



2001

ANNUAL REPORT



Arkansas
State Highway
Commission

2001 Annual Report

Arkansas State Highway
Commission
Report of the Activities
and Progress for Improving
Highways and Transportation
in Arkansas

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Highway Commission



*(Seated L-R) Mary P. “Prissy” Hickerson, John “M” Lipton, J. W. “Buddy” Benafield,
(Standing L-R) Carl S. Rosenbaum, Dan Flowers – AHTD Director, Jonathan Barnett*

Five Arkansas citizens serve as Commissioners on the Arkansas State Highway Commission in conformance with Arkansas Constitutional Amendment 42. The Commissioners, named to ten-year terms by the Governor and confirmed by members of the Arkansas State Senate, are vested with administrative control of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. The Arkansas Highway Commission appoints the Director of Highways and Transportation who oversees the improvement and operation of the 16,373 miles of the State Highway System.

★ John “M” Lipton, Chairman, Warren, [1-14-93 to Present]

★ J. W. “Buddy” Benafield, Vice Chairman, Hickory Plains, [6-29-93 to Present]

★ Mary P. “Prissy” Hickerson, Member, Texarkana, [1-21-97 to Present]

★ Jonathan Barnett, Member, Siloam Springs, [1-15-99 to Present]

★ Carl S. Rosenbaum, Member, Little Rock, [1-16-01 to Present].

Department Officials



(L-R) **Bob Walters**, Chief Engineer;
Dan Flowers, Director; **Jane Wilson**,
Chief of Administration and Public Affairs



(L-R) **Dale Loe**, Assistant Chief Engineer,
Design; **Ralph Hall**, Assistant Chief
Engineer, Operations; **Steve Teague**,
Assistant Chief Engineer, Planning



(L-R) **Larry Dickerson**, Chief Fiscal
Officer;
Robert Wilson, Chief Legal Cou



Mission Statement

“To provide a safe, efficient, aesthetically pleasing, and environmentally sound intermodal transportation system for the user.”



[Adopted June 4, 1996,
by the Arkansas State
Highway Commission]

Year In Review

This document is a report from the Arkansas State Highway Commission to the citizens of Arkansas, the Governor, and the General Assembly of the activities and progress for improving highways and transportation in Arkansas during Calendar Year 2001. Progress on the Department's Interstate Rehabilitation Program (IRP) continues in its second year. There were 21 IRP projects let to contract in Calendar Year 2001 totaling \$323,784,142 or 45% of the Department's budget. In Calendar Year 2001, 46.5 miles of IRP projects were completed at a cost of \$76,343,476.

July 10 and 11, 2001, were record-setting days for the Arkansas State Highway Commission. Bids were received for the second issue of \$185 million in Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles Bonds, the largest sale of bonds in the Commission's 88-year history. Act 1027 of 1999 authorized the Commission to issue up to \$575 million in bonds to help finance the nearly \$1 billion program.

Following on the heels of the July 2001 bond sale, the Arkansas State Highway Commission awarded its single largest contract for a highway repair project for \$42.6 million. This contract was for



the replacement of nearly 13 miles of Interstate 40 between Shearerville and Highway 77 in Crittenden County.

Work continues on other non-Interstate projects. More than 767 miles of highway improvements and other transportation projects totaling \$397,535,538 were let in Calendar Year 2001.

Interstate Rehabilitation Program (IRP)

Public Information Campaign

In April 2001, the Arkansas State Highway Commission members kicked off the *Pave the Way* public information campaign to promote safety in the Interstate work zones. Because of the unprecedented number of IRP work zones, standard and electronic signs warn motorists coming into the state that, “There’s a whole lot of paving going on.” Highway Advisory Radio broadcasts are placed at strategic locations to encourage motorists to plan ahead as they navigate Arkansas’ Interstates. This national award winning public information and driver safety campaign urges motorists to use caution along Interstate highways slated for rehabilitation by 2005. Motorists were also encouraged to stay informed about Interstate construction by logging on to the Arkansas Interstate Web Site at www.ArkansasInterstates.com.

★ The “Pride in Transportation Construction Award” was presented to the Interstate Rehabilitation Program and *Pave the Way* public information campaign by the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) citing the many positive contributions the transportation construction industry makes to the American economy and way of life.

★ The ARTBA and the National Safety Council “Roadway Work Zone Safety Award” honored *Pave the Way* for its potential to reduce roadway work zone construction accidents, injuries, and fatalities.

