

The Connection

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020

<p>John E. Watkins President 604 Country Drive Hope, AR 71801 870-777-2814 watkins-john@att.net</p>	<p>David Mayo Sr. Vice-President 21 Shawnee Forest Cv. Little Rock, AR 72212 501-224-5215 david.mayo@sbcglobal.net</p>	<p>Johnnie L. Parks Vice-President 6608 Chateau Drive Little Rock, AR 72209 (501)565-9657 vm parks7@att.net</p>	<p>Doyle Hughes Secretary/Treasurer 9112 Leatrice Dr. Little Rock, AR 72227 501-227-3819 etusnavy@aol.com</p>	<p>Larry Dickerson Member-Retirement Board 238 Trelon Circle Little Rock, AR 72223 501-425-3778 dickerson.larryd2016@gmail.com</p>
---	--	--	---	--

Message from the President

John E. Watkins

Greetings to all AHTD-ARDOT retirees. Hard to believe that we are already a quarter of the way into 2020. There are always items of interest to all retirees. We strive to inform everyone through chapter meetings and the two newsletters which are published during the calendar year. Also you can go to the ARDOT website and check on the retiree's section under divisions. I would like to pass along a little information on two things, one of which is new and the other that we hear about regularly from Robyn and Ronda Walthall.

The first is a new law passed at the federal level, which I believe could be very beneficial to our "younger" retirees. In December President Trump signed into law the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act. This new law focuses on retirement planning in three areas: 1. Modifies rules for required minimum distributions for retirement plans (IRAs and 401(k)s), 2 – expands plan access, 3.) increase lifetime income options in retirement plans. For Information as to how this act affects you, contact your financial advisor, or if you are computer savvy, Google the SECURE Act. For those who haven't passed 70 1/2, the age to start making withdrawals from these accounts is pushed out to age 72.

The second is a very familiar subject, keeping beneficiaries up to date. Most of, if not all of the problems do not show up until you or the names beneficiary is deceased. I will list a few of the most common mistakes: 1) not naming a beneficiary on all accounts, 2) forgetting to name a contingent (secondary) beneficiary on all accounts, 3) not using the full name, 4) failure to review the beneficiary information on a regular basis and keeping it up to date and, 5) not telling your partner and family about the beneficiary information. I am sure that we will again hear about this subject as it is a timeless one and taking the time to keep up to date can save some embarrassing situations and also alleviate possible legal problems.



WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER! #covid19

Message from the Legislative Joint Retirement Committee

The Chairmen of the Joint Legislative Committee on Public Retirement & Social Security Programs have addressed a recurring "rumor" that there would be an attempt to merge the State's retirement systems, which include ASHERS, APERS, ATRS and LOPFI. The Committee has made assurances at each of the recent Town Hall meetings that the systems are distinct, separate and must be maintained as such. **No** bills have been discussed, drafted or introduced; **nor** is there any intention of doing so. If anyone tells you otherwise, you are encouraged to call your State Senator or Representative.

Address and Beneficiary Changes

Attention all retirees, if you move, please notify
RoShunda Colclough at the

Arkansas State Highway Employees' Retirement Office at
(501) 569-2532. Besides keeping your address and phone number current,
you also need to keep your beneficiaries current. You should contact the
Group Insurance Office at (501) 569-2417 for beneficiary updates on your
group health or life insurance. Since 2001, the Retirement System
provides an additional lump-sum benefit of \$7,500 payable to your
beneficiary at the retiree's death. If you have any questions about this
benefit or the beneficiary for this benefit, please call (501) 569-2532.

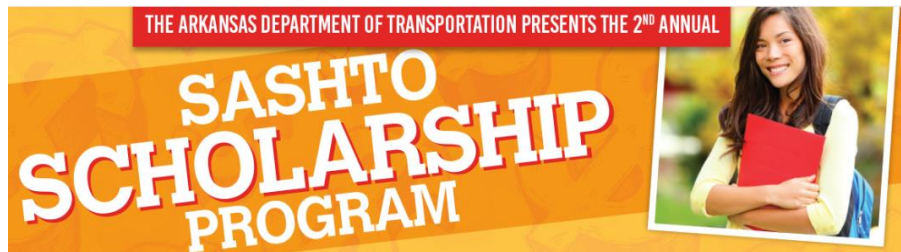


From left to right: David Mayo – Sr. Vice President,
John Watkins – President, and Doyle Hughes – Secretary/ Treasury.
Not Pictured: Johnny Parks – Vice President



AHTD Retirees' Association Facebook Page

The ARDOT Retirees' Association has a Facebook page that was set up and is maintained by Bettye Johnson. Our Facebook page is being enjoyed by many across the State. If you haven't checked it out, please do so at www.facebook.com and search for "AHTD Retirees Association." You may see some folks you haven't seen in a while. Please send any pictures and info to Bettye Johnson at bcj41@cablelynx.com.



