

# Arkansas Highways

Summer 2005



# Director's Message



## SAFETY FIRST

This year, there are 99 days between Memorial Day and Labor Day. These are considered the prime vacation and travel days of the year. It is during this time that many of us take family vacations, or schedule weekend trips to visit friends and relatives in other cities.

But this is also the prime season for highway construction and maintenance activities. Hundreds of miles of Arkansas' highways are being resurfaced, reconstructed, or repaired during the summer months. This

can mean detours, closed lanes, and narrow roadways.

The good news in this is that lane closures on our Interstate system will be at a minimum thanks to the completion of many projects in our Interstate Rehabilitation Program. For the past five summers, motorists have had to endure more Interstate lane closures than normal because of the massive amount of work taking place to bring our Interstates up to an acceptable condition. Motorists are now being rewarded for their patience with smoother travel lanes and fewer Interstate construction zones than in recent years.

But we can't let the success of the IRP overshadow the work that is still taking place on other highways. Drivers and workers must remember these simple words - SAFETY FIRST.

Work zone safety is a two-way street. Whether traveling in a car or operating a piece of equipment, we share responsibility for each other's safety in construction zones.

As drivers, we are at risk because the route has been temporarily changed by construction. It may be unfamiliar, narrower than usual, and dotted with barricades, cones, and orange barrels. There may also be heavy equipment on or near the roadway. Construction and maintenance workers' jobs take them within inches of vehicles passing by throughout the day. They cannot afford to make a mistake.

A split-second of inattention - one glance away - by either a driver or a worker could result in a serious or fatal accident. No one can afford to become complacent.

It is up to each of us, whether traveling on a vacation or working behind the barricades, to keep safety foremost in our minds. If we practice good safety habits, both on and off the job, we will have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Remember - SAFETY FIRST.

  
Director of Highways and Transportation

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John Ed Regenold  
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# Arkansas Highways

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department - Summer 2005

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**Back:** State Highway 23, spanning the Arkansas River at Ozark in Franklin County

# An Interview With New Commissioner John Ed Regenold



John Ed Regenold of Armorel was appointed to serve a ten-year term on the Arkansas State Highway Commission by Governor Mike Huckabee on January 26, 2005. He was sworn in as Commissioner on February 10, 2005, and will serve until January of 2015. Regenold is a native of Northeast Arkansas and is the Chairman of the Armorel Planting Company. He has served on numerous commissions and boards such as the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. He is also a member of the St. Francis Levee Board and is a Commissioner for the District 17 Drainage District. He is the Chairman of the Mississippi County Hospital System Board and a member of the Arkansas Northeast College Foundation. In a recent interview with Public Information Coordinator Randy Ort, Regenold discussed his first few months as a Highway Commissioner.

**ORT:**

**Mr. Regenold, what were your feelings when Governor Mike Huckabee first asked you to accept this appointment to the Highway Commission?**

**REGENOLD:**

I was honored. I was called about two nights before the announcement and was told not to tell anybody. So I proceeded to keep quiet about it - but I did tell my family.

On the day of the announcement, I got to the Capitol early, about two hours beforehand. I sat in the Governor's office about an hour and a half because they didn't want me outside since the appointment was a secret. When I walked into the Governor's conference room and saw all the people, I didn't expect it - I was shocked. But I was honored that the Governor picked me, and I hope that I can live up to what he expects of me.

**ORT:**

**What is it about the job of Highway Commissioner that is appealing to you?**

**REGENOLD:**

I have always wanted to do things that help our state. I live in an area of eastern Arkansas, in a Delta county, where we have to have some economic development help. But that need isn't just limited to the Delta. We need good roads and economic development for all of Arkansas, and I think I might be able to help that. The Governor has been really good to us over in the Delta. By him appointing me to the Highway Commission - whether I do anything or not - I think it has shown the Governor has faith in our area.

**ORT:**

**You mentioned economic development. You are a former member of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. How can that experience benefit you on the Highway Commission?**

**REGENOLD:**

I went to about 25 to 30 different communities in my five years on the AEDC, most of the time driving. I drove over every single solitary Interstate in the state, plus some of the other

roads, too. I went from Texarkana to Blytheville to Northwest Arkansas to El Dorado and Crossett. I went all over this state on those roads, and not all of them are four-lane roads as you know. I learned a lot about the state and about the roads, but I also learned what economic development consists of. That's knowledge I didn't have before I was on that commission, and I've tried to bring some of that knowledge to the Highway Commission. I think the value of the roads is enormous, and I want to bring a positive message, full of hope. I think we can succeed. The five years on the AEDC were invaluable to me in that regard.

**ORT:**

**If sounds like you believe that good roads, good highways are an economic development tool.**

**REGENOLD:**

That's right. You've got to have highways connecting areas - four-lane connectors. And we've got to have a regional concept - connecting region to region - not just city to city. That means everything. In Northeast Arkansas for example, our region could include as far over as Blytheville to Jonesboro to Paragould to Pochahontas to every place up in that area. That's my philosophy. That's my thinking.

**ORT:**

**Aside from being on the AEDC and the Highway Commission, you're involved in several private businesses. How can some of that experience help you on the Highway Commission?**

**REGENOLD:**

I come from an agricultural background completely. My father was in the farming business, and therefore, I am in the farming business. As far as education, I went to Kentucky Military Institute and to the University of Arkansas. After that, I came home and started farming. You could say that I got my degree from the "E. M. Regenold College." That was my father. About 40 or 50 years under him and you have learned more than from any school. That's as good as a college degree right there.