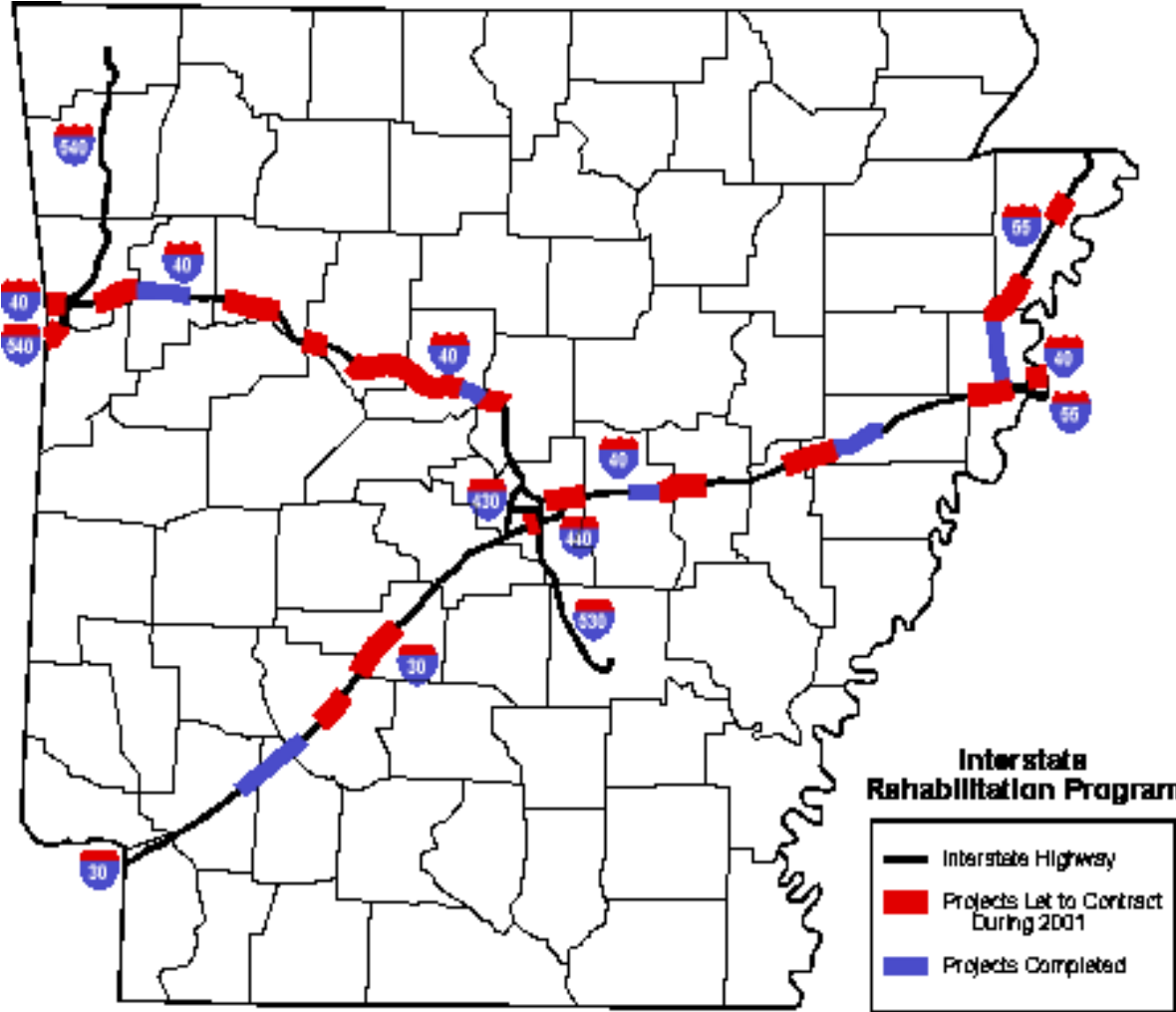
★ The Arkansas Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators selected *Pave the Way* as its first place winner, presenting the Bronze Quill Award in the Public Affairs Campaign category for creative excellence in a plan representing the full range of a communicator’s management skills.

★ The *Pave the Way* campaign received the prestigious American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials’ (AASHTO) “President’s Award” for Highway Traffic Safety for being an example of the ‘best of the best’ in highway and transportation communications.

★ AASHTO’s “Public Affairs Skills Award” was awarded in the fall of 2001. The “Highway Guy,” thirty-second public service radio spots, received first place recognition among all states’ public service announcements for clearly communicating work zone safety information with humor and attention-getting ability.