Applications are currently being accepted for the second year of the ARDOT SASHTO Scholarship Program.

ARDOT employees with school-aged children may apply for the scholarships, which are aimed at assisting parents with the expense of sending their kids to college. In addition, new for 2020, dependents of retirees and employees killed in the line of duty will also be eligible.

"Once again this summer, the Department will be awarding scholarships of \$500 each to the children of current and retired ARDOT employees to help defray the cost of college," ARDOT Director Scott Bennett announced. "We have 31 scholarships that will be awarded through a random drawing involving all eligible applications."

The scholarship money is provided to member states of the Southeastern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (SASHTO). Arkansas is one of 14 member states along with Puerto Rico. The scholarships represent remaining monies from the annual SASHTO Conference and are divided among the member states to promote their scholarship programs.

To be eligible for scholarship consideration, an applicant must:

- Be a dependent child of a full-time regular employee who has a minimum of two (2) current, consecutive years of credited ARDOT service as of January 1, 2020; the dependent child of a retired employee who had a minimum of two (2) consecutive years credited to ARDOT service upon retirement; OR the dependent child of a former, fulltime ARDOT employee who lost his/her life while on duty either through accident on the job or active military; and
- Be age seventeen (17) through twenty-three (23); and
- Be accepted to and/or registered for the upcoming fall school term at an accredited college, university, vocational school or technical school as a full-time student.

The ARDOT SASHTO scholarship application is available on the Human Resources Division's Intranet page at <https://ashtd.sharepoint.com/sites/HumanResources2>. A completed application and all accompanying materials must be submitted **no later than July 1 at 4:00 p.m.** for consideration for the fall semester.

"We are excited to offer this program as part of ARDOT's strategic goal of being an employer of choice and as part of our commitment to creating more education opportunities for employees and their families," Bennett added.

Winners will be chosen by random drawing by July 31 of this year.

For more information on the program, or if you have questions, contact Carla Edwards in the Human Resources Division at 501-569-2431 or at carla.edwards@ardot.gov.

A Message from Director Scott Bennett



To the ARDOT Family:

As many of you know, when you are nearing 30 years of service the question of when you are going to retire comes up fairly often. Many of you have heard me jokingly respond to that question with the answer, “Anytime between this afternoon and the time I turn 65.” Most people will tell you that you’ll when it’s time. And I now know that its time. I informed the Commission this morning that I will be retiring after almost 32 years with ARDOT, including serving you and this great State as Director since 2011.

ARDOT has had many successes during my tenure. All of the accomplishments have come from a team effort. Your talent and hard work are what makes ARDOT successful, and I am fortunate to have been a part of the team. I realize that there is still work to do in continuing our progress.

There is no doubt that you all are ready for any challenge and opportunity that comes your way.

When you spend this much time in one place, you develop many wonderful relationships that truly are just like family. Thank you all for your hard work and for your commitment to serving the people of Arkansas. Thank you for helping me be successful. And thank you for being a part of my family... and letting me be a part of yours... for so many years.

Stay positive, keep moving forward, and be safe.

-Scott

Tudor Named ARDOT Director



The Arkansas Highway Commission has named Lorie Tudor as Director of the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT). The Commission made the announcement following a special meeting held Thursday, February 20, 2020. Tudor will succeed Scott Bennett, who announced his retirement effective March 20, 2020.

“One of the primary functions of the Commission is to make sure we have the right leadership in place at ARDOT,” said Commission Chairman Tom Schueck. “Scott Bennett had been that person for the past nine years, and Lorie Tudor had been at his side the majority of that time. We know we’ve got the right person in Lorie to keep the agency moving forward without skipping a beat.

