoticed. But, you know what? That's okay. We aren't in this for glory and accolades. We are just doing our jobs.

I am learning so much from this challenge. One of the biggest lessons I've learned is what is really important. Our relationships with our home and work families and their wellbeing is what is truly important. We are all in this together to protect ourselves and, by doing so, protect others.

During the 36 years I've been an ARDOT employee, I've never been more proud to be part of this great organization. You have all shown a spirit of public service, cooperation, resolve and resiliency that is second to none.

I have worked hard to be an encouragement and positive voice to you all through this crisis. But, I've been the one that has received much needed encouragement and a tremendous outpouring of positive feedback. It has meant so much to me and I am so grateful for each and every one of you.

I'm looking forward to better days ahead. We are ARDOT United – Doing Our Part. We will get through this together and we will be stronger and better than before.

All my best,

Lorie Tudor, P.E., Director



FRONT & BACK COVER:  
Highway 13 near Searcy

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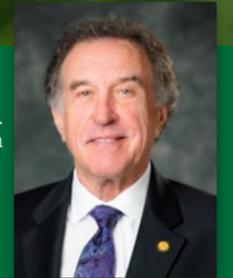
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# ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION

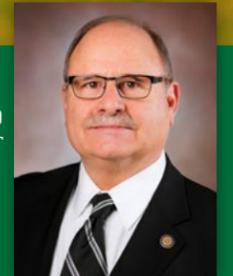
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## MEMORIAL

# Commissioner Thomas B. Schueck

1941 – 2020



**T**OM SCHUECK, WHO WAS SERVING A TEN-YEAR TERM ON THE ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION, PASSED AWAY ON MARCH 3, 2020.

He was appointed to the Commission by Governor Mike Beebe and served from 2011 to 2020. The last year and a half of his term, he served as Chairman.

Schueck was a student in the engineering program at Washington University in St. Louis and completed his studies there in 1965 with a degree in civil engineering.

He had 41 years of experience in forming and managing companies involved in heavy construction. Among the companies he founded are Schueck Steel, Custom Metals, Prospect Steel, L-Con Constructors, L-Con Marine Fabricators and Heritage Golf, a golf course construction company.

His experience as a public servant also included service to the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission, the Little Rock Airport Commission and the Arkansas Parks & Tourism Commission.

He also served on the UAMS Foundation Board, the board of The Nature Conservancy and the board of the Arkansas Industrial Development Foundation.

Schueck was the recipient of the Rotary Club of Little Rock *Sidney M. Brooks Fellow Award*, the *Rotary Foundation of Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow Award* and the *St. Mary's High School Legacy Award*.

He was a member of the American Institute of Steel Contractors and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

"Tom will be missed in so many ways — his directness, his humor, his laugh, his leadership, his generosity, just his presence in general," stated Commission Chairman Robert S. Moore, Jr. "He could have this gruff outward demeanor, but he was as soft as they come on the inside. Tom has left his own unique positive mark on this State, this Commission, and each of us individually. We'll get a new Commission member, but there was only one Tom Schueck." ■

# 9 YEARS IN THE CHAIR

## AN INTERVIEW WITH SCOTT BENNETT

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS



**W**E SAT IN AN ALMOST EMPTY OFFICE; THE WALLS THAT WITNESSED NINE YEARS OF SCOTT BENNETT IN THE DIRECTOR'S SEAT ARE MOSTLY BARE. Trinkets that once gleamed on shelves, reminiscent of past accomplishments, now gone. A foreign silence hung in the air while sunlight poured through the wall of windows, filling the room with an ironic brightness.

"What is your truth, sir?"

Born and raised in Blytheville, Arkansas, and the youngest of four boys, Scott Bennett realized in the 8th grade what he wanted to be when he grew up:

"At that time, my perception of civil engineering was that it was about building things that people use," Bennett said. "When I was a kid, I loved Legos, Lincoln Logs, anything and everything that I could use to build something."



Bennett began his career at ARDOT as an engineering intern in Osceola. He graduated from the University of Arkansas with a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering in 1989, received his master's degree in Civil Engineering in 1994 and became the Assistant Chief Engineer for Planning in 2004.

"I always wanted to do the absolute best that I could do with what I was given at the time. I've tried to tell others to not compare themselves to other people; compare yourself to how you're doing the job you've been given."

Bennett spoke of mentors Tom Harrell, former Division Head for Planning and Research, and Frank Vozel, former Deputy Director and Chief Engineer.

"I learned early on that you are going to make mistakes, and when that's the case, own up to it and learn from it so that you don't make those mistakes again."

He shared an anecdote from college: an entire class had taken an exam and not done well. The next time the class

met, the professor walked into the room and wrote on the board, "A good engineer learns from his mistakes," and proceeded to allow the class a second chance at the exam. Once this class ended, the professor for the next class entered, saw the writing on the board and added, "...and never makes the same mistake twice."

### LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Historically, leaders have different styles or philosophies about how to successfully rally people together for a common cause. Renaissance statesman Niccolo Machiavelli became renowned for his writing that, as a leader, it is better to be feared than loved. Scott Bennett, however, had success with a different approach.

"I think a leader means getting out in front, supporting people and giving them everything they need to be successful, and then getting out of the way and letting them do their job. We've all got work that we have to do every day. You can sit there and manage

it and be fully successful at that, but does it get the Department where it needs to be?"

During his tenure, Director Bennett led ARDOT through many changes, including \$1.3 billion of construction with the Interstate Rehabilitation Program (IRP), \$1.8 billion of construction through the Connecting Arkansas Program (CAP) and most recently, Governor Asa Hutchinson's Long Term Highway Funding Plan—a portion which is set to appear on the Arkansas ballot this November.

"Acquiring funding and completing jobs is an easy answer for success, but I think it has been the ability to change our pay scale as much as we have—the ability to provide those opportunities for employees to be evaluated based on performance. Years ago, if you were an equipment operator, in order to get an increase in salary, you had to take the next step and be a crew leader or supervisor. Not everyone wants to be a supervisor; they want to be the best

*(continued on page 8)*



(L. to R.) Commissioner Philip Taldo, Vice Chairman Alec Farmer, Commissioner Marie Holder, Chairman Robert S. Moore Jr., and Commissioner Keith Gibson

# MARIE HOLDER NAMED TO HIGHWAY COMMISSION

BY DAVID NILLES

equipment operator that they can be, and they've got a better opportunity to do that now. Anything that we can do to make things better for our employees is really the biggest success that I could ever have."

Before implementing performance evaluations Department wide, Bennett requested that the Arkansas Highway Commission conduct an annual performance evaluation of himself. When the Department began using Network Fleet, an application that tracks travel and diagnostic data for ARDOT vehicles, Bennett instructed the Equipment and Procurement Division to first install the program on his own vehicle.

"I didn't want other staff to do something that I wasn't doing myself. I want to show everyone that I'm part of it, too."

## LEAVING A LEGACY

The Arkansas Highway Commission named Lorie Tudor, formerly the Deputy Director and Chief Operating

Officer, the next, and first female, Director of the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

"I told Lorie that she has prepared her whole career to do this job, and I told her to own it. This is it. This is going to be hers. This is her ship to steer now. She made the statement one day that she would never be me. I told her, "You don't need to be me. You need to be the best Lorie Tudor that you can be." She's going to do great."