I'm also on the St. Francis Levee Board. We deal with 160 miles of Mississippi River levee, and 75 miles of St. Francis River levee. Our job is to protect the integrity of the levees. The waterways in Arkansas are very important to our agricultural and transportation systems. The Mississippi River, for instance, is a tremendous asset to Eastern Arkansas and, really, the whole state. It is so cheap to ship commodities by boat. Right now our main artery to the river is Interstate 55 coming up





from the South. But we need other connectors. If we can tie in Northeast Arkansas to Central Arkansas using Highway 18 over to Jonesboro, then go from Jonesboro over to Highway 67, that will open up Northeast Arkansas to Central Arkansas, and probably bring a lot of delivery traffic. That is one of my objectives – to connect regions of the state and to better tie together our modes of transportation.

**ORT:**

**You've already met with several groups to talk about highway needs. What have you been hearing from people in the state regarding highways?**

**REGENOLD:**

People don't understand about funding for highways. They think the Highway Commissioners have a lot of money to work with, but that money probably wouldn't build ten miles of road. They don't understand what we have to work with, where the money comes from, or how we determine where to spend it.

They don't understand the difference between wants and needs. Everybody has wants, but you can't go build all they want because then you can't meet all the needs. In our state, we do a dadgum good job with the little revenue we have to put on these roads. That's something that people need to understand.

**ORT:**

**You mentioned the need to connect regions of the state with good, hopefully, four-lane highways. Have you had a chance to identify any specific highways you'd like to see done during your tenure on the Highway Commission?**

**REGENOLD:**

I'd like to see all of them done! But if you're talking about specific highways, I think the Highway Commission has already done a good job of identifying our needs. Major corridors like I-49 and I-69 are critical. Highways 412, 67, 65, 82, 18 – I could go on and on. They are all important and they all need to be done. Addressing our needs with our limited resources is a tremendous challenge that I take very seriously. And I know the other Commissioners feel the same way.

One area that I will mention is West Memphis. I think we've got to do more over there. That is the hottest spot in the state in my opinion. It's just beginning to blossom over there. I think there's a tremendous amount of potential in the West Memphis area.

Like I mentioned earlier, in Northeast Arkansas, I think the main corridor we've got to get is Highway 18 between Blytheville and Jonesboro. Then you can go on from there to other places, like over to Highway 67. There are others too, but I better stop there. There's no way to list them all and I don't want to offend anyone by leaving one out.

**ORT:**

**What has been your impression of the Highway Department operations so far?**

**REGENOLD:** I want to bring out that I'm impressed with the organization and the way it operates. I mean that, I'm not polishing apples, I'm telling the truth here. I was amazed at the way things work smoothly. I have never seen an organization as well-organized. Everybody's got a job and everybody does their job. From what I've seen at the Highway Department, I don't see how you do what you do. But everything is like clockwork – one of the most impressive outfits I've ever seen.

**ORT:**

**I think you're finding out that being on the Highway Commission can be time consuming. Has being a Highway Commissioner affected any of your other business or personal endeavors?**

REGENOLD:

I think as a Highway Commissioner, you can be what you want to be. I imagine some want to be more involved than others. My concept is that we have good people on staff that can do their job. I'm going to do what I need to do and let them do what they need to do. I'm not going to be a hands-on Commissioner when it comes to the day-to-day business of the Department. We've got good people working on staff and I don't see any point in me trying to tell them what to do. I'm here for a certain reason, and I'll fulfill that reason, but I'm not going to get involved in the day-to-day operations.

**ORT:**

**Are there any final thoughts you want to share about your future as a Commissioner?**

REGENOLD:

Something my father told me when I came home to farm: Be careful what you wish for, because you might get it, and love something that you can learn from. Knowledge is important. In ten years, there's no way I can learn everything there is to learn about highways. Highways have always interested me. I think about how they are constructed. I love to learn about them. As for our highway system, I hope we can tie everything together. The idea about four-lanes tying everything together is a great idea. But not everyone is going to get what they want. We'll do what we can to see that they get what they need. When one person gets a steak, somebody else might get a hamburger, but everyone's going to get something to eat.



# 15 Years of Rodeo



AHTD teams gathered from across the state in Little Rock for the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Equipment Operator's Rodeo June 9th, 2005. Winners from District semi-final competitions have an opportunity each year to walk away with the state title. The engines started revving shortly after 8 a.m. for competition in tractor mower, tractor/lowboy, single axle dump truck, tandem axle dump truck, motor patrol and backhoe categories.

From guiding mowers through obstacle courses to placing golf balls with backhoes to knocking tennis balls off posts with a motor patrol blade, these dedicated workers displayed award-winning skills. After a luncheon for employees and families, AHTD Director Dan Flowers and Highway Commission members announced the final results.

District Engineer Frank Russenberger was proud that District 8 won Team Champion. "Many of our employees look forward to annual participation in the District and State Rodeos and they really are excited now that we will have four members of our District Team going to the regional competition in Myrtle Beach," Russenberger stated.

The top two winners in each category from the day's competition will travel to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, for the 2005 Regional Rodeo featuring teams from South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Arkansas. The competition is tentatively set for October.