Tudor began her 36-year career with what was then called the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department in 1981 as a Clerk Typist. She resigned in 1995 to return to school and obtain her Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering Degree from the University of Memphis. She returned to the Department in 1998 as a Civil Engineer I in the Planning branch. She held various titles in Planning Research, and Program Management, becoming Assistant Chief Engineer for Planning in 2011. In December 2014, she was named Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer. She is a Registered Professional Engineer.

Tudor is the Vice-Chairman of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Committee on Funding and Finance and recently appointed by AASHTO to represent the United States on the World Road Association’s Technical Committee for Finance and Procurement. Tudor was inducted into the University of Arkansas’ Academy of Civil Engineering in 2018, and was the recipient of the AASHTO’s Alfred E. Johnson Achievement Award in 2019.

“I am both honored and humbled by the trust that the Commission had placed in me to lead the Department,” Tudor stated. “I have had many great mentors over the years, but Scott Bennett has taught me the most. His strong and effective leadership has resulted in many positive changes at the Department. He will be greatly missed and we wish him the best as he begins this new chapter. With the Department’s competent staff and support, I am confident that we can continue that progress as we head into the future.”

Tudor will become the Department’s first female Director, and the fifth person to serve in that role in the Department’s last 47 years; she follows Henry Gray (15 years), Maurice Smith (6 years), Dan Flowers (17 years), and Scott Bennett (9 years).

2019 Annual Retirees' Association Meeting





The COLA for 2020 is 2.31%

The COLA for Fiscal Year 2021 to be awarded in July will be 2.31%. This percentage is calculated using the CPI-W and will be applied to your annuity benefit only. Note: The monthly healthcare offset is not included in the calculation for your COLA.

Message from the Retirement Office

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Retirement and Insurance offices are working in a very limited capacity. If you call and no one answers, please leave a voicemail message. Someone will return your call as soon as possible.

Thank you for your patience,

Retirement

RETIREMENT PAYROLL SCHEDULE 2020	
ALWAYS verify your deposit with your bank before spending.	
Your monthly annuity payment, by check or direct deposit, should arrive by the NEXT TO LAST BUSINESS DAY of each month. Those dates are listed to the right.	1/30/2020 2/27/2020 3/30/2020 4/29/2020 5/22/2020 6/29/2020 7/30/2020 8/28/2020 9/29/2020 10/29/2020 11/25/2020 12/23/2020
STATEMENTS ARE ONLY MAILED IN JULY AND DECEMBER	
We cannot begin procedures to replace a lost check (if you didn't receive it) until 14 days from the date mailed.	
Please be sure to notify us if your address changes so that we can send you the forms to update it.	
Your point of contact is RoShunda Colclough at 501-569-2532 or by e-mail Roshunda.Colclough@ardot.gov	

Chapter Reports

*****Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, meetings maybe postponed or canceled. Please check with you local officers for further information.**

District **1**

Roy Morris-Pres. / Jimmy Smith-Vice Pres. / Terry Morris – Secretary-Treasurer
Meets: 2nd Thursday in March, June, Sept. & Dec. at Mikes in Colt, AR.

September 2019 – The District One Chapter of the AHTD Retirees Association met on September 12, 2019 at Mike's Restaurant in Colt, AR with 23 present. Everyone enjoyed our Lunch and fellowship

District **2**

Ben Novak-Pres. / Vacant-Vice Pres. / Vacant – Secretary-Treasurer
Meets: 3rd Friday. Quarterly, starting in March (Monticello, Pine Bluff, or Star City) 12:pm

No news

District **3**

Don Donaldson-Pres. / Herbert Ross-Vice Pres. / LaVerne Arledge – Secretary-Treasurer
Meets: Quarterly, 2nd Wednesday of March, June, September and December at 10:30am.
CALL (870)777-2814 for meeting places

