

The Connection

Fall 2018 NEWSLETTER

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Mike Selig

Message from the President: Mike Selig

Hello to everyone! The State Officers enjoyed visiting with all of our fellow retirees this year. We were able to see old friends and make new friends. All of you really made us feel at ease and made our visits worthwhile.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone again at the Association of AHTD/ARDOT Retired Employees Annual Meeting on October 25th at 11:00 am. We will meet at Bishop Park Community Center on Boone Road in Bryant. Our speaker is Frank Fellone also known as *Drivetime Mahatma*. He is a freelance writer for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. His column is featured in the Saturday

edition and concerns questions and answers about the Highways and other roads in the State. We think you will enjoy some of the stories he tells about all the different and sometimes odd questions he receives.

Of course the main reason to come to the annual meeting is to fellowship with other retirees. It is fun to share stories of the times we were working on a road and something happened that we didn't expect. The State Officers have heard many of the stories while visiting each of the districts during the year. We were joined at those meetings with Robyn Smith, Ronda Walthall, and Robbie Howlett. They were always available to let the retirees and spouses know the status of the retirement system and what was happening concerning our insurance and pharmacy benefits.

Back to the annual meeting, we are going to feast on the great tasting catfish and chicken buffet again this year. The catfish and chicken come with all the trimmings of slaw, beans, fries, green tomatoes, and don't forget the delicious fried pies. The peach fried pies are the first to disappear. The reason to discuss the food is to let you know we need a good headcount so we make sure to have plenty of food. Please purchase your ticket from Doyle Hughes at least two weeks ahead of the date of the meeting. He can mail it to you or have it held for you at the door. Doyle's address and other meeting information is located elsewhere in the newsletter.

For the tech savvy people, information about the newsletter, the annual meeting and district meetings can be found on our webpage. We give thanks to ARDOT for giving us OUR own webpage. If you have any suggestions or changes to the webpage, contact any of the officers. Please check us out at ARDOT.GOV/RETIREES.



Frank Fellone

Address and Beneficiary Changes

Attention all retirees, if you move, please notify Lacey Cole who replaced Emily Boggs (Happy Retirement, Emily!) at the Arkansas State Highway Employees' 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.



2018 Statewide Officers: From left to right, Mike Selig -President; Mike Limbird – Sr. Vice President; John Watkins-Vice President; and Doyle Hughes –Secretary/Treasurer.



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.

Don't miss out on food, fun, and fellowship at your local chapter meetings. Go to ARDOT.GOV/RETIREES to get meeting times and locations!!



Jim and Shirley Chaney with Ronda Walthall at 7/14/2018 District 5 meeting in Searcy

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

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**.

2019 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 2018 Statewide Annual Meeting
October 25, 2018
11:00 a.m.
Bishop Park, Bryant Arkansas
\$15.00 Per Person