## TRACTOR / LOWBOY

- 1st Place — Wesley Hall, District 5
- 2nd Place — Darrell Barnes, District 8
- 3rd Place — Tim Cagle, District 2

## TANDEM AXLE DUMP TRUCK

- 1st Place — Joey Ragland, District 9
- 2nd Place — Kenny Howard, District 8\*
- 3rd Place — Johnny Light, District 1

## SINGLE AXLE DUMP TRUCK

- 1st Place — Bobby Dean, District 4
- 2nd Place — Joe Villalobos, District 8
- 3rd Place — Jeremy Evans, District 7

## TRACTOR MOWER

- 1st Place — Fred Ridenhour, District 4\*
- 2nd Place — Ronald Hughes, District 3
- 3rd Place — Eugene Farrell, Central Office

## BACKHOE

- 1st Place — Randy White, District 8
- 2nd Place — Kenny Riley, District 9\*
- 3rd Place — Rick Hale, District 10

## MOTOR PATROL

- 1st Place — Randall Edgmon, District 9\*
- 2nd Place — Lance Baker, District 9
- 3rd Place — Dennis Langston, District 8

## TEAM CHAMPION

District 8 — Darrell Barnes, Paul Charton, Kenny Howard, Dennis Langston, David Pruitt, Randy Tankersley, Joe Villalobos, Randy White

\* **Kenny Howard:** State Champion 2000, 2004, Regional Champion 2004.

**Fred Ridenhour:** State Champion 1999 - 2001 & 2004, 3rd Place in 2004 Regional Rodeo.

**Kenny Riley:** State Champion 1993 - '96, 1998, 2000 - '01, Regional Champion 2004.

**Randall Edgmon:** State Champion 2001 - '04 and 3rd Place in 2004 Regional Rodeo.



**FIRST PLACE**

***Rodeo Winners:** (l. to r.) Joey Ragland, District 9, Tandem Axle Dump Truck; Bobby Dean, District 4, Single Axle Dump Truck; Randall Edgmon, District 9, Motor Patrol; Randy White, District 8, Backhoe; Wesley Hall, District 5, Tractor / Lowboy; Fred Ridenhour, District 4, Tractor Mower.*



**TEAM CHAMPIONS**

***District Eight** won the title of Team Champions for 2005. (l. to r.), Joe Villalobos, Paul Charton, Randy Tankersley, Dennis Langston, Frank Russenberger (District Engineer), Kenny Howard, David Pruitt, Darrell Barnes, Randy White.*

# Department Receives Statewide Recognition

The early months of 2005 saw the Highway and Transportation Department receive numerous awards from organizations around the State.

The Department was the recipient of a QBS Award (Qualification Based Selection) from the American Council of Engineering Companies of Arkansas on February 24th. The award was presented for exemplary use of the QBS selection process and promotion of the practice of QBS in the selection of engineering services.

"The Highway and Transportation Department has always been a proponent of the QBS process and we wanted to show our appreciation for that," Ann Hamilton, Executive Director of the Council stated.

On March 3rd, the AHTD was the recipient of an award at the 1st Annual Corporate Executive Minority Business Awards, presented by the Arkansas Regional Minority Supplier Development

Council. The Department received the Government/Public Service Award for outstanding commitment to minority business contracting and purchasing.

The Department was recognized at the 2005 Arkansas Governor's Conference on Tourism held March 8th in Little Rock. The AHTD was the recipient of the Crystal Award for its work with the Department of Parks and Tourism on plans to rebuild four Arkansas Welcome Centers. Centers at El Dorado and Texarkana opened in late 2004. A new center in Fort Smith opened May 24, 2005, and one at Corning is scheduled to open later this year. The Department was also commended for its improvements to state park roadways across the state.

"We wanted to recognize the contributions of the Highway and Transportation Department and honor them for their continued support," stated Richard Davies, Executive Director of Parks and Tourism.



(l. to r.) The Crystal Award from the 2005 Arkansas Governor's Conference on Tourism; the QBS Award for Exemplary use of the selection process and promotion of the practice of QBS in the selection of engineering services; and the Government/Public Service Award for Outstanding Commitment to Minority Business Contracting and Purchasing.

# Department Employees Receive Recognition

The University of Arkansas recently recognized two top Department employees. Dan Flowers, Director, received the 2005 University of Arkansas College of Engineering's Distinguished Alumni Award. Scott Bennett, AHTD Assistant Chief Engineer for Planning, was recognized with the Young Alumni Award from the College. They received the awards at the College of Engineering Alumni Awards Banquet on April 9, 2005, in Fayetteville.

The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes exceptional professional and personal achievement. The Young Alumni Award also recognizes exceptional professional and personal achievement for graduates who are under the age of 40. Nominations were submitted by the College of Engineering alumni, faculty and staff members. The award selection com-

mittee was composed of engineering alumni leaders, department heads, faculty members and staff.

Ashok Saxena, Dean of Engineering, explained, "We are using the words 'imagination, innovation and inspiration' to represent the attitude and achievements of alumni. They are one of our college's biggest strengths and it is truly incredible to see the difference they are making in the world."

Prissy Hickerson, Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman, said of Dan Flowers, "He is certainly an asset to the Department. His work at the AHTD for the past 36 years is a credit to the U. of A. and the College of Engineering." Hickerson continued, "We are also pleased to have Scott Bennett as our Assistant Chief Engineer for Planning. It is great that his alma mater has recognized him for his work."



(l. to r.) Dr. Bob Elliott, Civil Engineering Department Head; Distinguished Alumni Award recipients Grady Harvell, President of AFCO Steel; Dan Flowers, AHTD Director; and Young Alumni Award recipient Scott Bennett, AHTD Assistant Chief Engineer for Planning.

