

# THE CONNECTION

## ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED AHTD EMPLOYEES, INC.

*Fellowship*



*Communication*

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**Spring 2017**

### Message from the President

Bonnie Wesson

This year has truly been a very memorable experience getting to see so many friends at every chapter meeting. You are so welcoming and we love the trips, hearing about your current activities and years of working on particular highways and bridges; then sharing a wonderful lunch has been great. I also want to thank the membership for supporting this organization that keeps it strong for all retirees, their families and future retirees.

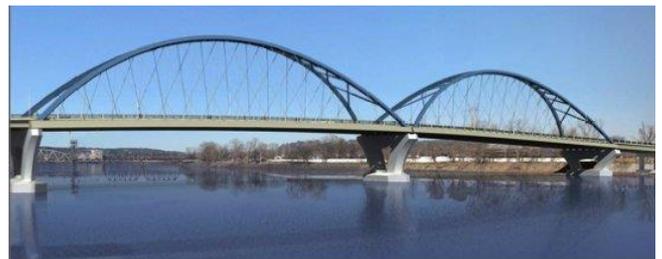
I'd like to mention a meeting we attended in District 5 Chapter at Searcy. The officers spoke on various important topics. Then we very much enjoyed Tom Huie playing so many memorable songs on his harmonica, such as "You Are My Sunshine," "When The Saints Go Marching In," "Shortening Bread," "St. Louis Blues," "Hank Williams Tunes," "Oh My Darling Clementine," "O Susanna," and "Dixie Medley" to name a few. My Dad was a jazz piano player so these songs are unforgettable. Tom also told me of his association with Elvis Presley many years ago. If you were not there, you missed a very entertaining day!

The 2017 Annual Meeting will be held on October 26<sup>th</sup>, at the Bryant Community Center at Bishop Park. I want to encourage you to be there, to visit old friends and make new ones. This meeting is for all retirees, not just for members of the Retirees Association. The registration table, as well as donuts and coffee, will be available in the meeting room beginning at 10:30 AM. So come early and visit!

We welcome your family, friends, and DROP members, as well as our Department Officials that continue to do such a fantastic job for the State of Arkansas!

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## **ARKANSAS' BROADWAY BRIDGE COMPETING FOR BEST IN AMERICA!!!**



The recently opened Broadway Bridge (U.S. Highway 70) spanning the Arkansas River between Little Rock and North Little Rock is among twelve finalists announced in the *2017 America's Transportation Awards* competition. Everyone is encouraged to vote online for the People's Choice Awards, once a

day, every day until September 27<sup>th</sup>! Wouldn't that be great if Arkansas is the WINNER! Vote at

<http://AmericasTransportationAwards.org>

## Address and Beneficiary Changes

Attention all retirees, if you move, please notify **Emily Boggs at the Arkansas State Highway Retirement Office at (501) 569-2413**. Besides keeping your address 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**.



2017 Statewide Officers: From left to right, Bonnie Wesson-President; Mike Selig – Sr. Vice President; Mike Limbird-Vice President; and Doyle Hughes – Secretary.

### From the Editor:

Please e-mail Chapter News to **Bettye C. Johnson at [bcj41@cablelynx.com](mailto:bcj41@cablelynx.com)**. If you do not have e-mail, please contact your local district office for help.



## **AHTD Retirees' Association Facebook Page**

The 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](http://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](mailto:bcj41@cablelynx.com).

## **Annual Meeting Guest Speaker:**

### **Mary Twedt**

Mary Twedt, MA – Mrs. Twedt is the Executive Director of the Centers for Simulation Education at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. She started working at UAMS in 1993 with one of the first Standardized Patient Programs in the south. She completed her graduate work at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock where she studied communications that focused on the doctor and patient relationship. As Executive Director, she works with all college and hospital staff at UAMS and helped develop the first practical examination using standardized patients for United States pharmacy students. She now also serves on the Leadership Institute at UAMS and conducts workshops for communication for providers throughout the year. She is appointed faculty of the Department of Medical Humanities and Global Health.

In 2002, Mary launched Arkansas Cooks, a weekly 30 min radio show on KUAR public radio. She used her maiden name, Mary Twedt, and continues to interact with folks at contests and events under that name. Last year for example, she donated an auction item to the Arkansas Rep's Saint & Sinners event that was a Dessert-a- Month for a year. She enjoys making the sweets and can now deliver them without eating all the calories. She ran weekly for over 12 years and during that time interviewed hundreds of chefs and cooks from all over Arkansas. For many of those years she was the highest ranked show at KUAR. She might pick it back up sometime after she retires and is not too sure when that will be. Mary is also the voice of the Greek Food Festival at her church, the Annunciation Greek Orthodox church in Little Rock.