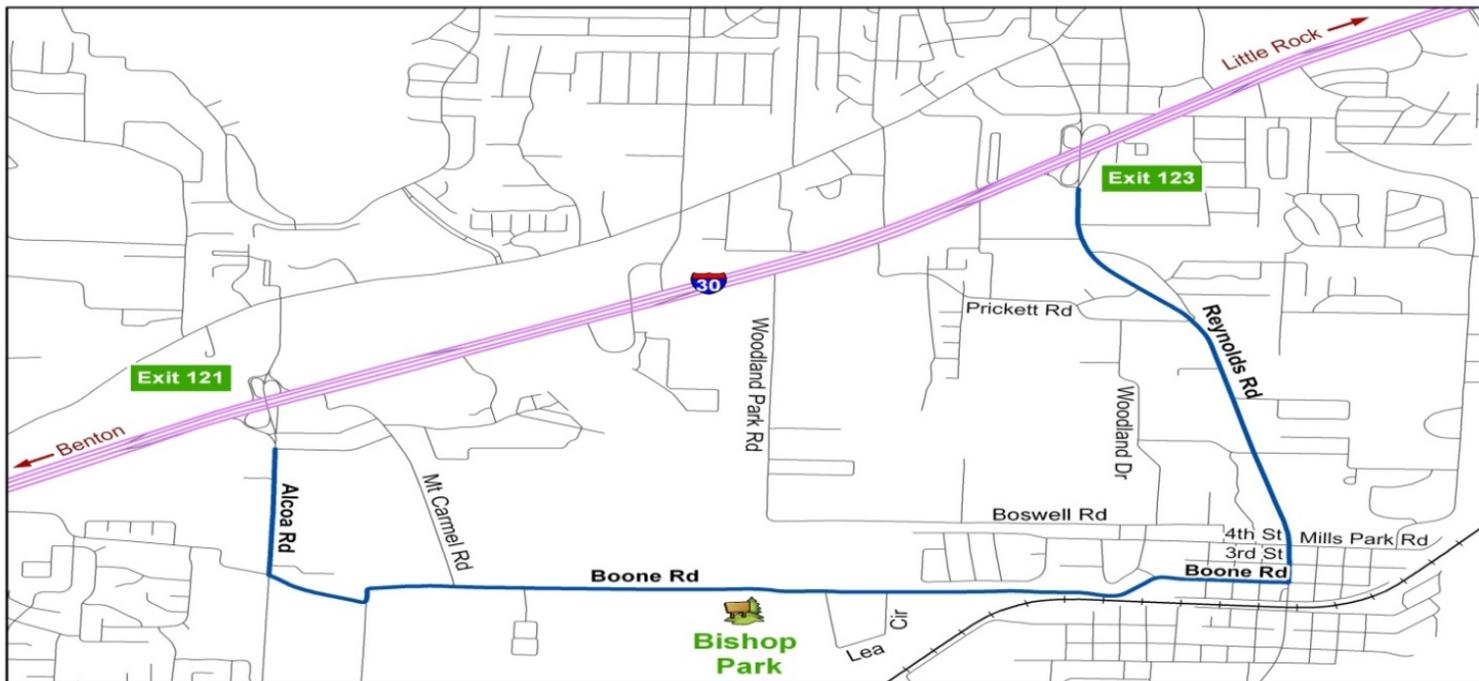


District _____

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

Address to send tickets to: _____

BRYANT COMMUNITY CENTER AT BISHOP PARK



CHAPTER REPORTS

DISTRICT ONE – No news

DISTRICT TWO - On June 22nd the District 2 chapter of the Retirees' Association met at Western Sizzlin in Monticello. There were 26 members in attendance. We were fortunate that the large meeting room was available as we overflowed the meeting room that had been reserved. Prayer was offered by Ben Novak. He also gave a brief review of the information received on the proposed raises for the retirees and the current state of the retirement system. A good time of fellowship, visitation, and reminiscing was had by all. The next scheduled meeting is to be held at Cane Creek State Park near Star City. We hope to have a presentation from the Maintenance staff in District 2 on current projects, new methods, and updated on new equipment currently being employed. Beginning at 11:30am, there will be a potluck style lunch with the main course, (BBQ) provided.

DISTRICT THREE - No News

DISTRICT FOUR – At our meeting, we were pleased to have our state officers update us on association business. Robyn Smith, ASHERS Executive Secretary, also gave updates and noted that the Arkansas State Highway Employees' Retirement System is doing well. Ronda Walthall, ARDOT Insurance Administrator, spoke and asked that anyone who has received new Medicare card(s), please call her office at 1-800-422-9833 and give them your new numbers. Before October, we hope to have an ARDOT District 4 staff member address us on current activities. We could ask questions about the roads in our area. Our next free lunch is on December 19, 2018. Hope you can be there. We meet at the Golden Corral in Fort Smith the 3rd Wednesday of the month. We gather at 11:00am and eat about 11:30am.

DISTRICT FIVE –

April 2018 - District 5 retirees met on April 14, 2018 at the Italian Grill. There were 14 members present. Charles Sherley opened the meeting with prayer. Charles reported on the information he received at the State Associational Meeting. He also distributed a handout which showed a link to the Retirement Web Site. There has been a change in the formulary due to the 30-year unfunded liability being higher than acceptable. This will affect new hires. New editor would like to mail copy of Monthly Newsletter to all retirees, however cost may be too high. State Officers will meet with our Chapter in July at Western Sizzlin in Searcy.