# Arkansas Highway Police Graduates 27 Officers

Commencement exercises were held on March 11, 2005, to welcome 27 new graduates to the Arkansas Highway Police.

The graduates had recently completed an intensive, 21-week basic training course that challenged them in every aspect of becoming an officer with the Arkansas Highway Police.

"They put in long hours and hard work to graduate and become members of the Highway Police," stated Arkansas Highway Police Chief Ron Burks. "We are proud to welcome them to our ranks."

Those graduating were Sherry Adams, Schawntell Arberry, Lonnie Banks, Douglas Beliew, Sandy Brown, Fidel Caballero, James Canard, Raunona Clemons, James Cooper, Phillip Dunlap, Jeremy Gore, James Hamrick, Joseph Harris, Chad Heath, Robert Johnson, James Jones, Jamie Jordan, Vicky Lee,

Andreas Pruitt, Anita Ray, Jeffrey Smith, Michael Smith, Donna Stobaugh, Sally Sweeden, Kreston Taylor, Alvin Todd and Jeremy Watkins.

"These graduates now become part of an organization that is recognized nationally for leadership in the fields of motor carrier safety, drug interdiction, hazardous materials enforcement and training," stated Highway Commission Chairman Prissy Hickerson. "We thank them for their hard work over the past many weeks and for accepting the unique challenges of becoming a member of the Arkansas Highway Police."

In 2004, officers of the Arkansas Highway Police issued 199 drug citations, inspected just under 50,000 vehicles and weighed over two million trucks.



*The 2005 graduating class of the Arkansas Highway Police.*

# New Hotline to Aid in Reducing Roadside Litter

It only takes a short drive along one of Arkansas' highways or Interstates for motorists to experience Arkansas' natural beauty. Our state has an abundance of lakes, rivers and mountains to enjoy. Unfortunately, there is also an abundance of litter that distracts from this beautiful landscape.

In fact, just last year, 61,000 cubic yards of litter were collected on Arkansas' roadsides by the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department and other groups. Not only is it an eyesore, it cost \$3.8 million to pick up that litter in 2004.

In an effort to address the problem, the AHTD has introduced a new Litter Reporting System featuring a 24-hour, toll-free hotline that motorists can call when they spot a littering violation along any street, road or highway.

Phone calls to 1-866-811-1222 to report littering will be answered 24 hours a day by an office of the Arkansas Highway Police. A record of the incident will be kept and a letter will then be sent to the registered owner of the vehicle regarding the violation.

"Information about recurring violations reported from the same vehicle will be tracked and may eventually result in an in-person visit by an Arkansas Highway Police Officer to investigate the problem," said Arkansas Highway Police Chief Ron Burks. "Our goal is not to issue citations, but to let both law abiding citizens and



AHTD Director Dan Flowers explains the new Litter Hotline program at the state kickoff event.



litter violators know littering is a problem we take seriously and that we will pursue the enforcement of Arkansas' litter laws," added Burks.

"We expect three benefits by implementing the new Litter Reporting System," said Director Dan Flow-

ers of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. "Motorists who see the signs and become aware of the program will be reminded that they can be reported for littering by other motorists, and may be more conscious of their own littering behavior. Second, the program will give citizens who see littering some remedy to the frustration of a few careless motorists trashing the natural beauty of our state, and third, we hope that any person who receives the letter will be more thoughtful of their littering habits and will change their behavior."

There are currently eight other states that have implemented similar Litter Reporting Systems.

The Highway and Transportation Department's new program is part of a comprehensive plan to curtail roadside litter in Arkansas. At the request of the Arkansas Highway Commission, a Litter Task Force was formed in 2003 from federal, state and local governments and associations to review current litter prevention and removal activities and identify areas of improvement. Action teams were then established to focus on the areas of education and outreach, litter pick up, enforcement and legislative funding.

In addition to the litter reduction effort, representatives from associations and state agencies such as the Highway Police, Arkansas State Police, Chiefs of Police & Sheriffs Associations, the Departments of Environmental Quality, Parks & Tourism, Game & Fish Commission and the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission have diligently worked together to solve Arkansas' litter problem. Additional programs and policies are still in development as a result of the Litter Task Force's effort to create incentives for litter enforcement and clean up activities.



Arkansas First Lady Janet Huckabee (top, center) assists in the installation of a new sign displaying the litter hotline.

# Highway Police Remind Motorists To Slow Down

The Arkansas Highway Police observed National Work Zone Awareness Week April 3 – 9 by conducting radar-assisted speed enforcement activities on Interstate 40 in North Little Rock.

Set up in a construction zone and disguised as construction workers, officers used radar to identify speeding motorists and issued tickets for traveling too fast through a work zone area.

The motto for this year's National Work Zone Awareness Week was "Slow Down or Pay Up." Similar enforcement activities took place across the nation.

A total of 46 tickets were issued in the Interstate 40 work zone in a 3-hour period on the morning of April 4th. Of the citations issued, 43 were for speeding and 36 of those were in excess of 15 miles per hour over the 55 mph speed limit.

"Ensuring the safety of construction workers and the motoring public in work zones continues to be an enforcement priority of the Highway Police," says Arkansas Highway Police Chief Ron Burks. "National Work Zone Awareness Week serves to showcase the enforcement efforts the Highway Police have been involved in for years and that will continue well into the future."

With nearly a 50% increase in work zone fatalities nationally between 1997 and 2003, work zone safety is a growing roadway safety concern. In 2003, there were 1,028 work zone fatalities in the U.S. During that same year, total crashes in Arkansas' city, county and state roadway work zones were 3,583, resulting in 24 fatalities.