When addressing the Department as a whole, Director Bennett had one main message:

"Don't put yourself above anyone else. We're a family. Keep doing what you're doing, and keep moving forward. Don't compare yourself to anything other than the job and the responsibility that you've been given. When every single person is doing that, everybody is rowing at the same time, and the whole ship moves in the right direction. Don't ever forget whom we work for—the millions of people that are on our

highways every day.

"What's my truth? My truth in this role, and in every one of them, has been seeking what's best for the traveling public. We get the chance to change the face of the earth."

The past 30 years, Bennett has played many roles: Engineer. Father. Mentor. Leader. Director. He grinned from across the oversized, executive desk separating us.

"I can retire from this role, but I'm not ready to quit work. The transportation industry is in my blood. I'm going to take this opportunity to do something a little different." ■

*"What is that feeling when you're driving away from people and they recede on the plain till you see their specks dispersing? - It's the too-huge world vaulting us, and it's good-bye. But we lean forward to the next crazy venture beneath the skies."*

- Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

**G**OVERNOR ASA HUTCHINSON NAMED MARIE HOLDER OF LITTLE ROCK AS THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE ARKANSAS HIGHWAY COMMISSION AT A NEWS CONFERENCE HELD MARCH 12 AT THE STATE CAPITOL.

"I have known our newest member of the Highway Commission for many years. Marie is a smart businesswoman, she is talented and she is tough. I think that is what we need in a new highway commissioner," Hutchinson told the crowd of business leaders, family and friends.

Holder is president of Holder Consulting, a position that she has held since 2015. She worked as the executive director and communications director of the Republican Party of Arkansas and as the deputy press secretary for former U.S. Senator Trent Lott. She previously served on the State Medical Board.

She will serve out the remainder of the term of former Commission Chairman Tom Schueck, who passed away in early March. Hutchinson shared that he will re-appoint Holder to a new 10-year term in January 2021.

Holder joins the Commission as Arkansans consider passing Issue One in the coming November election. The vote would extend the half-cent sales tax for highways and is part of a larger highway funding package approved earlier in 2019.

"I wanted to make sure we had a full complement of Highway Commissioners as we go into a very important time in Arkansas with Issue One on the ballot and with so many decisions the Highway Commission has to make daily," the Governor explained.

In addressing the crowd, Holder stated, "I am honored to serve the People of Arkansas and Governor Asa Hutchinson. It is a great honor to fill the term of Tom Schueck. Chairman

Schueck was an excellent advocate for the people of Arkansas. As a mother of two children, I will put safety first in every decision that I make. And as a businesswoman, I will work to promote transportation system fiscal responsibility and transparency."

With her appointment, Holder becomes the fourth woman to serve on the Arkansas Highway Commission. Willie Lawson served in the 1950s. Patsy Thomasson was named in 1977, and Prissy Hickerson began a 10-year term in 1997.

Governor Hutchinson commented on naming another woman to serve on the Commission.

"The fact that she brings diversity to the Commission is an added bonus. She is someone that has contributed greatly to the State of Arkansas and is a leader. She brings a lot to the table. I love her integrity and her perspective that she will bring to the Commission." ■

# Quickly, Robin, TO THE BAT BRIDGE!

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

**A**RKANSAS HAS FOUR FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES OF ENDANGERED BATS: THE INDIANA BAT, THE OZARK BIG-EARED BAT, THE NORTHERN LONG-EARED BAT AND THE GRAY BAT. Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 requires that ARDOT consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service if a proposed project would result in any interaction with a listed bat.

"Caves have a steady, ambient temperature. During the summer roosting months, our bridges create a similar climate. The heat from the pavement creeps into the hollow spaces under the bridges and maintains a temperature that bats like to huddle in during the day," explained Kayti Ewing, Natural Resources Section Head in the Environmental Division.

The Department conducts routine bridge inspections on a regular basis throughout the year.

"We were finding a lot of bats hanging out at our bridges," Ewing said. "Bats living in the bridges do not compromise the structural integrity of the bridge, but we're required to conduct a Section 7 consultation if the bats are an endangered species."

Bats are known to return to the same roosting spot each year (caves, bridges and trees). Between March and November, bats roost outside

of their hibernacula—the shelter of their winter quarters. Ozark Big-eared bats and Gray bats are cave obligates, meaning they roost in caves during the summertime, too. Bats roost during the day and forage for insects at night.

"The Indiana bat and the Northern Long-Eared bat are tree roosters, but since bridges mimic cave habitats, many Northern Long-Eared bats hang out in our bridges. Bats are known to come back to the same roosting spots, so we take inventory of which bridges they're using. This helps us efficiently conduct our Section 7 consultation, so when that bridge is slated for replacement, we can already be talking about which bid letting that project will go into and what measures we need to take to streamline that project," Ewing

explained.

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission sees bats roosting in bridges as a conservation opportunity. The structures are a benefit to the species and bring no harm to the integrity of the bridge.

"We don't want to harm any bats. We always make sure the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is aware of any activity. We will get any bats out of our bridges before we perform maintenance or tear them down for replacement," Ewing emphasized.

Ewing and her staff are able to track endangered bat activity through acoustic surveying and mist-net surveying. They can identify which roost trees are used and can then avoid that tree during construction.

"When a bridge has to be replaced, if we know bats are there, we can put that job in a bid letting during the season when the bats are in their caves. I can't imagine what our insect population would be if we didn't have bats to keep it in check," she said.

For more information on bat conservation, visit [www.batcon.org](http://www.batcon.org). ■