May 2018 - District 5 retirees met on May 10, 2018 at the Italian Grill. Shorty Coles opened the meeting with prayer. Our guest speaker was Karen Ryan, Chief Executive Officer with Vital Link Ambulance Service. Ms. Ryan assumed this position after serving in the Army. Ms. Ryan reported that all ambulance personnel are skilled in life saving. Each shift staffed with one EMT and one Paramedic. Each team stays together for one year, then changes. Vital Link has exclusive franchise in three counties, Independence, Izard and Stone. The crews have quarters in a home type setting and are on 48 hours at a time. Vital Link has been located here for approximately 30 years and is one of only three in Arkansas to have been accredited a Gold rating. Service memberships are \$55 annually. Ms. Ryan has invited our Chapter to a meal and tour of Vital Link for our next meeting.

June 2018 - District 5 retirees met on June 9, 2018 at the Italian Grill. Shorty Coles opened the meeting with prayer. There were 19 members and one guest present. Our guest speaker was Tommy Mitchum who is with the Office of Director, Department of AR DHS. Mr. Mitchum was appointed by Governor Hutchinson as a Civil Enforcement Liaison with DHS. Mr. Mitchum served 20 years in the Legislature. Mr. Mitchum commented on the population growth primarily in NW Arkansas compared to the loss in population in Eastern Arkansas. Arkansas is #1 in computer science training. Our economy is strong and we have the lowest unemployment we've ever experienced. He thanked everyone for their service with AR DOT. We will meet at Western Sizzlin in Searcy in July and at Vital Link in August.

DISTRICT SIX

March 2018 - District 6 Retirees met March 2, 2018; our speaker for the meeting was Sandra Withers. She is Administrator for Outreach Programs for UAMS's Kids First Program and is an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. Sandra's topic was Health Information on the Internet and Social Media. In the past our references for medical information, other than doctors, was a dictionary encyclopedia, or an acquaintance. Now there are any numbers of sources on the internet but not all the information is reliable. If you choose to utilize the internet:

- Use the sites of recognized authorities such as the Centers for Disease Control.
- Make sure the recognized sites deal with the information/aliment you are considering.
- Be a "cyberskeptic"; if it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't.
- Look for medical evidence, not opinions.
- Check for current information, and
- Beware of bias in the information. Who is sponsoring the site?

Always consult with your health professional, the best decisions will be made through a patient/medical provider partnership.

April 2018 - District 6 Retirees met April 2, 2018; our speaker for the meeting was Lindsay Zweifer, Water Quality Specialist with ArDOT Environmental Division. Lindsay spoke on various environmental clearances for multiple projects to be let under the NEPA - Natural Environmental Policy Act. The Assessment Section provides impact statements on original land use, population, relocation possibility, hazardous material, gas, fuel underground, historical building, water quality and drinking water. The GIS Geographical Impact provides posters and maps. The Public Involvement section provides information to the public with flyers, radio, and door to door with onsite diagrams, investigate artifacts including the Broadway Bridge and discovering a six foot deep stone and mortar spring, and even uncovering a jail. Also, considered are wetlands, plants, floodplains restoration on interstate operations, wild flowers, and public awareness of storm water and pollution.

May 2018 - District 6 Retirees met May 7, 2018; our speakers for the meeting were Susan Altrui, Little Rock Zoo Director and Brian Kutch, Little Rock Zoo Education Program Coordinator. The Little Rock Zoo is ninety-two years old; it started in 1926 with one timber wolf and one retired circus bear. The Zoo now has 700 animals representing 200 animal species. The Zoo is accredited by Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA); all the animals must have their health maintained by veterinary care/diet/exercise. The Zoo helps in the conversation of animals through the AZA's species survival plan; the Zoo's animals are not bought or sold. The Zoo has an economic impact; the Zoo gets about 300,000 visitors a year with 75% of the visitors not from Little Rock and 15% from out of State. Future plans for the Zoo include a new education building with a toddler's education area. Increasing the Zoo area in the future is being considered by utilizing areas near the Children's Library south of I-630 with access by a walkway/bikeway bridge. An outreach education program includes classroom visits. Funding for the Zoo includes \$3.5 million from visitors, \$700,000 from a dedicated Little Rock tax, and public donations.