In addition to the efforts of local law enforcement agencies throughout the country, the Federal Highway Administration is working to improve public awareness of work zone safety through a wide array of activities including a clearinghouse website, training courses for engineers, conferences, interactive CDs for younger drivers, guidebooks and brochures.

To educate motorists about work zone safety issues, a video called "Driving in Orange" is available through a partnership between the AHTD and the Mack Blackwell Rural Transportation Center (MBTC) at the University of Arkansas. This 13-minute video provides helpful safety tips and emphasizes safe driving practices in work zones for motorists of all skill levels. Educators and citizens are encouraged to request a copy of this video on VHS or DVD by calling the MBTC at (479) 575-6026 or sending an email to [wchesser@uark.edu](mailto:wchesser@uark.edu).



*Corporal Ross Batson, dressed as a construction worker, uses radar to enforce the speed limit.*



*Highway Police stopped several motorists on Interstate 40 during Workzone Awareness Week.*



# Arkansas Highway Police Participate In Roadcheck 2005

The Arkansas Highway Police joined forces with law enforcement agencies across the U.S., Canada and Mexico in June for Roadcheck 2005.

Roadcheck 2005 emphasized safety and security on North American highways through the inspection of commercial vehicles and drivers over a three-day period.

The annual event, in its 18th year, is sponsored by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance. Truck and bus safety inspectors were on the job night and day during the 72-hour period performing inspections on commercial vehicles and their drivers at sites along major highways. In addition, roving patrols inspected commercial vehicles traveling other highways. The goal was to reduce the number of crashes involving commercial trucks and motor coaches.

Arkansas law enforcement officials set up checkpoints on Interstate 30 near Benton and on Highway 270 between Sheridan and Malvern. By the end of the event, 437 inspections had been performed within the state. A total of 1,099 violations were detected.

"We consider Roadcheck to be a significant enforcement activity that highlights the importance of ensuring safe travel of commercial vehicles," stated Arkansas Highway Police Chief Ron Burks. "Our Arkansas Highway Police officers assigned to Roadcheck represent just a portion of the 9,000 plus North American officers and inspectors dedicated to making a contribution toward the achievement of our goal."

Nationally, a record 60,562 inspections were performed at 1,248 locations during Roadcheck 2005.

"Working together, we are achieving results," added Burks.

In addition to roadside inspections, Roadcheck 2005 was also an opportunity to distribute educational and safety information to drivers passing through the inspection stations.



*Officers hand out educational materials to truck drivers on Interstate 30.*



*PFC Dwayne Hines performs an inspection at the Interstate 30 checkpoint in Benton.*



*CPL William Scott and his German Shepherd, Yvo, check the engine of an 18-wheeler for illegal drugs.*

# My Favorite Drive Highway 5

*-Drive suggested by Barbara Cox,  
Bridge Division*

Winding its way through north central Arkansas is Highway 5, a highway that offers a bit of everything that Arkansas has to offer. A journey along Highway 5 leads to a glimpse of Arkansas' past, fun at one of our state's most popular lakes, peaceful mountain scenery, Ozark mountain music and one of the most fascinating caverns in this area of the country.

Our trip on Highway 5 to north Arkansas begins at Cabot. There, one will find the Cabot Museum, home to hundreds of items grouped into military, political and social history displays. The museum is located on the Cabot High School campus at 401 N. Lincoln.

Traveling north out of Cabot on Highway 5, motorists will come to the small town of Romance. Each year for two weeks during Valentines Day season, this small community's post office is big business. Hundreds of Valentines Day letters and cards make their way to the Romance Post Office from across the country and as far away as England, France and Canada in order to be marked with a commemorative Romance cancellation stamp. This year's cancellation stamp featured Cupid shooting an arrow above the words, "Love Station, Romance, Arkansas."

Continuing northward out of Romance, motorists will come to the town of Heber Springs. This area is one of the state's most popular vacation destinations and is home to Greers Ferry Lake and the Little Red River. The lake offers many areas for outdoor recreation including swimming, camping and hiking. There are plenty of opportunities for fishermen on the lake, and trout fishing can be found on the Little Red River. People from across the country come to Heber Springs every year in



July for the World Championship Cardboard Boat Races on the lake. There is also plenty of shopping to be found in town.

Leaving Greers Ferry Lake, the highway begins to climb into the Ozark Mountains and eventually leads to the "Folk Music Capital of the World," Mountain View. Any evening of the week on Mountain View's historic Courthouse, live music by local residents breaks out on every corner for those with time to listen and enjoy. Hometown and visiting musicians with banjos, guitars, dulcimers and fiddles play old folk songs of the Ozarks. There are also many music shows in town. The area around the Stone County Courthouse is the heart of a diverse shopping district and home to a variety of craft, gift and antique shops.

Just north of town is the Ozark Folk Center, a unique State Park devoted to preserving Ozark music, crafts and heritage. The park features traditional craft demonstrations in basketry, blacksmithing, candle making and more. In addition, living histories, live music and workshops share the story of the state's Ozark mountain culture.