## ARKANSAS BATS ON THE ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST

Indiana Bat • 3/11/1967

Gray Bat • 4/28/1976

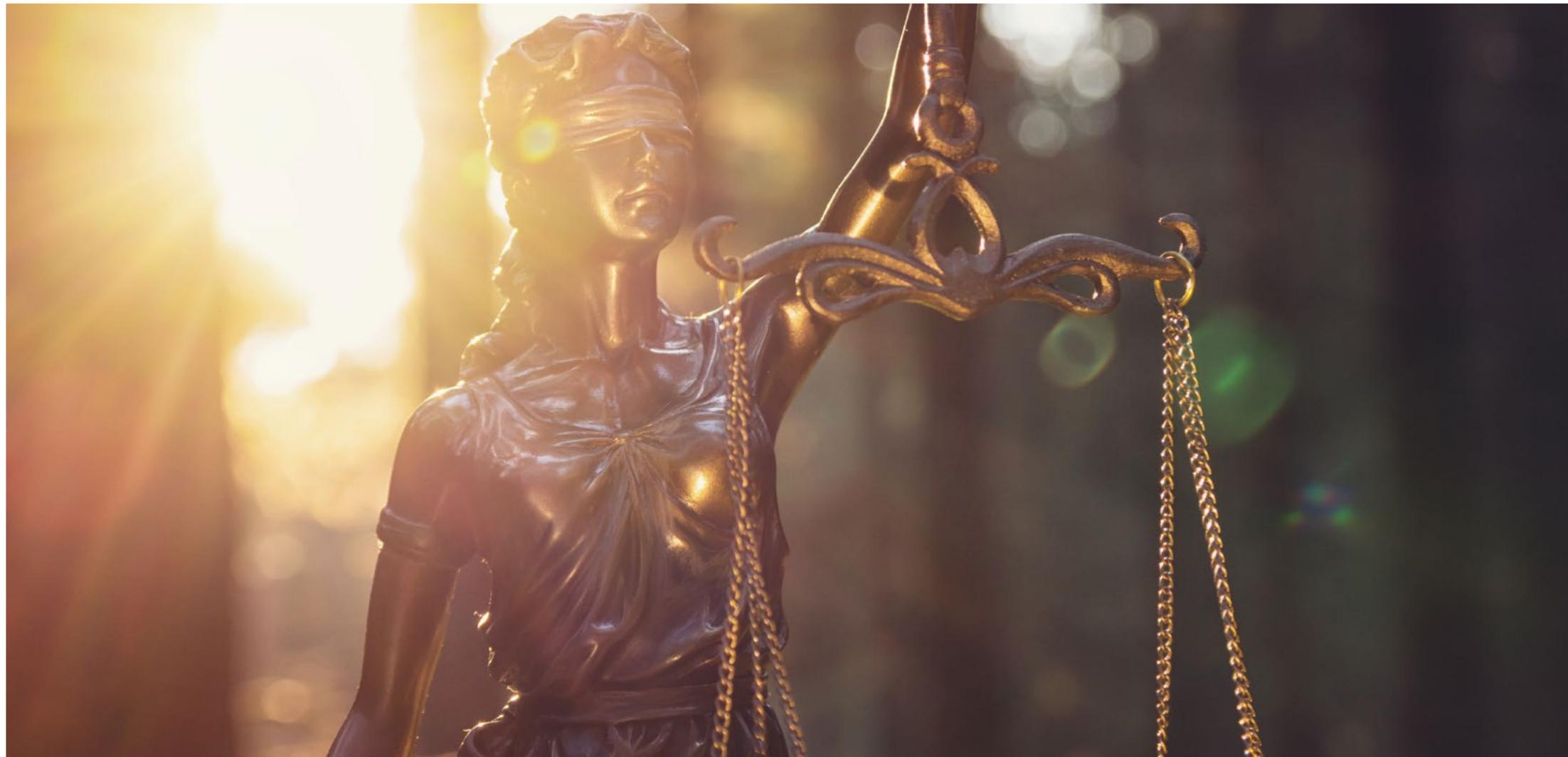
Ozark Big-Eared Bat • 11/30/1979

Northern Long-Eared Bat • 5/4/2015

# A MILE IN THEIR SHOES

## A Closer Look at Environmental Justice and Transportation

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS



### WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

**A**CCORDING TO THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA), ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IS DEFINED AS THE FAIR TREATMENT AND MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT OF ALL PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN OR INCOME, WITH RESPECT TO THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES.

At ARDOT, the Environmental Justice (EJ) Section exists to build positive working relationships with a community that will be affected by a transportation project.

Many years ago, before environmental justice was implemented, land located in a minority or low-income neighborhood cost less than land in an affluent area, so DOTs would plan and design transportation projects based on the cheaper option.

"It isn't fair to impact an area just because it's cheaper. We need to take a closer look to see if there's an opportunity to minimize the impact and get the community involved in the decision-making process," explained Ruby Jordan-Johnson, EJ Section Head for the Department.

### EJ AT ARDOT

"We currently have a local project that runs through a minority neighborhood. A portion of Highway 10 is located in the Pankey Community, and we want to make sure they are not being impacted disproportionately from another group," Jordan-Johnson said.

EJ staff are tasked with collaborating with planning and design engineers, coordinating public involvement meetings and building relationships with community members all around the State. Once an area has been identified, Jordan-Johnson and her team engage leaders within a community to build trust and a positive rapport. They work to encourage members to attend meetings, voice their concerns or opinions and ask any questions they may have.

"The section exists to let people know that they are seen and heard. Affected individuals deserve to be a part of the process."

### ETHIC OF RECIPROCITY

"Do unto others," and "the Golden Rule" have long contributed to altruistic philosophies.

"I always go back to 'treat others how you want to be treated.' It's vital to try to get into their mindset. I just try to put myself in their position, whether I'm working in the Delta or in Central Arkansas. I love what I do. Yes, I get paid, and yes, it's important. But it's bigger than that. It's personal. ARDOT applies these EJ federal guidelines, even when we don't have to, because it's the right thing to do. Yes, we're talking about transportation projects, but it's about helping people," Jordan-Johnson emphasized. ■

ARKANSAS' SCENIC BYWAYS:

# Taking the Scenic Route

BY DAVID NILLES

Arkansas is the Natural State. Our highways provide incredible vistas that feature lakes, rivers, mountains, forests and much more. Within our borders are a select few highways that stand at the top of the list when it comes to great scenery and local flavor. They are Arkansas' Scenic Byways. This series looks at each one, allowing you to pick a favorite, chart a course and hit the open road.

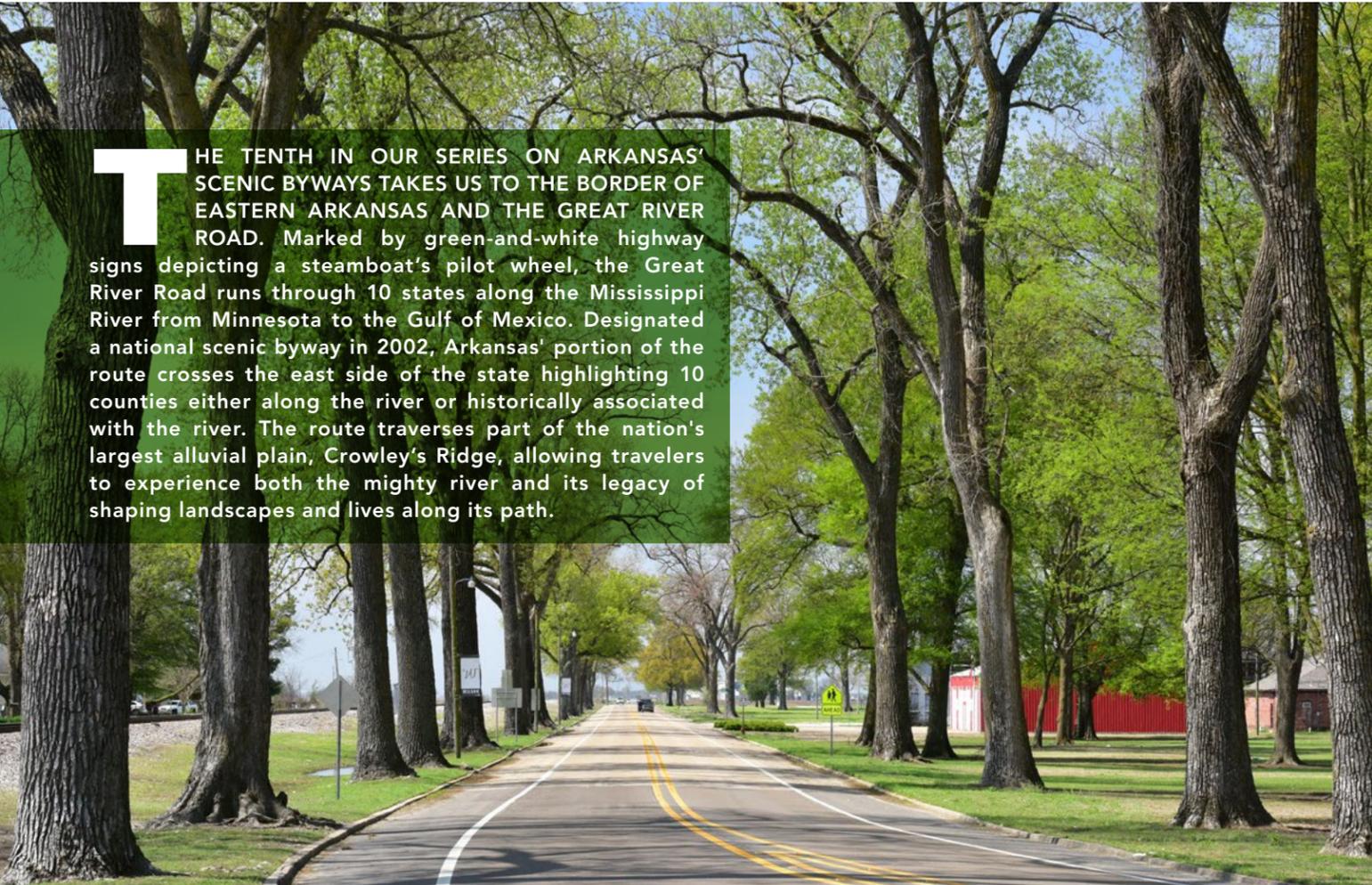
**ROUTE:** Highways 61, 77, 70, 147, 38, 79, 49, 44, 20, 318, 316, 1, 165, 82, 65