June 2018 - District 6 Retirees met June 4, 2018 in Maumelle Park for our Annual Picnic.

July 2018 - District 6 Retirees met July 7, 2018; our speakers for the meeting were Lou Tobian, AARP Arkansas's Director for Outreach & Education and Sara Lynn. They talked about network fraud. Network fraud is much more common than one would expect; over the last six years it is estimated to have been \$116 billion. This is typically seen in identity theft. Some easy ways to avoid identity theft are: don't leave wallets, computers, phones, etc. in plain sight in a car or leave mail in easily accessible and visible locations. Shred paperwork with identifying information including unsolicited credit card information; micro cut shredder is the best (AARP provides a free bulk shredding services at the War Memorial parking lot, usually in September or October); Monitor checking and credit card accounts frequently. Don't conduct personal business through public Wi-Fi and be especially leery of e-mails from unknown sources. The Network Fraud Watch information is provided and more is available at AARP.org/fraudwatchnetwork.

DISTRICT SEVEN

September 2017 - District 7 Retirees met at 11:00 am, July 12, 2018 at Cardinal Café in Camden, Arkansas. President Mike Nelson called the meeting to order with 21 members and 2 visitors present. The two visitors were Drew Hoggard, District Maintenance Engineer, and Alex Roofe, District Construction Engineer. Mr. Roofe gave a talk on current and future constructions jobs. Mr. Hoggard spoke on how much money was spent on maintenance this year and how much was allotted for next year. Both talks were very informative. Mr. Sam Bradshaw gave the blessing for the food. The next meeting will be September 13, 2018.

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEES
INC.



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

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DISTRICT EIGHT – No News

DISTRICT NINE – The District 9 Chapter of the A.H.T.D. Retirees Association met Friday July 13, 2018 at Western Sizzlin' Steak House in Harrison, for a Dutch Buffet lunch and meeting. There were 36 in attendance, including guests. The meeting was called to order by Williams H. Phillips, President. Mr. Jackie Pharis gave thanks for the meal. The door prize of a free meal was won by Mr. Terry Widner. Mr. Mike Selig, Mr. Mike Limbird, Mr. John Watkins and Mr. Doyle Hughes, all State Officers were present. They reminded us of the State Meeting in October and encouraged everyone to attend. Also, Mike told us about the Retirees Association's new web page. Robyn M. Smith, ASHERS Executive Secretary and Robbie Howlett of the Insurance Office were also present. Our Insurance rates will remain the same next year. The next meeting will be October 19, 2018 at Western Sizzlin' Steak House in Harrison.

DISTRICT TEN – The District 10 retirees met June 5, 2018 at Simpkins Family Restaurant in Paragould. Following a delicious buffet style meal, President Carlos Lester conducted a short business meeting, with Secretary/Treasurer Elaine Sims reading the minutes of the April meeting and giving the Treasurer's Report. Mary Kingston won the free meal drawing and donated the money to our fund for Arkansas Children's Hospital. We are experiencing low attendance; however those who attended enjoyed food and fellowship.

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS – The NWA Chapter of the AHTD Retiree's Association met on Tuesday June 12, 2018 at Wester Sizzlin Steak House in Springdale, AR for a Dutch buffet lunch and meeting at 12:30pm. There were 19 present including members and guests. Sam Turner opened the meeting with prayer. After lunch, the cost of living raise of 2.18% and no rate changes in insurance was discussed. The Retiree's Association state officers plan to visit our August 14, 2018 meeting which will be held at 12:30 pm at Western Sizzlin' Steak House in Springdale, AR. We invite all retiree's in our area to come and join us.