*The U.S. Post Office in Romance.*



The area around Mountain View offers hiking trails throughout the Ozarks, guided fishing trips and the recently opened Syllamo Mountain Bike Trail. Once completed, the bike trail will be over 50 miles long and will make this area of

*The Greers Ferry Dam was dedicated by President John F. Kennedy on October 3, 1963.*



*The Bugshuffle String Band performs on an outdoor stage at the Ozark Folk Center.*

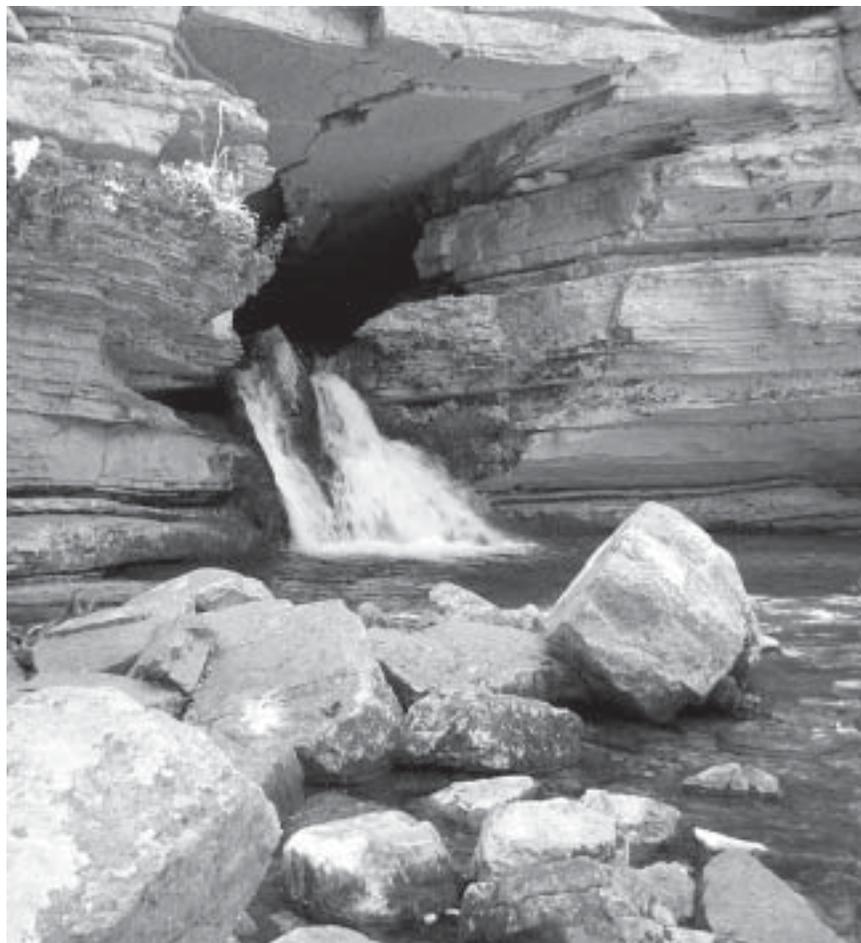
Arkansas one of the top mountain biking areas in the country.

Continuing north out of Mountain View is the unique and fascinating Blanchard Springs Caverns, one of the most spectacular and carefully developed caves found anywhere. To reach the caverns, travel seven miles north of Mountain View on Highway 9, which runs concurrently with Highway 5 in this area, and then six miles west on Highway 14. The visitor center features displays, a gift shop and a short video presentation on the formation of the caverns. Elevators then take visitors underground to a choice of three different tours inside the caverns. Two tours are on a paved, lighted pathway and are led by Forest Service guides. A more adventurous third tour takes visitors to undeveloped sections of the cave. This

incredible living cave stays a constant 58 degrees year round. Back on ground level, the area around the caverns features hiking trails, picnic areas, campgrounds along North Sylamore Creek and trout fishing in Mirror Lake.

Leaving Blanchard Springs, it is a short drive on Highway 5 through the Ozark National Forest to the town of Calico Rock. The town is located on the White River where fishing and boating opportunities abound. The historic downtown area hosts thousands of visitors each year and is listed on the National Historic Register.

The last destination on this Highway 5 drive is Norfolk Lake and nearby Mountain Home. Norfolk Lake has more than 550 miles of shoreline perfect for watersports of all kinds. There



are also 19 developed parks for those who want to camp in the outdoors. Fishermen will find almost all varieties of fresh water fish in the lake.

The city of Mountain Home lies in an area that includes Lakes Norfolk and Bull Shoals. Also nearby are the White, Norfolk and Buffalo Rivers and beautiful mountain scenery. It is no wonder it is called one of the best vacation and retirement spots in the country. In addition to outdoor recreation, visitors will find antique stores, great restaurants and championship golf courses.

A trip along Highway 5 into north Arkansas offers so many things to do, visitors to the area may want to plan on making this favorite drive a two-day weekend adventure.

Do you have a favorite drive along Arkansas' highways? If so, email our Public Affairs office at [david.nilles@arkansashighways.com](mailto:david.nilles@arkansashighways.com) or call 501-569-2508. It may be featured in a future issue of *Arkansas Highways*.

*Blanchard Springs pours from the caverns at this popular destination in the Ozark Mountains.*

# Ground Broken for Cabot Project

Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department officials joined local officials on January 6, 2005, to look over final plans for the Highway 89 relocation in downtown Cabot.

The \$690,000 project was awarded to Freshour Construction to improve the intersection at Second and Main. The 0.2-mile relocation will straighten out two intersections and alleviate congestion that has increased as the community has grown.



*(l. to r.), Gary McMillan of First Security Bank in Cabot; State Representative Sid Rosenbaum, State Senator Bobby Glover, AHTD Director Dan Flowers, Highway Commissioner Carl Rosenbaum and Assistant to the Director Frank Vozel look over plans for the Highway 89 relocation project in downtown Cabot.*

# Another Welcome Center Dedicated

The new Van Buren/Fort Smith Welcome Center was officially dedicated on May 24, 2005. The new \$3 million facility is a 6,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art, rock and log building sitting on 10 acres.