**POINTS:** Blytheville to Lake Village

**LENGTH:** 362 miles



Former Greyhound Bus Station at Blytheville.



**T**HE TENTH IN OUR SERIES ON ARKANSAS' SCENIC BYWAYS TAKES US TO THE BORDER OF EASTERN ARKANSAS AND THE GREAT RIVER ROAD. Marked by green-and-white highway signs depicting a steamboat's pilot wheel, the Great River Road runs through 10 states along the Mississippi River from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. Designated a national scenic byway in 2002, Arkansas' portion of the route crosses the east side of the state highlighting 10 counties either along the river or historically associated with the river. The route traverses part of the nation's largest alluvial plain, Crowley's Ridge, allowing travelers to experience both the mighty river and its legacy of shaping landscapes and lives along its path.

The Great River Road in Arkansas officially begins in Blytheville at the **U.S. HIGHWAY 61 CONCRETE ARCH** stretching over the roadway at the Missouri/Arkansas line. The arch reads "Entering Arkansas" on one side and "Entering Missouri" on the other. Built in 1924, it is on the National Register of Historic Places.

While in Blytheville, visit the **DELTA GATEWAY MUSEUM** housed in the historic Kress Building. Exhibitions focus on the history and heritage of the Arkansas Delta. Be sure to visit the **GREYHOUND BUS STATION** as well. The building is one of the finest examples of Art Moderne styling in the State. Constructed in 1937, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In Osceola, tourists will find the best view of the Mississippi River to be had in Arkansas. **SANS SOUCI LANDING** presents a wide panorama of the river. Historical markers provide information on the history of the area. The landing sits on the 10,000-acre Sans Souci plantation, established in 1854.

Traveling south to Wilson, stop in at the **HAMPSON ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM STATE PARK**. The museum shares a nationally renowned collection from the Nodena site. Nodena was a 15-acre village that once thrived on the Mississippi River in what is today Mississippi County. Hampson Archeological Museum interprets the lifestyles of this farming-based civilization that lived there from 1400 to 1650 A.D. Artifacts and exhibits tell the story of this early aboriginal population of farmers.

You may want to step into the **WILSON CAFÉ** if it is meal time. The menu features delectable items in a setting unique to this small eastern Arkansas town.

Heading south, the greatest maritime disaster in United States history is the focus of **THE SULTANA DISASTER MUSEUM** in Marion. The Sultana, a Civil War era sidewheel steamboat, exploded and burned on the Mississippi River on April 27, 1865. Acknowledged by Congressional Resolution as the greatest maritime disaster in United States history, nearly 1,200 of the more than 2,100 passengers and crew were killed in the explosion and fire, which sank the Sultana off the banks of the river at Marion. The museum tells the story of the disaster and the events that led up to it.

Just a short drive downriver from Marion is Helena-West Helena. Lying in a valley of Crowley's Ridge, Helena-West Helena's hilly landscape distinguishes it from the typically flat marshlands of



Map created by Don Dailey, ARDOT Senior Geospatial Specialist



Hampson Archeological Museum State Park at Wilson



Southern Tenant Farmers Museum in Tyronza.



Lakeport Plantation near Lake Village

most Mississippi and Arkansas Delta towns. Helena/West Helena is home to the **DELTA CULTURAL CENTER**, which is housed in an old train depot. The museum tells the story of the surrounding land and its people through exhibits and educational programs, capturing what makes the Arkansas Delta region unique. Just one block away is the **DELTA CULTURAL CENTER VISITORS CENTER**, home to “King Biscuit Time,” the longest running blues radio broadcast in the world.

Following the Great River Road into southeast Arkansas, make a visit to the **ROHWER RELOCATION CENTER** and **WORLD WAR II INTERNMENT MUSEUM**. The Relocation Center was one of two World War II-era incarceration camps built in Arkansas to house Japanese Americans from the West Coast, the other being the Jerome Relocation Center (Chicot and Drew counties). The Rohwer relocation camp cemetery, the only part of the camp that remains, is now a National Historic Landmark. The camp, along with the Jerome camp, housed some 16,000 Japanese Americans from September, 1942, to November, 1945, and was one of the last of ten such camps nationwide to close.

The Internment Museum is located in a renovated railroad depot in McGehee. The museum is home to “Against Their Will,” an exhibit about those interned at Jerome and Rohwer.

Our exploration of the Great River Road leads east out of McGehee to the Mississippi River town of **ARKANSAS CITY**, just a ten-minute drive on State Highway 4 to its end.

Between the years of 1873 and 1927, Arkansas City was one of the most important river ports on the Mississippi River. The town had a steamboat landing as early as 1834 and the river town prospered as a major trade and cultural center. That all changed with the Flood of 1927. With the rising water, the river changed its course and the port channel was, suddenly, no longer navigable. With no access to the river and the commerce it brought in, Arkansas City’s prosperity was diminished. Through the years, the town’s population has dwindled but there is still plenty to see in the old port city. Arkansas City now serves as the southern trailhead for

the **DELTA HERITAGE TRAIL**, an 84-mile hiking/biking trail and State Park. Starting at Arkansas City, the trail follows the Mississippi River levee northward to Rohwer where it connects to the “rail to trail” conversion of the former route of The Delta Eagle on the Union-Pacific railroad. The **ARKANSAS CITY TRAILHEAD** includes a multi-use building designed in the style of historic rail depots that houses administrative functions, bathhouse facilities and an open pavilion.

While in Arkansas City, explore the restored home of **JOHN H. JOHNSON**, founder and publisher of *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines, the historic **GOVERNOR X.O. PINDALL LAW OFFICE** and the **ARKANSAS CITY JAIL**.