Interstate Rehabilitation Program (IRP)

2001 Projects



Interstate Rehabilitation Program (IRP)

IRP Projects Let To Contract In 2001

<u>Route</u>	<u>Job Name</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Amount</u>
30	Mabelvale West Interchange Pulaski County	0.51	\$ 4,909,108.84
30	Alcoa Rd. Interchange Saline County	0.42	\$ 5,015,871.36
30	Hwy. 5 Crossover Saline County	0.65	\$ 6,441,425.91
30	65th St. – East Pulaski County	1.55	\$ 8,196,590.69
30	Caddo Valley – East Clark & Hot Spring County	7.88	\$17,576,895.23
40	Brinkley – Goodwin Monroe & St. Francis County	.00	\$ 8,446,984.13
40	Hwy. 25 – West Conway & Faulkner County	5.29	\$11,170,457.10
40	Johnson Co. Line – Mill Creek Pope County	5.31	\$12,358,778.75
40	Brinkley – Goodwin Monroe & St. Francis County	11.57	\$17,125,016.62
40	Dyer – Franklin Co. Line Crawford County	7.44	\$17,696,633.29
40	Hwy. 331 – Atkins Pope County	10.82	\$18,832,796.29
40	Hwy. 64 West – Co. Rd. 40 Johnson County	6.10	\$18,868,754.41
40	Blackwell – Plumerville Conway County	11.93	\$25,473,510.59
40	Carlisle – East Lonoke & Prairie County	12.78	\$26,378,962.55
40	Hwy. 67 – Lonoke Co. Line Pulaski County	8.58	\$27,264,733.77
40	Shearerville – Hwy. 77 Crittenden County	12.89	\$42,672,291.04
55	Jericho – Lake David Crittenden County	7.99	\$ 5,669,911.52
55	Hwy. 158 – Hwy. 148 Mississippi County	5.57	\$15,227,748.47
55	Lake David – Bardstown Rest Area Mississippi & Crittenden County	11.98	\$27,392,254.96
540	Oklahoma State Line – Hwy. 22 Sebastian County	6.40	\$ 6,825,416.81
–	Highway Advisory Radios and Signs	0.00	\$ 240,000.00



Major Projects Let To Contract In 2001

In addition to work on the IRP, the Arkansas State Highway Commission let to contract 337 other projects totaling \$397,535,538 and covering 767 miles in Calendar

Year 2001. The following table lists several of the major non-Interstate projects let during the year.

Route	County	Job Name	Length	Amount
1	Cross	Wynne – Poinsett Co. Ln. (Passing Lanes)	9.94	\$ 5,645,438.84
5	Pulaski	University Ave. – Col. Glenn Rd.	2.49	\$ 5,843,075.25
8	Clark	Alpine – East	2.84	\$ 3,885,575.68
18	Craighead	Jonesboro – East	4.38	\$ 8,477,895.16
59	Washington	Hwy. 62 – Cincinnati (Resurf. & Shoulders)	4.62	\$ 3,773,476.99
60	Faulkner	Tucker Creek – U.P. R.R. Overpass	3.98	\$11,282,165.13
63	Craighead	Craighead Co. Ln. – Bono	3.06	\$ 6,977,483.06
64	Crittenden	Wynne – Hwy. 147 (Passing Lanes)	2.90	\$ 2,298,357.70
65	Chicot & Desha	South C.L. McGehee – Black Pond Slough	5.78	\$ 7,253,381.77
65	Desha	Hwy. 159 (No. Dumas) – South Dumas	3.47	\$ 6,322,995.53
67	Jackson	Hwy. 18 – North (Structures)	1.68	\$15,195,456.86
69	Independence	Hwy. 122 – East	6.83	\$ 6,820,811.74
71	Miller	Hwy. 245 – South (Base & Surfacing)	0.00	\$22,232,971.34
71	Miller	Fouke – North (Base & Surfacing)	10.05	\$18,644,625.67
71B	Benton	Washington County Line – Rogers (Overlay)	6.38	\$ 1,279,413.75
72	Benton	KCS Railroad Overpass (Gravette)	.26	\$ 1,098,699.62
82	Union	El Dorado – Strong (Passing Lanes)	4.01	\$ 3,071,734.25
165	Lonoke	Humnoke – England	9.47	\$ 6,596,130.49
215	Johnson	Franklin Co. Line – Co. Rd. 33	2.76	\$ 4,497,577.35
540	Washington	Hwy. 265 – Hwy. 71B (Resurfacing)	5.60	\$ 4,693,434.15



Public Involvement

Public Hearings

Through news releases, the public is informed of decisions and activities of the Commission and the Director in administering the State Highway System and other transportation modes. The Department encourages early and on-going involvement by the public. Seven public hearings were held throughout the year so that local citizens and governments could voice their opinions on proposed highway improvements. Approximately 300 interested citizens attended these meetings and offered oral and written comments. Hundreds of other Arkansas citizens also had opportunities to voice their opinions on highway projects at dozens of information sessions.