The AHTD and the Department of Parks and Tourism partnered to promote the many attractions our state has to offer. The Welcome Centers are a result of that partnership. There are 12 such facilities across the state.

The plan to rebuild up to eight of the Centers began in 2003 when the AHTD let contracts totaling \$13.4 million to rebuild four new Welcome Centers in El Dorado, Texarkana, Van Buren/Fort Smith and Corning. The Corning Center will open in late 2005.



*Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee cuts the ribbon to dedicate the new Van Buren/Fort Smith Welcome Center. Members of the Highway Commission and the Department of Parks and Tourism were on hand, as well as local dignitaries.*

## Highway 64 Improvements

### Vilonia

An open forum public involvement meeting for the proposed Highway 64 improvements in Vilonia was held at Vilonia High School on October 28, 2004. Attendance at the meeting was approximately 345.

Plans call for improving approximately 8.5 miles in the Vilonia area. Information on southern bypass alternatives and widening to four lanes on the existing alignment were available.

Attending the meeting from the Highway and Transportation Department were Environmental, Roadway Design, Right of Way and Public Affairs staff as well as District Eight personnel.

## Widening of Highway 67/167

### Sherwood

Approximately 92 citizens gathered for an open forum public hearing at the Fellowship Christian Center in Sherwood on December 9, 2004, to hear plans for improving Highway 67/167.

Plans call for increasing the capacity of Highway 67/167 by adding an additional travel lane in each direction extending from McCain Boulevard in North Little Rock to Redmond Road in Jacksonville. In order to improve safety along the route, the frontage roads have been converted to one-way and three new turnarounds have been constructed.

Environmental, Roadway Design, Right of Way, Public Affairs and District Six personnel participated in the meeting.

## Russellville Bypass

### Pottsville

Approximately 128 residents attended an open forum design public hearing on March 21, 2005, at Pottsville High School to hear plans for a bypass of the city of Russellville.

The bypass would be located on the southeast side of Russellville and accommodate traffic that currently must travel through the central business district. The proposed four-lane facility will be approximately 7.9 miles long and extend from the intersection of Highway 7 and 247 eastward to the Interstate 40/Highway 363 interchange.

Attending the meeting for the Highway and Transportation Department were Environmental, Roadway Design and Right of Way staff as well as District Eight personnel.

## Hot Springs Bypass

### Fountain Lake

An open forum design public hearing was held April 7, 2005, at Fountain Lake High School in order to provide information on the proposed extension of the Hot Springs Bypass

Plans on view at the meeting showed a four-lane, divided highway on new location that will be an extension of the existing bypass. The highway will extend from Highway 70 East, near Morning Star, northward to near the Highway 5/Highway 7 intersection. The project will initially be constructed as a two-lane highway, with plans to add two additional lanes in the future.

Department staff from Environmental, Roadway, Public Affairs and Right of Way divisions, along with District Six personnel, participated in the meeting.

## Relocation of Highway 71

### Texarkana

Cathedral Heights Church of the Nazarene in Texarkana was the scene of an open forum public hearing on March 17, 2005. Approximately 279 citizens attended the meeting to learn more about a new Highway 71 northern loop around Texarkana.

The proposed design calls for the relocation of Highway 71 on new location with four lanes and a median. The 7.6 mile roadway would extend from Arkansas Boulevard to Interstate 30 and from Interstate 30 northward to Highway 71.

In attendance from the Department were representatives of the Environmental, Roadway and Right of Way staff, as well as District Three personnel.

# Letters to the Department



William J. Clinton Foundation

December 21, 2004  
David Lambert  
Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department  
8900 Nabelvale Pike, P.O. Box 190296  
Little Rock, AR 72219

Dear Mr. Lambert:

I write this letter to express my thanks and appreciation for all you did to ensure the smooth operation of the grand opening of the Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock.

The hard work that went into the event was clear, even if the weather was not. Guests still are telling me what a wonderful time they had, how much they enjoyed the program, and how helpful they found the staff, volunteers, and vendors they encountered. I will always remain grateful for your role in making the occasion such a memorably good one for the thousands of people who attended - and for getting the Center off to an auspicious start.

Sincerely,

1200 President Clinton Avenue • Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 • 501-370-8000  
33 West 125th Street • New York, New York 10027 • 212-348-3082

Dear Mr. Dan Flowers,  
The County Judge and I would like to commend Neil Ford and his crew in the Conway County District for their response during the snowstorm during Christmas. Their timely and excellent work enabled the citizens of Conway County to get safely home under hazardous conditions. We are pleased to have such a great crew working in our area. We appreciate your efforts for our county.  
The Honorable Stewart P. Nelson, Mayor,  
City of Morrilton, AR

Dear AHTD,  
The following is a conversation between my six year old Grand Daughter and me as we took the "new road to Nana's" (exit 12 off 1-40 to the Collum Lane exit off 1-540)  
Jaelyn: Nana, who built all this new road?  
Nana: The Arkansas State Highway people and construction workers.

Jaelyn: (stretching her neck to look all around) Boy, that sure was a lot of work! This sure is a nice road. They sure did a good job!

Nana: Yes, it was a lot of hard work and it took a long time and a lot of people to do the job. Remember when it was just a lot of trees and woods?