September 2019 – The District Three chapter of ARDOT Retirees gathered on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at the Doddridge Community Center. Eighteen retirees and guests were in attendance, ready to chow down on some delicious fried catfish, fries, and hushpuppies that Lonnie Hazel had prepared along with many desserts. President Don Donaldson opened the meeting, Jim Blackwell said the prayer and then the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. LaVerne read the minutes from the June meeting. Don then spoke about the Hope meeting of the Arkansas Legislature’s Joint Committee on Public Retirement and Social Security Programs, which had been held a few days prior. Robyn Smith, Executive Secretary, represented ASHERS. Her presentation with slides and a printed hand out, highlighted contributions, payouts, and the unfunded liability of our system. ASHERS had already taken action to reduce the unfunded liability and the changes are gradually being implemented. The Committee meetings are being held in several locations around the state to give retiree members of the various systems an opportunity to learn more and to have questions asked and answered concerning their pension plans. Three gracious local ladies – Patricia Barnes, Nola Harrison, and Patsy Maddox – assisted with serving at the fish fry. Following the meal, several individual took the opportunity to walk across the street to the Doddridge Museum. Nola and Patsy opened the doors and answered questions about the interesting historical artifacts on display there. (There are no set hours for the museum to be open, so potential visitors need to contact Lonnie at 903-826-7326 and he will get in touch with the right person.) Donations were taken and divided equally between the Doddridge Community Center and the Museum.

District 4 Don Griffin-Pres. / Vacant-Vice Pres. / Paul Edgemon-Secretary/Treasurer
Meets: 3rd Wednesday, Monthly at Golden Corral, Ft. Smith, 11:00am

March 2020 – Robyn Smith (ASHERS Exe. Secretary) and Ronda Walthall (Insurance Administrator) reminded us to check on our beneficiaries and any other changes that might apply to our retirement or insurance. The phone number for the Retirement Office is (501)569-2532 and for Insurance Office it is (800)422-9833. Since our fall newsletter we have seen the passing of Aubry Bowen & Kim McDowell. May they rest in peace.

District 5 Charles Sherley-Pres. / A.L. “Shorty” Coles-Vice Pres./Shirley Jones – Secretary / Jim Leggett - Treasurer
Meets: 2nd Saturday Monthly (Except July & Nov) at Wyatt’s, Batesville. 2nd Saturday July & Nov. at Western Sizzlin’ in Searcy

No News

District 6 Don Potter-Pres. / Jerry Westerman-Vice Pres. / Julia Hart-Secretary / Richard Blaine-Treasurer
Meets: 1st Monday, Monthly, Baptist Hospital, Gilbreath Conference Ctr., Little Rock, 12:00pm (*Not having meetings at this time)

September 2019 - The District 6 retirees met on September 9, 2019. Our speaker for the meeting was Joe Hawkins, Staff ITS Engineer in the Maintenance Division. Mr. Hawkins oversees the ITS management system for ARDOT. The traffic management center (TMC) monitors many activities over the entire state, including traffic and travel. Many TMC functions are helped with cameras to track and report to Arkansas State Police and fire departments for official response. Real time travel information on highways is captured. There have been 743 lane closures, 414 accidents, some related to water. They have ten mobile trailers which are sent out to measure and report weather, flooding, snow, ice and secondary crashes. Their aim is to reduce crashes, increase driver’s attention, and add more message boards to change routes to save travel time. He showed various intersections around the state. He answered several questions and said their goal was to have cameras for every inch of highway travel.

October 2019 – The District 6 retirees met on October 7, 2019. Our scheduled speaker did not show and our meeting changed to a discussion meeting. Social security raises, cost of living raises, possible speakers for next year and various other concerns were discussed. Don Potter was elected President for next year.

December 2019 - The District 6 retirees met on December 2, 2019. Our scheduled speaker was Jarrod Ritchie, Licensure Administrator for Emergency Medical Services at the Center for Health Protection at the Arkansas Department of Health. Jarrod’s message was about the importance of the “Stop the Bleed” program. He spoke about why you should call 911 instead of driving yourself to the emergency room, applying a tourniquet for a maximum of two hours, and wear gloves to clean the blood off of you. He also stated the three main steps for personal safety: (1) Alert 911 on speaker phone; (2) If bleeding apply a temporary dressing and you may have to pack wound if big opening; and (3) Compression - Apply pressure to stop bleeding or attach a tourniquet. There are several commercially available tourniquets for sale to keep in vehicle and home. Jarrod stayed after the meeting for demonstrating how to apply a tourniquet.