Outside of work, Mary is interested in spending time at her home and garden in Little Rock with her super husband, Paul Cantrell and their 6 year old dog, Bear. Mary's daughter lives in Rogers and since she has work in Fayetteville at the UAMS center there, she often gets to see her.

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.**

**2018 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Please send form to Doyle Hughes, 9112 Leatrice Drive, Little Rock, AR 72227



**Tickets for 2017 Statewide Annual Meeting**  
**October 26, 2017**  
**11:00 a.m.**  
**Bishop Park, Bryant Arkansas**  
**\$15.00 Per Person**

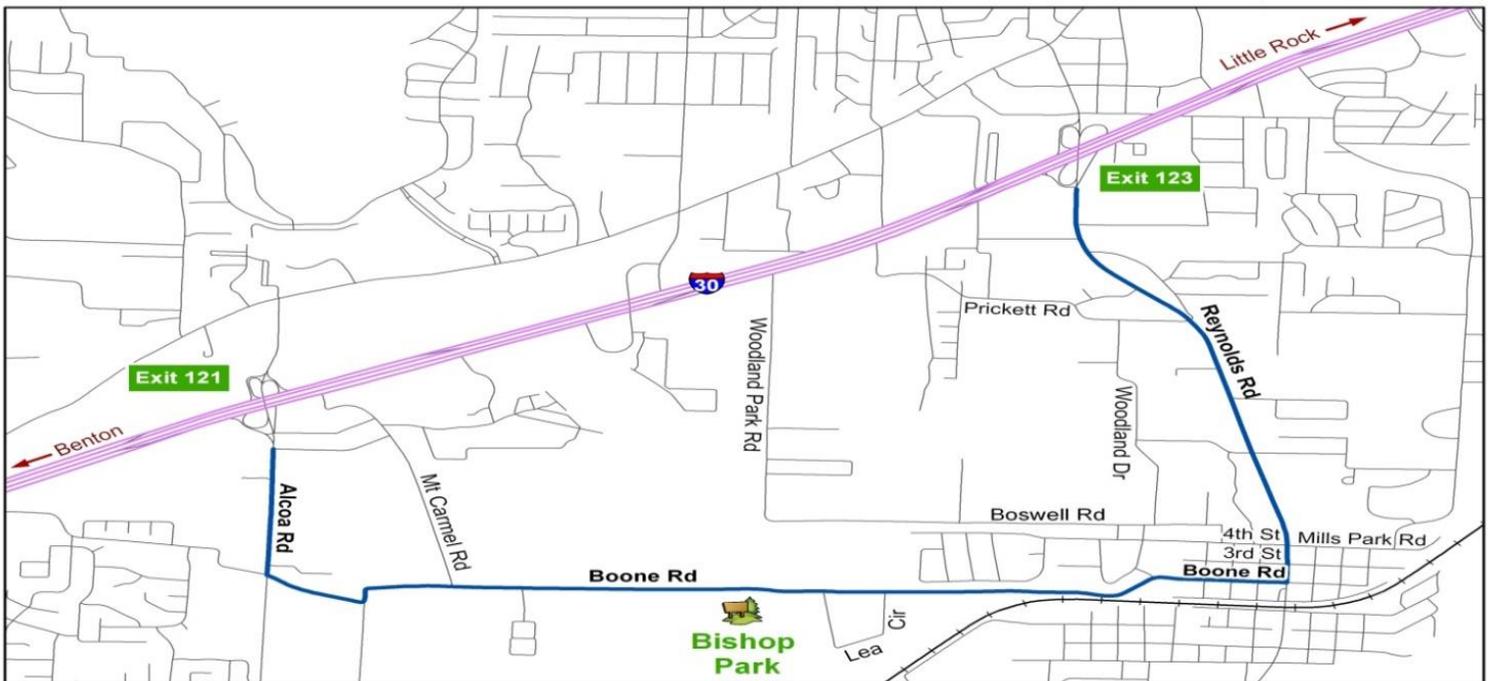


District \_\_\_\_\_

Name _____	Member _____	Spouse _____
Name _____	Member _____	Spouse _____
Name _____	Member _____	Spouse _____
Name _____	Member _____	Spouse _____

Address to send tickets to: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**BRYANT COMMUNITY CENTER AT BISHOP PARK**



## REMINDER!!!



Starting in 2018, there will be a dues increase to \$15.00 for retirees. Dues for spouses will not be increased, but remain at \$10.00 annually. All chapter officers have been notified and the enclosed dues application form reflects this change. This will be the first dues increase in our 35 year history!