Jaelyn: Yeah, and they had to knock down all those trees and make the ditches and spread out the dirt and make the road... that sure was a lot of work! They sure did do a good job! Nana, you need to call the highway people and tell them that they sure did do a good job!!!

Nana: You are right, Jaelyn, I do need to. How about I just write them a letter and they can show it around or put it in a frame or their files and keep it forever. I bet they will even write a letter back to you.

Jaelyn: That would be good. You tell them they did a good job!!!!

Nana: I will do that.

So, at her request, I am doing just that. This six year old made me realize we take a lot of things for granted. Most of us only complain when there are bumps in the roads. We need to appreciate the new roads too and the "good jobs" you all do. Jaelyn and I thank you for the "new road to Nana's".  
Luana Cauley,  
Alma, AR

Dear Sirs,  
It's been a few months since Civitan was presented with keys to the new wheelchair accessible van, but I wanted to let you know how much our clients are enjoying it. Everyone likes to have new things they can be proud of, and people with disabilities are no different. On behalf of our entire staff, clients and their families, thank you for helping us serve people in Saline County with developmental disabilities.  
Carolyn Carle, Civitan Services

Dear David Henning,  
I just wanted you to know that I had the opportunity to drive Interstate 40 almost all the way across the country a couple weeks back while helping my parents move from California to North Carolina. I just had to let you know that by far, Arkansas had the best roads in the country. It was a real pleasure to pass through your state. Keep up the excellent work you are doing in Arkansas.  
Brad Parks, Atlanta, GA

Dear Mr. Dan Flowers,

I want to thank you especially for the construction workers who have been out there working from daylight till dark in hot and cold weather, sometimes seven days a week. I have watched as the interstate has developed into and continues to develop into a nice highway to drive on. I have seen what the construction crews have had to put up with in the impatience of the drivers, the weather and drivers traveling too fast for conditions. They are to be commended for the excellent work they have done. I can now see what a nice highway we will have when finished. Please convey to all who have been involved in this project my utmost thanks and gratitude. Thanks.

Charles Kincaid, Alexander, AR

Dear Chief Ron Burks,

For several years, Cpl. Butch Stephens has willingly stopped by the offices of Ronnie Dowdy Trucking in Batesville to sign off on "fix-it" tickets. Whenever we call for him, he makes a point of coming in as soon as his schedule permits to certify that the required corrective action has been taken. His cooperation allows us to return the ticket to the state of issue with a small administrative fee, instead of paying a large fine. Certifying that the repairs have been made also demonstrates to those states that we are attempting to comply with regulations and operate safely. We are very appreciative of Cpl. Stephens' consistent support and assistance over the years. He is to be commended for his cooperative attitude and willingness to help. He is a credit to the Arkansas Highway Police.

Michael West, Director of Safety, Ronnie Dowdy Trucking, Inc., Batesville, AR

Dear Mr. Ralph Fulton,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Stan Risley and his crew from Baxter County. They did a great job during the recent snow and ice. It is so nice to be able to know that the road crews are out and they were getting the roads in the best possible shape for the conditions. I also understand that the district sent some help over on Friday to assist Stan. I would like to thank them also. Their effort probably saved us from working several accidents in the snow and ice. As you know, we all try to work together over here and if you ever need anything to the east, please feel free to call anytime.

Cpl. Mark A. Morton #464, Arkansas State Police, Baxter County, AR

Dear Sirs:

On behalf of the citizens of Amity I want to express our thanks for working with us on our recently completed City Circle Enhancement Project (Job # 070233). We appreciate your administering these federal funds in such a responsive and responsible way. Every time I called with questions or concerns you or your staff responded promptly and professionally.

The completed project has superceded our expectations and we just want you to know that we are grateful to you for your role in making it possible. Although the local funds raised almost equaled the federal funds we hope that you will take as much pride in this enhancement as we. It has truly been a good experience of cooperation and teamwork in getting the project completed and helping our community's image and growth potential. In summary:

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Chester V. Clark, Jr., Mayor  
City of Amity, Arkansas

Dear Mr. David Lambert,

On the twenty-first day of December, 2004, my wife and I left our place of residence headed to Mexico in an emergency trip. Upon arriving to Little Rock, Arkansas, exactly on the exit where Interstate 40 became 30, one of the tires on our car exploded in the middle of the freeway, no help, no telephone and in the middle of a curve on a bridge. Our lives in danger with the high velocity of oncoming traffic, we were asking for help for approximately 30 minutes, until Mr. Matthew Wycough, with all his amiability, was kind enough to help us. He alone changed our tire and followed us to the nearest Wal-Mart in order to buy a tire and install it. I am writing you this letter to thank Mr. Matthew Wycough, once again, even as we do not speak English well because we are Hispanics, with all courtesy, he helped us out. I thank you for the attention that you give to this letter and am hoping that the labor of Mr. Wycough is recognized.

Cesar Ramos Nunez  
McMinnville, TN

Dear Mr. Dan Flowers,

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to Mr. Roger Turner, who is with the Grant County Highway Department and personnel for taking care of the Darysaw Township (Highways 190 and 35). Last week the roads were very bad as the result of snow. Mr. Turner and his staff's performance was a splendid tribute to their professionalism and dedication to duty and the success of making many families safe on Highway 190 East and 35 South. I am sure that the entire community joins me in expressing appreciation.

Alton L. Davis, Constable, Darysaw Township, Grapevine, AR



*Arkansas State Highway and  
Transportation Department  
Post Office Box 2261  
Little Rock, AR 72203-2261*

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