January 2019 - The District 6 retirees met on January 6, 2020. Our scheduled speaker was Joe Ledvina, Botanist of the Environmental Division from ARDOT. He gave a speech about the ARDOT Wildflower Program. This includes preserving native populations, planting wildflowers, and changing mowing patterns. He also explained how they are trying to save the yellow cone flower which would have been destroyed by a widening job if they had not intervened. The ARDOT sometimes transplants plants to wetland mitigation sites. They have sponsors for sites and plant varieties. Joe talked about milkweed enhancement program that is important for the monarch butterflies. The female monarch butterfly only lays eggs on milkweed plants of which there are 15 varieties.

February 2019 - The District 6 retirees met on March 2, 2020. Our scheduled speaker was Davy Ashcraft, Park Superintendent of the Cossatot River State Park. He said the Arkansas State Parks works jointly with the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission to operate the Cossatot River State Park. He stated the river is mainly used for kayaking and rafting. Davy stated that the kayakers know before they do when the river will rise high sometimes from 2 feet to 13 feet after a hard rain. The Park is 5,260 acres with 90 miles of bounty. The main spot for class 5 rapids is called the Cossatot Falls. About one half mile from the bridge is Stan's Bridge that is suitable for good pictures. They have 12 full-time employees and 4 extra people to manage the Park. They have challenges of multiple entries and mountainous terrain to manage.

District **7** **Michael Nelson – Pres./ Dannie Launius-Vice Pres. / Anna Jane Reddin – Secretary-Treasurer**
Meets: 2nd Thursday, every other month (Starting in January) Cardinal Cafe, Camden, AR 11:00am

No News

District **8** **Janet Boozer-Pres. / Don Wilkinson-Vice Pres. / Martha Paine– Secretary-Treasurer**
Meets: 1st Monday, every other month (starting in February) Western Sizzlin', Russellville, 11:00am

No News

District **9** **Bill Phillips-Pres. / James McIntosh-Vice Pres. / Roy Brasel – Secretary-Treasurer**
Meets: 3rd Friday, Quarterly (January, April, July, & October) Western Sizzlin', Harrison, 11:00am

October 2020 – The District 9 Chapter of the ARDOT Retirees association met Friday October 18, 2019 at the Western Sizzlin' Steakhouse in Harrison, for a Dutch buffet lunch and meeting. There were 31 in attendance, including guests. The meeting was called to order by William H. Phillips-President. Mr. Ricky Dodson gave thanks for the meal. The door prize of a free meal was won by Cecilia Knight. Insurance and Retirement was discussed. It was noted that we would receive a Social Security Increase, the first of the year and our Insurance Premiums would also increase at that time. The next meeting will be January 17, 2020 at Western Sizzlin' Steakhouse in Harrison.

January 2020 – The District 9 Chapter of the ARDOT Retirees Association met Friday January 17, 2020 at Western Sizzlin' Steakhouse in Harrison for a Dutch buffet lunch and meeting. There were 15 in attendance, including guests. (Due to threatening weather, our attendance is down.) The meeting was called to order by William Phillips-President. Mr. Jackie Pharis gave thanks for the meal. The door prize of a free meal was won by Bill Phillips. Insurance and Retirement was discussed. It was noted that it was too early to know about our Health and Insurance. The next meeting will be April 17, 2020 at Western Sizzlin' Steakhouse in Harrison.

District **10** **Vacant-Pres. /Vacant-Vice Pres. /Vacant – Secretary-Treasurer**
No news

NWA **Sam Turner-Pres. /Jerry Stuckey-Vice Pres. /Teresa Maze – Secretary-Treasurer**
Meets: 2nd Tuesday every other month (starting in February), Western Sizzlin', Springdale, 12:30p

No news

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEES
INC.



Doyle Hughes, Secretary/Treasurer
9112 Leatrice Drive.
Little Rock, AR 72227

Return Service Requested

Presort Standard
U. S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 645
NLR, AR
72114

We urge you to fill out the Membership Application Form below. You can turn it in to your local Chapter Secretary/Treasurer or mail application and \$15.00 annual dues to: **Doyle Hughes, Secretary/Treasurer, 9112 Leatrice Dr., Little Rock, AR 72227**. Make your check payable to: **AHTD Retirees Association**.

2020 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Retiree Name _____ \$15 Fee Enclosed

Spouse Name _____ \$10 Fee Enclosed

Phone Number _____ Year You Retired _____ Division/
District No. _____

Address _____ Zip Code _____
Street or Route & Box No. City State

E-Mail Address _____

Signed _____