Enjoy all the outdoors has to offer at **LAKE CHICOT STATE PARK**. At 20 miles long, Lake Chicot is the largest natural lake in Arkansas and the largest oxbow lake in North America. Its waters are a favorite with anglers. Located near the Mississippi River, the park is situated in one of the largest flyways in the country making it a perfect place for birdwatching. Park programs include lake and levee tours. Enjoy one of the 14 cabins or 122 campsites for overnight stays. The park is situated just northeast of Lake Village.

As the Great River Road passes through Lake Village, be sure to stop by **RHODA’S FAMOUS HOT TAMALES AND PIES**, a well-known eating establishment in southeast Arkansas. There is a reason the tamales are as popular as they are. Burgers, sandwiches and plate lunches are cooked up as well. Don’t think of leaving without dessert. An assortment of pies, cupcakes and fried pies should not be missed!

Just outside of Lake Village is the last stop on this trip, **LAKEPORT PLANTATION**. This historic house was built in 1859 for Lycurgus and Lydia Johnson. It is the only remaining Arkansas antebellum plantation home on the Mississippi River. Featuring Greek Revival architecture, the home is one of Arkansas’ premiere historic structures. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. The plantation gives a glimpse of the people and cultures that shaped plantation life in the Mississippi River Delta. ■



# BOBBY ALLISON:

## Serving in the Civil Air Patrol

BY DAVID NILLES

**O**N ANY GIVEN WORKDAY, YOU CAN FIND BOBBY ALLISON SERVING IN THE MAINTENANCE DIVISION AS ARDOT’S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS (ITS) OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR. It is here that he manages the Department’s ITS system including the two-way radio network, the VHF (Very High Frequency) system for the Department and Arkansas Highway Police and anything ITS-related such as traffic cameras, digital message boards and highway advisory radios. Allison has 17 years with the Department.

As if that weren’t enough to keep him busy, you may find him flying overhead in a Cessna 182T as a member of the Arkansas wing of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP). Allison has been in the Civil Air Patrol for 25 years and today serves as Wing Commander for Arkansas, coordinating ten squadrons across the State.

**A LOVE FOR MILITARY SERVICE**  
Allison’s involvement with the CAP began early in life.

“I started in the Civil Air Patrol when I was 13 years old. I was in their Cadet program for four years and loved it so

much that I stuck with it when my cadet time was up,” Allison shared.

“I was all about the military and service in general. My family has a diverse military background. Unfortunately, I could not join the military due to a medical disqualification so I decided to stick with CAP. I definitely enjoy the service and what the Air Patrol does.”

**THE ROLE OF THE CIVIL AIR PATROL**

The Civil Air Patrol is the country’s premier public service organization for conducting emergency services and disaster relief missions nationwide. As

(continued on page 18)



the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, CAP's citizen volunteers search for and find lost citizens, provide comfort on the ground in times of disaster and work to keep the homeland safe. Its 60,000 members devote their time, energy and expertise toward the well-being of their communities. They also promote aviation and related fields through aerospace education and help shape future leaders through CAP's Cadet Program.

#### IN THE AIR

"Nationwide, we have a fleet of more than 560 aircraft," Allison explained. "In Arkansas, we have seven aircraft based around the State. The majority are Cessna 172Ts and 182Ts, and they are the backbone of our fleet. Those aircraft enable us to do many of the missions the Air Force and other agencies charge us with, such as aerial damage assessment

and disaster relief, or search and rescue."

Allison serves as an aircrew member when airborne. Usually, he is positioned in the right hand seat serving as the mission observer.

"As observer, I work the radio and keep track of the mission," Allison explained. "Other times, I serve as the specialty mission scanner which means I'm in the back of the plane operating a camera in the plane's camera window. It takes time and practice to steady the camera, get the right settings and get a good shot with the aircraft vibrating and the wind passing over. So on any given mission, we have a pilot and mission observer up front and someone in back taking photos."

The CAP is best known for their search and rescue missions. There are other missions in the skies as well.

"We are involved with disaster relief and damage assessment," Allison added. "For example, during the Arkansas River flooding last year, CAP did 95 percent of the photography of the flooded areas. The wing put in more than 400 man-hours and 40 deployments flying aerial photography missions to provide incident assessment and awareness to State officials and the National Guard. CAP took thousands of digital images that were provided for the Wing's Unclassified Processing, Assessment and Dissemination capabilities. Those images went to the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management.

We also do other missions. We help the Air Force in escorting unmanned aerial aircraft or Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems and remotely piloted aircraft (drones). We also do counter drug operations and border patrol

operations. There are other missions where CAP assists Air Force units practicing intercept air defense. We are the targets, and they track and find us."

#### SERVICES ON THE GROUND

In addition to work in the air, CAP assists in local communities with work on the ground.

"Our aircraft need someone on the ground as a liaison during a search and rescue mission or during disaster relief. We have ground teams that train specifically for that. We also have Civilian Emergency Response Training for disaster situations. The trainings are hosted by the Red Cross or another emergency management agency."

#### THE CAP CADET PROGRAM

Civil Air Patrol's Cadet Program is aimed at young people ages 12 to 20 and transforms youth into future aerospace leaders through a curriculum that focuses on leadership, aerospace, fitness and character. As Cadets participate in these areas, they advance through a series of achievements, earning honors and increased responsibilities along the way. Many of the nation's astronauts, pilots, engineers and scientists first explored their careers through CAP. Currently there are 1,000 local squadrons nationwide involving 25,000 young people.

"I got my start in the Cadet program," Allison shared. "We are always recruiting young people. We recruit through schools or set up at airports for air shows. Word of mouth is a huge recruiting tool as well. In Arkansas, we have approximately 460 students involved.

"We promote flying and get Cadets up in the air whenever we can for

orientation flights. We also provide scholarship opportunities to help them get their pilots licenses. Many go on to become pilots. If these Cadets want to join the military later in life, the Cadet program gives them a step above everyone else when they hit age 18 or 19. As a former Cadet, I can't say enough about this program!"

#### AEROSPACE EDUCATION

Civil Air Patrol's award-winning aerospace education program promotes aerospace, aviation and STEM-related careers with standards-based, hands-on curriculum and activities for students.

"Our wing is one of the leaders when it comes to aerospace and STEM. We have a program allowing teachers access to STEM kits, our library of aerospace topics and different resources. We have kits for science, technology, engineering and math ready to go into classrooms. We work with NASA's Arkansas Space Grant Consortium which provides us grant money each year to help provide resources for teachers."

#### A LOVE FOR THE PATROL

Allison was promoted to Colonel last October, the same time he was named Wing Commander.

"I love what we do and think we provide a great service to the nation. I enjoy being a part of it. I believe in our mission as a volunteer force, and I enjoy giving back to our community."

As Wing Commander, Allison could not help but put in a plug for future volunteers.

"We have jobs doing any number of things — administrative, personnel, logistics, public affairs, photographers, pilots — every little bit helps and adds up!" ■

# HERBICIDES MEET HIGHWAYS

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

**IT ISN'T EVERY DAY THAT ENVIRONMENTALISTS GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO COLLABORATE WITH SEVERAL STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES DURING THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT'S (NEPA) 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, BUT SUCH IS THE CASE WITH ARDOT'S ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION.**

Maintenance staff across the State began noticing that grass was growing through the cracks in the highways, causing damage to the structural integrity of the pavement. The challenge? The highways were located within the boundaries of the U.S. Forestry Service.

## CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

The importance of safety and land conservation is not lost on Advanced Environmental Impact Analyst Susan Staffeld. She and Natural Resources Section Head Kayti Ewing accepted the task of finding a solution to extend the life of the pavement while adhering to federal guidelines.

"The Environmental Division acts as a liaison between the Maintenance Division and the U.S. Forestry Service, bridging the gap between the two entities that must work together to complete the job safely and properly," said Ewing.

"An environmental assessment, complete with NEPA processes, had to be completed prior to any spraying of herbicides," explained Staffeld. "NEPA provides a process for federal agencies to assess the environmental impacts of their projects."

Ewing and Staffeld conducted field work, including extensive botanical surveys of plant life in the affected areas.

"Surprisingly, it was non-native, invasive species that were causing problems with the pavement," Ewing said. "Herbicides, when used correctly, are an effective tool for combating non-native, invasive species. Many land conservationists use it then return a habitat to its natural shape."

Non-native, invasive species are responsible for multiple plant species being listed on the endangered species list.

"They're wiping out our native habitats," Staffeld added.

## BUT FIRST, SAFETY

Maintenance personnel are allowed to spray herbicides only after completing specific training through the Arkansas Plant Board and receiving certification and licensure to do so.

"There will not be any kind of broadcast spraying within the U.S. Forests. A lot of collaboration occurred so that the herbicide use will be very minimal; in many cases, since the biggest cause for concern were the cracks in the pavement, we're mostly spraying the pavement," Staffeld said.

"The NEPA process provided a feedback mechanism for the public. Part of the original proposal was actually modified based on the comments from the public. There are also a lot of restrictions in place to make sure that certain resources are not impacted, like human public water supplies, endangered species—both plant and animal—protected bodies of water,

and wilderness areas. NEPA has improved the project by requiring that all of these aspects are considered and the entire picture is seen," Staffeld emphasized.

She also explained that the U.S. Forestry Service also requires a risk assessment on the specific herbicides chosen for use within its boundaries.

"They have an independent third party researcher study the toxic limits for humans and wildlife to determine if it can be used around water, and if the use of the herbicide needs to be more stringent than the instructions on the label. It's all about safety."

## TARGET ACQUIRED

Each herbicide's manufacturer's label indicates the effective rate, established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and instructions on how and when to apply it to a targeted species. One of Ewing's responsibilities was to ensure that ARDOT was not spraying any rare populations.

"We use equipment that is specific and targeted to minimize any adverse effects," Ewing said. "Both the process and the herbicides used are tightly monitored and held accountable. The environmental assessment is a living agreement—annual reporting, annual monitoring; there will always be constant contact between our Maintenance Division and the Forestry Service." ■

**"A lot of collaboration occurred so that the herbicide use will be very minimal..."**

- Susan Staffeld, Advanced Environmental Impact Analyst

# INTERSTATE 630 SIGNAGE HONORS GOLD STAR FAMILIES

BY MAJ (RET.) KEITH DOVER, PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIRMAN,  
AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS

**INTERSTATE 630 IN LITTLE ROCK NOW HAS A NEW DESIGNATION—“GOLD STAR FAMILIES MEMORIAL HIGHWAY,” HONORING THE FAMILIES OF THOSE WHO HAVE MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY.**

The signage is located at both ends of the 7.4-mile stretch of highway. The eastbound sign is located near the John Barrow Road overpass, and the westbound sign is near the pedestrian bridge at MacArthur Park. They were erected to coincide with the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument Dedication on the grounds of the Arkansas State Capitol in September of 2019. Arkansas State Senator Dave Wallace and Arkansas State Representative Marcus Richmond co-sponsored the legislation to have the signage erected.

Although some travelers may know this stretch of highway as Interstate 630 or I-630 locally, many Arkansans do not know that the highway was originally named the “Wilbur D. Mills Interstate 630 Freeway,” back on September 30,

1985, when then - U.S. Representative Wilbur D. Mills was on hand to deliver the dedicatory address. The new designation is the second of its type in the State of Arkansas as another Gold Star Families Memorial Highway is located on a five-mile segment of Scenic Highway 163, near the State Veterans Cemetery at Birdeye in northeast Arkansas.

Hundreds of Arkansans gathered for the recent dedication of the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument on the Arkansas State Capitol grounds. Many of them came from the far reaches of the State, and some expressed their feelings about the signage following the event.

“I grew up in Central Arkansas and traveled this highway countless times with my Dad, so to drive it now and see this tribute is really special,” said Jennifer Legate, daughter of CW4 Patrick Kordsmeier, who was killed in a mortar attack in Taji, Iraq, while serving his country in the Global War on Terror.

“We as Gold Star Families want our loved one’s sacrifice remembered, and

the naming of this highway serves as a constant reminder to the community that freedom is not free.”

The Gold Star Families Memorial Monument is located on the west side of the Arkansas State Capitol and was created by the Hershel Woody Williams Foundation. It encourages, with the assistance of the American public and community leaders, establishing permanent Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments in communities throughout the United States, conducting Gold Star Families Outreach across the country, providing Living Legacy scholarships to eligible Gold Star Children and advocating for educational benefits for all Gold Star Family members.

“The Gold Star Families Memorial Monument is meant to honor the memory of those Arkansans who have paid the ultimate price by giving their life in defense of our great nation, while at the same time recognizing and honoring the families of the fallen and the many hardships they continue to face in the absence of their loved ones,” said Paul Garrett, Arkansas Gold Star Families Memorial Monument



# Quiet Please...

## Traffic Noise Analysis and Abatement

BY DAVID NILLES



**WHEN THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONSIDERS IMPROVING ITS NETWORK OF HIGHWAYS, THERE ARE A HOST OF ITEMS THAT MUST BE CONSIDERED. Many of them have to do with the environment, and among those environmental considerations is highway traffic noise. How is a new highway, or additional lanes on an existing highway, going to impact the surrounding area?**

Early in the planning stages of many highway projects, ARDOT must carry out a noise study. The purpose of the study is to determine if the project, when completed, will create excessive noise problems for area residents. If the predicted noise levels cause an

impact, the Department must consider measures that can be taken to lessen those adverse impacts.

There are a variety of options that ARDOT can consider to lessen the impacts of highway traffic noise. Possible noise abatement measures include noise barriers, highway design alterations and traffic management measures. Effective noise barriers can reduce noise levels by 10 to 15 decibels, cutting the loudness of traffic noise in half.

Though ARDOT has used some berms in the past, most of the Department's noise abatement efforts center around barriers, more specifically walls.

"ARDOT's first noise barrier was constructed of metal and installed on U.S. Highway 71 in Fayetteville in 1979."

stated Matt Strawn, an Advanced GIS-Data Management Specialist in the Environmental Division.

"In 2004, we installed a wall made of decorative concrete blocks on Dave Ward Drive (State Highway 60) in Conway. There is also one made of precast concrete on Interstate 40 in North Little Rock," Strawn added. "The recent widening project on Interstate 630 in Little Rock features our newest wall, and it is made out of lightweight PVC panels."

### DETERMINING THE NEED

ARDOT is required to assess the effect of traffic noise on all highway projects of certain types receiving federal aid funds or having federal oversight. Some examples of these projects are: construction of a highway at a new

location, substantial horizontal or vertical alteration of an existing highway, adding capacity to an existing highway and the addition or relocation of interchange ramps.

"After a project has been identified that requires a noise analysis, study areas and receptors are identified," Strawn added.