Freight Forum

The Arkansas State Highway Commission sponsored a Statewide Freight Transportation Forum in July 2001. The purpose of the Forum was to bring together freight transportation stakeholders to discuss issues and opportunities, gather information, exchange ideas, and gain knowledge on how to improve the state's freight transportation network. Comments were received from freight transportation providers, economic development groups, academics, federal and state agencies, and others. This Forum represented an important step in developing strategies to enhance freight transportation in Arkansas.



Scenic Environmental Aesthetics

2001 Globe Award

The Department's Pine Bluff Bypass project received national recognition as the primary winner of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association's "2001 Globe Award." This award recognizes excellence in environmental protection and mitigation in the planning, design, and construction of transportation and infrastructure projects in the United States. The Pine Bluff Project allowed the much-needed southern bypass and major economic corridor to progress while also relieving local flooding problems by increasing floodplain storage, restoring 175 acres of wetlands, preserving 200 areas of bottomland hardwood forest, and saving \$12 million dollars of taxpayer funds in the process.

Wildlife Mitigation

To facilitate overland movement of wildlife between wetland and uplands habitats, underpasses have been placed in one of the new sections of Interstate 440 at the Rixey Bayou Wetland Mitigation Area in Pulaski County. A camera monitors the movement of many different animal species through the underpasses which reduce highway mortality and the effects on habitat and population fragmentation. More underpasses will be incorporated in future projects.



Coyote Using I-440 Wildlife Underpass



Special Highway Designations

I-555 Designation

Interstate 555 will be the official designation for the section of Highway 63 from Interstate 55 at Lake David to Highway 49 (Southwest Drive) in Jonesboro upon completion of the highway to Interstate design standards. The designation was received from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 2001. The 26-mile portion of Highway 63 from Payneway to Highway 49 has been constructed to full Interstate standards and the remaining sections (Payneway to Interstate 55 and Highway 49 to Highway 63B) are scheduled for upgrading. Signs designating the highway as “Future I-555” will be in place until the entire route is completed to Interstate standards. The Interstate will connect Jonesboro and the surrounding area with Interstates 40 and 55 in the West Memphis area.



Scenic Byway Designations

Interstate 530 from White Hall to the eastern edge of Pine Bluff was designated as an Arkansas Scenic Byway in 2001. This byway travels along Bayou Bartholomew, a unique example of a lowland wetland, meandering along the edge of Pine Bluff.

Portions of Highways 1 and 4 in Desha County were designated as part of the Great River Road Scenic Byway by the Arkansas State Highway Commission. The Great River Road is part of an international route extending from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico highlighting the Mississippi River.

I-130 Designation

Designation of Loop 245 in Texarkana from Interstate 30 to the new location of Highway 71 as future Interstate 130 has been approved by the AASHTO Special Committee on U.S. Route Numbering and the FHWA. Loop 245 can be signed as I-130 upon completion of the highway to Interstate standards. The 5.8-mile portion of Loop 245 will greatly enhance travel between Interstate 30 and the industrial areas of Texarkana and will ultimately become a part of the overall route from New Orleans, Louisiana to Kansas City, Missouri.



Winter Storm Damage

Winter ice storms caused severe damage and power outages in most of Arkansas and as a result 52 counties were declared major disaster areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The storms left their toll on Arkansas' state highways and rights-of-way. Department expenditures for labor, equipment rental, and materials to fight the storms totaled approximately \$40 million. For comparison the Department spent \$40 million in the

last ten years coping with winter storm damage. Department employees worked under difficult conditions and in extreme cold to make travel possible and safe during the most costly natural disaster in Arkansas history. Crews worked 24 hours a day to clear the damage. They were commended by the Commission for their great dedication and exemplary service based on comments received from citizens.



Innovation and Technology

Materials Lab Complex

The Department's new Materials Laboratory Complex was dedicated in June 2001. The 55,000 square-foot building located on West Base Line Road replaced the lab which had been in use for 37 years.



The new testing laboratory will be the cornerstone of inspection, testing and approval of all materials used in highway construction and maintenance. This complex provides one of the most modern materials testing laboratories of any transportation department in the nation.