### In the Spotlight

#### *John Ed and Frankie Smith*

This spring, Shelba and A. L. "Shorty" Coles, retired Sign Crew Supervisor and currently Vice President of District Five in Batesville and John Ed and Frankie Smith, Resident Engineer and retired for 30 years invited Bonnie Wesson to visit and have lunch with them. We met at the lovely retirement home of Frankie and John Ed. It's amazing how well they are doing and enjoying life at John Ed's age of 90. He said, "I am grateful for the help and support that I had throughout the years at the Highway Department. I assure you no one's help or work is unappreciated."



Seated: Frankie & John Ed Smith  
Standing: A.L. "Shorty" & Shelba Coles and Bonnie Wesson

### FYI

- The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department is now the Arkansas Department of Transportation or ARDOT.



NEW LOGO

- Also, for anyone visiting the Central Offices, a new security protocol is in place. You will need to contact whoever you are planning on visiting so they will be prepared to send someone to escort you to the appropriate office. In addition, you are required to present your Driver's License for identification purposes

### CHAPTER REPORTS

#### DISTRICT ONE

**June 2017** - The District 1 Retirees Association met at Mike's Restaurant in Colt with the State Officers in attendance. President Roy Morris welcomed all and encouraged members to pay their 2017 dues. State President Bonnie Wesson introduced Mike Selig, Senior Vice President, Mike Limbird, Vice President and Doyle Hughes, Secretary/Treasurer, who all spoke on various interesting topics. Our meeting was adjourned and everyone enjoyed their delicious lunch.

#### DISTRICT TWO

District Two Chapter of the AHTD Retirees' Association met in Monticello at the Western Sizzlin' restaurant for the June meeting. President Jimmy Johnson called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests. Max Bagwell gave the blessing and all enjoyed their lunch. After lunch, State Representative LeAnne Burch was introduced as the guest speaker. Rep. Burch served Drew and part of Ashley counties in Southwest Arkansas. She spoke on her first Legislative Session, as she was newly elected. Highway projects were discussed as well as economic development for Southwest Arkansas. Rep. Burch is traveling her district speaking to groups and visiting with voters. She is a native to DeWitt and current resides in Monticello. Many in the group had questions for Rep. Burch to answer and she received a huge thank you for attending from all. Secretary /Treasurer Bettye Johnson gave her report and collected dues. It was announced that the next meeting would be held September 22<sup>nd</sup> in Pine Bluff at the Nature Center. After 10 years of serving, President Jimmy Johnson and Secretary /Treasurer Bettye Johnson asked to be replaced. A nomination committee was appointed.

### **DISTRICT THREE**

**June 2017** - District 3 Chapter met on June 14 at Doddridge, Ark, City Park with a view of the Doddridge City Museum across the highway. President John Watkins welcomed all including the State Officers and introduced our Host, Lonnie Hazel, retired Area Foreman, Miller County, and currently Chief of Fire Department. He was instrumental in saving the old Spring Bank Ferry across the Red River which was on display in the City Park. A wonderful lunch was provided and we all enjoyed going through the Museum and learning so much history. If you were not there, you missed a remarkable day. Everyone was encouraged to attend the State meeting this October 26 in Bryant, AR.

### **DISTRICT FOUR – No News**

### **DISTRICT FIVE**

**May 2017** - District 5 retirees met on May 13, 2017 at Kelley-Wyatt's. There were 18 members present. Charles Sherley opened the meeting with prayer. Our scheduled speaker was unable to attend due to a conflict. Charles entertained us with a humorous story from his younger days. We will meet in Searcy in July.

**June 2017** - District 5 retirees met on June 10, 2017 at Kelley-Wyatt's. There were 19 members and three guests present. Charles opened the meeting with prayer. Our guest speaker was Broader Sweetnam, who spoke about his travels to the Middle East. He was an English teacher in Muscat, Oman. Oman is currently at peace, however, it borders some violent countries. The country has free education and free health care. July meeting will be held at Western Sizzlin' in Searcy.

**July 2017** - District 5 retirees met on July 8, 2017 at Western Sizzlin' in Searcy. There were 17 members and five guests present. Charles Sherley opened the meeting with prayer. Thomas Huie, retiree from the Searcy Resident Engineer's office, played the harmonica during the meal. He played a medley of tunes from the 19th and 20th century. Our state association officials were in attendance. They presented an informative program, which included information on membership dues, recruitment and the annual meeting which will be held on October 26th at Bishop Park in Bryant. We enjoyed meeting with them.

**August 2017** - District 5 retirees met on August 12, 2017 at Kelley-Wyatt's. There were 17 members and four guests present. Charles opened the meeting with prayer. Sandra McMatt and group presented a program in song.