A receptor is a location such as a park, residence, school or campground. ARDOT identifies possible receptors using Department aerial photography, GIS databases, survey data and field reconnaissance.

### MEASURING NOISE LEVELS

Since highway projects are designed to accommodate types and volumes of traffic anticipated for future growth, typically 20 years, ARDOT must assess both current and future noise levels.

"A model is created using a software called Traffic Noise Model (TNM) to predict sound levels and to analyze possible abatement measures. The model is validated by using real world sound measurements and traffic counts to assure accurate predicting," Strawn explained.

TNM reports predict noise levels at model receivers in decibels (dB). A receiver is considered to have a noise impact when the sound level exceeds the threshold for that land use as defined in ARDOT policy. If traffic noise impacts are found, abatement must be considered.

### ABATEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Abatement measures must be evaluated for both feasibility and reasonableness. Feasibility means that the proposed abatement must provide at least a 5 dB reduction for at least one impacted receptor and not pose any major problems related to design, construction, safety, drainage, maintenance or other factors.

"If the abatement is found feasible, then it must be tested for reasonableness based on three criteria set forth in ARDOT's policy," Strawn pointed out.

1. The abatement must be effective in reducing noise levels a minimum of 8 db for at least one receptor.
2. It must be cost effective; the current threshold is the abatement can cost no more than \$36,000 per benefited receptor.
3. If abatement is found to be feasible and reasonable in cost and effectiveness, then the benefitted property owners and residents will be asked to vote for approval. There must be a consensus in support of the proposed abatement. If ARDOT receives greater than 50% in support, the abatement will be built.

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## HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THE WALLS FOR BLOCKING NOISE?

The effectiveness of sound walls at reducing highway traffic noise depends on a number of factors. Those include construction materials, distance to the wall from the noise source and distance from the receptor to the wall.

“Lightweight walls, like the ones built along Interstate 630 in Little Rock, have two functions: sound blocking and sound absorption,” Strawn points out.

For sound blocking, the walls have a STC (Sound Transmission Class) rating of 32; ARDOT requires a minimum rating of 30. Simply put, the STC is how much sound in decibels a wall will block from getting to the other side. In theory, if the highway side of the wall’s sound level is 82 db, the opposite side should be 50 db.

“For sound absorption, they have a Noise Reduction Coefficient (NRC) rating of 0.95, where 0 absorbs no sound waves and 1 means all of the sound waves are absorbed.”

## ARDOT’S NEWEST NOISE ABATEMENT WALL

Arkansas’ most recent noise abatement walls were constructed as part of the widening of Interstate 630 in Little

Rock. The walls, erected on the north side of the Interstate near the intersection with Mississippi Avenue, measure 5,500 feet in total length and have an average height of 16 feet. They are made from long-lasting, UV-resistant PVC. Strawn elaborated on the construction.

“This was our first job using lightweight noise panels. Part of this job required a noise wall to be constructed on the bridge that goes over Rodney Parham Road. That meant part of the wall was going to have to be constructed using lightweight panels since it would be attached to the bridge structure. The contractor had the opportunity to bid either precast concrete or lightweight panels for the rest of the walls. They chose to bid the entire project with the lightweight panels.

“The walls also had to be absorptive due to the presence of noise sensitive land uses opposite the wall that didn’t warrant abatement. The system chosen by the contractor is manufactured by Atlantic Industries Limited and is constructed with tongue and groove PVC panels and standard steel posts.”

Most residents living near barrier walls seem to feel that highway noise barriers effectively reduce traffic noise. The barriers have become a cost-effective way to improve the quality of life for people who live adjacent to busy highways. ■

Lightweight noise panels on Interstate 630



# A NATIONAL TREASURE RUNS UNDER IT: BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION OVER THE BUFFALO

BY DAVID NILLES

**M**OST ARKANSANS WOULD AGREE THAT THE BUFFALO RIVER IS ONE OF ARKANSAS’ SPECIAL TREASURES. Making its way through the Ozark National Forest of northwest Arkansas, it is a place of untouched beauty that attracts paddlers, campers and hikers from across the country.

Because the river is loved by so many, it was designated the country’s first National River in 1972. This special status protects the river from commercial or residential development or any other destructive operations.

When the time came to replace the State Highway 7 Bridge over the Buffalo River near Pruitt, ARDOT knew the bridge project would have to be handled with special care to protect the national river running below it.

## HISTORY OF THE PRUITT BRIDGE

Known as a landmark in Newton County, the Pruitt Bridge is a two-lane

“Pennsylvania through truss” structure that was built in 1931 by the Virginia Bridge & Iron Company. It stretches 374 feet as it crosses over the Buffalo and carries 2,400 vehicles a day. It was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1990.

The unique bridge has served its purpose well over the past 89 years, but time and traffic have taken their toll on the structure.

“The old bridge is in very poor condition and is too narrow for today’s traffic,” District Nine Engineer Steve Lawrence explained.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR A NEW BRIDGE

Because the Highway 7 Bridge is located over a national river, plans for a new structure required not only bridge design considerations but extra environmental considerations as well. The Environmental Assessment for the new bridge project weighed heavily with ARDOT staff.

“The Environmental Assessment and Least Overall Harm Section 4(f) Evaluation we prepared for the project identified a number of measures that had to be considered,” stated Mary Pearson, an Environmental Impact Specialist for ARDOT.

Section 4(f) is part of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 that was passed to protect public parks, recreation areas, wildlife/waterfowl refuges and important historic sites from being harmed by transportation projects.

“Because there were multiple project alternatives and several Section 4(f) protected resources in the project area, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requested that we follow the Least Overall Harm Section 4(f) evaluation procedures,” Pearson explained.

In such a situation, FHWA may approve only the alternative that causes the least overall harm in light of the preservation purpose of the statute.

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The previous bridge served its purpose for 89 years.

**"...we worked very closely with the Park and State Historic Preservation Office personnel to determine the relative significance of the protected resources, how to reduce impacts and consider mitigation measures."**

The new bridge is expected to be completed in 2020.

According to Pearson, "This was the first time ARDOT had used the 'least overall harm' evaluation procedures, and we worked very closely with the Park and State Historic Preservation Office personnel to determine the relative significance of the protected resources, how to reduce impacts and consider mitigation measures. This was a complex process given that the Park has so many protected features, qualities and activities that make it important for recreation."

Historic sites that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and therefore considered stand-alone Section 4(f) projects were also in the project area. The Section 4(f) evaluation went through a rigorous FHWA legal sufficiency review, a public comment period in conjunction with the Environmental Assessment (EA), and ultimately identified the preferred alternative.

Options for the Buffalo River bridge replacement project underwent a variety of considerations for several years. Among them was combining it with a passing lanes job, or combining it with the Mill Creek bridge replacement project nearby. Separating it from other projects was also considered, but the final decision was to replace the Buffalo River Bridge

and the Mill Creek low water crossing as a single project.

"The EA and Section 4(f) evaluation process took approximately four years," Pearson shared. "It involved preparing a preliminary draft, a completed draft and final documents with review periods and agency coordination meetings at each stage."

Because the Pruitt Bridge is considered unique to nearby residents, ARDOT also held a public meeting prior to construction to gain input from residents living in the area.