The Materials Laboratory provides for in-depth testing of many asphalt mixes which are used extensively in all of the Department's roadway improvement projects.

Infrared Technology Detects Inoperative Brakes

The Department evaluates many innovative technologies as they become available to the transportation community. One example is a recent research project that compared two inspection systems, both of which use infrared technology to detect inoperative brakes on commercial vehicles. Thermal imagery using infrared cameras has been proven to be an effective screening method for detecting malfunctioning brake systems. If the results of the scan indicate a problem, the vehicle is pulled over for a more detailed inspection.

GIS

The Department is using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology that combines layers of information to develop comprehensive maps. These maps are then used to assist in the streamlining and evaluation of environmental impacts on highway projects such as noise analysis on potential highway alignments. Particular emphasis is placed on historic preservation, scenic beautification, control and removal of outdoor advertising, wetland mitigation, and archeological planning and research.

GIS technology is also used with other data sources to develop comprehensive maps showing cultural resource locations, public water wellhead locations, and hazardous waste sites.



Safety

State Lowers Drunk Driving Standards

The 83rd Arkansas General Assembly reduced the maximum standard for blood alcohol content for persons driving while intoxicated from .10 percent to .08 percent, making Arkansas eligible to receive funds under Title 23 U.S.C., Section 163 Safety Incentive Grant Funds. The funds are being utilized to supplement the railroad crossing safety program, to support the drug and alcohol safety educational program under the Department of Health, and to develop a district court automation system by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Studies show the lower threshold has the potential to save between 10 and 16 lives in Arkansas each year.

Fines Double in Work Zones

Legislation was passed by the 83rd Arkansas General Assembly doubling the fines in construction zones. The Arkansas Highway Police as well as the Arkansas State Police have stepped up their enforcement in areas leading to construction zones.

Safety Training Opportunities

In an effort to reduce traffic fatalities, injuries and crashes in the state, the Department contracted with 32 local law enforcement agencies to provide funds for overtime enforcement of all traffic laws with an emphasis on alcohol, seat belt and child safety enforcement. A total of 436 Arkansas State Police, Arkansas Highway Police, and local law enforcement officers were trained in standardized field sobriety testing and the proper use of seat belts and child restraints.



Workforce and Training

Workforce

The Department's workforce numbered approximately 3,794 employees in 2001. Eighty-one percent were male, nineteen percent were female, and sixteen percent were minorities. Depending on interests, skills and experience, positions are available at the Central Office in Little Rock, ten district headquarters, 84 county maintenance headquarters, and 32 resident engineer offices statewide.

The Department is the state's largest employer of civil engineers – including planning, research, design, materials, construction, and maintenance engineers. Other employment positions include: accountants, agronomists, archeologists, attorneys, auto body repairers, cartographers, chemists, computer-aided drafters/designers, computer programmers, electricians, environmental scientists, ferryboat operators, general laborers, human resources personnel, land surveyors, law enforcement officers, materials inspectors, mechanics, office administrators, painters, photographers, public affairs personnel, realtors, researchers, sign makers, summer interns, truck drivers and welders.

Training

The Department offers its employees specialized technical and non-technical training. Courses range from prevention of on-the-job accidents, promotion of safety procedures, and supervisory training for career development. A database is maintained to log the number of training hours employees receive.

A career development program is administered to encourage young people to pursue careers in the transportation industry.

Since the inception of the Motorist Assistance Patrol in July 2000 additional training has become necessary. Classes in Radio/Telephone Protocol, Hazardous Materials Training, Service Vehicle Operations, Basic Mechanical Skills and Equipment Training, and Fire Extinguisher Training have been added.

Other ongoing training activities include: CPR, First Aid, Sexual Harassment and Bloodborne Pathogens.

Effects of September 11, 2001

Effects of September 11, 2001

The events of September 11, 2001, changed our nation and our lives forever. Tragedies of this nature create a concern for the safety and security of our citizens and employees. All Department employees have significantly increased their awareness of potential security threats targeted against the state's highways, as well as Department computer systems and facilities. The Arkansas Highway Police (AHP) Division has significantly increased inspections of hazardous material transports through Arkansas and is maintaining a vigilant watch of critical transportation structures such as major river bridges and tunnels. A task force made up of federal, state, and local jurisdictions was initiated in an effort to provide targeted surveillance and responses to critical bridge incidents. The Department and AHP

participate at the national, state, and local level in security and intelligence briefings and coordinated efforts to ensure the continued security of state and national transportation modes.

The Department continues to review, enhance, and develop its current security system to provide a more secure work environment for Department employees, visitors, and assets.