### **DISTRICT SIX**

**May 2017** - District 6 Retirees met at 12:00 Noon, May 1, 2017 at Baptist Hospital Conference Room in Little Rock, Arkansas. President Mike Selig called the meeting to order and Jerry Heffington offered the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Our program speaker, Robyn Smith, Executive Secretary ASHERS, spoke on the Retirement Fund Status and Retirement Benefits update.

**June 2017** - District 6 Retirees met at 12:00 Noon, June 5, 2017, at Maumelle Park for our annual picnic.

**July 2017** - District 6 Retirees met at 12:00 Noon, July 10, 2017 at Baptist Hospital Conference Room in Little Rock, Arkansas. President Mike Selig called the meeting to order and James Sanders offered the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Our program speakers, Amanda Smith and Carrie Teeter, are Baptist Health Foundation representatives. The Foundation works to raise funds for scholarships, construction, community projects to improve the health of the people of Arkansas. Over \$18,000.00 for hotel accommodations was provided to help families that have sick babies. Angel Eye Cameras are provided for families to continue to watch their babies who are in the hospital if they have to leave for a period of time. Bolo Bashes, Charity Food Boxes, Farmers Markets, Dilliard's Day and Bass Pro Shop Day are events used to help raise needed funds.

**August 2017** - District 6 Retirees met at 12:00 Noon, August 7, 2017 at Baptist Hospital Conference Room in Little Rock, Arkansas. Vice President Mike Limbird called the meeting to order and Jerry Heffington offered the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Our program speaker was Sharon Hawkins from ARDOT Planning and Policy Division, GIS and Mapping section. Sharon spoke on a full range of new data being compiled from flood data, highway closures, crash data, and 911 centers to be available on computer and mobile devices at any location across the State.

**October 7, 2017 Celebrate Sybil Maddox's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday from 1:00-3:00 at the Riverfront Hospitality House 140 Riverfront Drive, North Little Rock, Ar.**

### **DISTRICT SEVEN – No News**

### **DISTRICT EIGHT**

**April 2017** - District Eight Chapter met April 3 at Western Sizzlin' in Russellville with State Officers attending. President Kenneth Brown welcomed all and introduced each officer who spoke briefly on retirees' interests and encouraged all to plan to attend the fall State Meeting in Bryant, AR. Everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch.

**ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED  
ARKANSAS HIGHWAY EMPLOYEES**

**INC.**



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

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**DISTRICT NINE** – The District 9 Chapter of the AHTD Retirees’ Association met Friday July 14, 2017 at Western Sizzlin’ Steak House in Harrison for a Dutch buffet lunch and meeting. The meeting was called to order by William H. Phillips, President. Mr. Doyle Root gave thanks for the meal. The door prize of a free meal was won by Mr. Kenneth Oxford. It was announced that the COLA for Retirees this July will be 2.07% and will vary from year to year. Insurance was discussed and there will be no increases in the rates for next year. Mrs. Bonnie Wesson, State President, Mr. Mike Selig, Sr. Vice President, Mr. Mike Limbird, Vice President, and Mr. Doyle Hughes, Secretary, from the State Retirees Association visited our meeting. They reminded us of our Annual State Meeting to be held in Bryant on October 26, 2017, and encouraged us to attend. The next meeting will be October 20, 2017 at Western Sizzlin’ Steak House in Harrison.

**DISTRICT TEN**

**April 2017** - District 10 Retirees held their bi-monthly meeting April 4, 11:00 AM at Simpkins Family Restaurant in Paragould. Following a short business meeting, the attending eleven members enjoyed a delicious buffet meal and great fellowship. Rosa Huffine was the winner of the free meal drawing. We look forward to our next meeting June 6 at the same place and time.

**June 2017** - District 10 of the Association of Retired AHTD Employees met at 11:00 AM, June 6 at Simpkins Family Restaurant in Paragould. Following a delicious meal, President Carlos Lester called the meeting to order with a total of twelve members and guests present. Secretary/Treasurer Elaine Sims read the minutes of the last meeting and gave the treasurer's report, which were approved as read. Following a very short business meeting, President Lester introduced our distinguished guests State Officers, President Bonnie Wesson; Sr. Vice President, Mike Selig; Vice President, Mike Limbird; and Secretary/Treasurer, Doyle Hughes. Each officer shared information pertaining to membership growth and the importance of members providing email addresses to their respective districts, to be forwarded to state. We were notified our 2018 dues will increase to \$15, due to the rising cost of postage. We were encouraged to attend the state meeting in October, details to follow. The meeting closed with a very entertaining, uplifting, and humorous presentation by President Bonnie Wesson titled "Be Happy". The motion was made, seconded, and carried the meeting be adjourned. Please join us at our next meeting August 1st, same place and time.

**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS – No News**