### BUILDING THE NEW BRIDGE

The new Buffalo River Bridge is being constructed 200 feet east of the old bridge. It will be 45 feet wide and include a five-foot wide sidewalk on one side. Instead of 10-foot traffic lanes, the new bridge will have 12-foot lanes and include 8-foot shoulders.

Construction of the new bridge began in early 2019. The project was awarded to Crouse Construction of Harrison for \$13.5 million.

"The contractor is making good progress on both of the bridges and their approach work," Lawrence added. "Most of

the foundation work is complete, and work is currently being done on the columns and caps of the substructure."

The Environmental Assessment and "Least Overall Harm" Section 4(f) prepared for the project identified a number of visual impact mitigation measures. Among them was the design of the bridge.

ARDOT staff members Jim Pool and Luke Bailey, Bridge Design Engineers in the Bridge Division, coordinated with Park personnel in selecting the new bridge's architectural finishes and colors. A patterned form liner, used to produce detailed textures reflective of the rock formations in the area, will be used on the pedestrian and traffic barrier railings. Weathered steel and earth-toned concrete stains were also chosen to help the bridge blend in with the natural surroundings.

### PROTECTING THE RIVER BELOW AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

With the knowledge that the bridge is being constructed over a national river, special considerations had to be made to ensure protection of the river and surrounding environment. That began with clearing for the project.

"The endangered Indiana bat and threatened Northern long-eared bat potentially live in the project area," Pearson explained. "To prevent disturbing these bats during their active season as they're foraging and roosting in the surrounding forests, tree-clearing is prohibited from March 15 through November 14, and construction activities are prohibited one hour before sunset and sunrise. Blasting operations are also prohibited between November 30 and March 15 to avoid disturbing their hibernations in nearby caves."

Special monitoring of the river's water quality was the role of the Stormwater Section of the Environmental Division.

"The Buffalo River's status as an Extraordinary Resource Water requires turbidity monitoring during instream construction activities," Pearson added. "Sarah DeVries and Lindsay Zweifel in our Natural Resources section trained the construction contractors and provided equipment so monitoring can be carried out as needed."

Work along the river's shoreline also had to be considered. Native stone riprap (rock used to stabilize shorelines) will be used to prevent the visual disruption that standard riprap can cause in settings such as the Park. The riprap voids will be composted and planted with special grass and seed mixes to assist with native re-vegetation and further naturalize its appearance.

"Plating rock fill areas and ditch liners with native stone also helps retain the Park's natural appearance," Pearson added.

Special seeding requirements had to be put into place including minimizing the disturbance of native vegetation and ensuring that re-vegetation includes only native species.

"We are replanting areas with native grass and wildflower seed mixes, and following procedures to prevent introducing non-native or invasive species. A 50-foot vegetated buffer zone was also established along the river to protect both the riparian area and the Buffalo River's water quality."

Estimated completion of the new bridge is expected at the end of 2020. The existing bridge will be removed once the new bridge is open to traffic. Though the area will lose a bit of history, it will enjoy a brand new bridge, one that blends in well with the waters of the Buffalo. ■



# FIRST TWO ARKANSAS WELCOME CENTERS CELEBRATE 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

BY DAVID NILLES

EVERYONE KNOWS THE SAYING “TIME FLIES WHEN YOU ARE HAVING FUN.” For volunteers working in the Arkansas Welcome Centers at El Dorado and Texarkana, “time flies when you are welcoming tourists to our great State.”

The Welcome Centers in both cities recently celebrated 15-year anniversaries. They were the first two Centers reconstructed as a result of Arkansas Act 345 of 2001. Signed by then-acting Governor Mike Huckabee, the act proposed \$9 million from the State’s general improvement fund to help pay for the rebuilding of eight Tourist Information Centers (TIC).

In 1997, ARDOT conducted a study of conditions at the 13 existing TICs

and concluded that improvements were needed. Working together with the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, ARDOT developed a plan to rebuild eight of the TICs. The first decision was to rename them Arkansas Welcome Centers. The first two new Welcome Centers hosted ribbon cuttings in late 2004.

Fast forward to 2020 and Arkansas has 10 of the redesigned Welcome Centers featuring rock and log exteriors. Inside, the Centers offer visitors large screen televisions, racks of tourist brochures, computer kiosks and sitting areas.

The Centers at El Dorado and Texarkana celebrated their anniversaries with cake and other snacks for visiting tourists. ■

## ARKANSAS WELCOME CENTERS

- 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

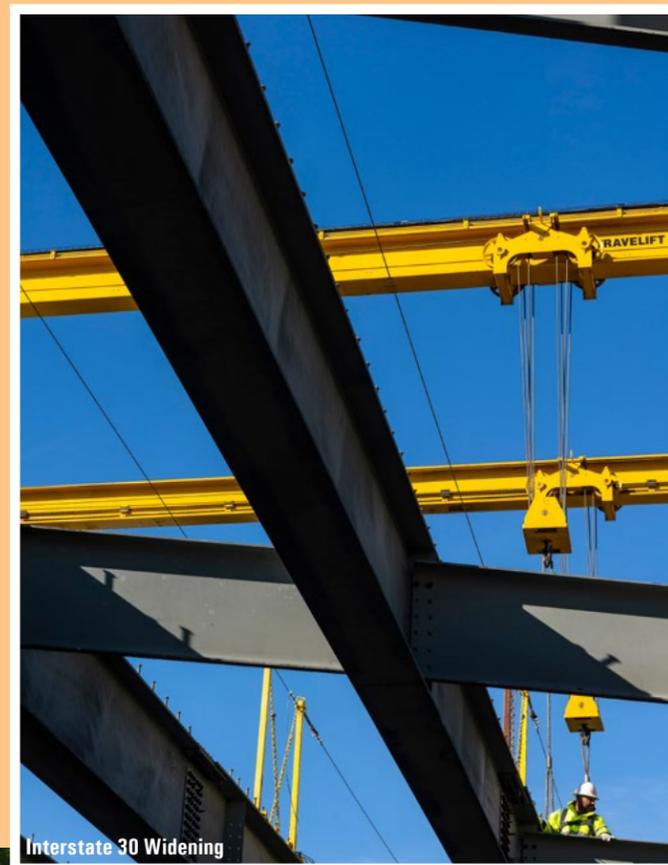
## DISTRICT 6

# CONSTRUCTION

## CORNER



Interstate 30 Widening



Interstate 30 Widening

Driving along Interstate 630 in Little Rock, it was easy to see the progress crews were making as they worked to widen the Interstate to eight lanes between Baptist Health Medical Center and University Avenue. The two-mile project was awarded to Manhattan Road & Bridge Company in the spring of 2018 for \$87.3 million. Work on the project’s noise abatement wall near the Mississippi Avenue interchange was a major part of the construction phase. The wall averages 16 feet in height and measures 5,500 feet in length. The Interstate 630 widening project was completed in the spring of this year.

In Saline County, work continues on a \$187.3 million project that is widening Interstate 30 to six lanes between Sevier Street, in Benton, and the U.S. Highway 70 interchange. Johnson Brothers Corporation was awarded the contract in December of 2018. The five-mile project includes reconstruction of three interchanges and replacement of five bridge structures. With completion of this project, Interstate 30 will feature six travel lanes from North Little Rock westward to the interchange with U.S. Highway 70. Work is expected to be complete in early 2023. ■



Interstate 630 Widening



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