



Arkansas Highways

WINTER 2009/2010

Director's Message

Without a doubt, the most talked about subject related to Departments of Transportation across the country recently has been the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. The President signed the bill in February of 2009 and the Highway Commission met in March to plan how to distribute the money to Arkansas highway projects. The result is 116 projects spread across the state that includes work ranging from resurfacing to new traffic signals and from new passing lanes to major freeway improvements. The Department has met every deadline and fulfilled or exceeded every Congressionally-established requirement of the ARRA. But equally important is how this program has been implemented. We worked to go beyond the apparent deadlines and certification requirements contained in the act. We wanted to meet the intent and spirit of the program as well. You can find the entire list of projects and other information related to the Recovery and Reinvestment Act on our webpage at www.arkansashighways.com.

Incidentally, our webpage has been redesigned. The new look debuted last summer with a wealth of helpful information for visitors. If you haven't seen the new site, plan to do so soon.

Another development, signed into legislation during the last session, was the creation of Arkansas' Blue Ribbon Committee on Highway Finance. Act 374 of 2009 created the Committee with a purpose of studying issues relating to transportation revenues and costs and to recommend the best methods for raising adequate revenues to address our constantly growing transportation needs in our state. The Committee hopes to propose legislation that can be brought before the General Assembly in 2011 – meaningful legislation that assists in funding our state highways, county roads and city streets.

I want to thank everyone for your hard work in improving and maintaining our highway system and in making the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act a success in Arkansas.



Paul Flowers
Director of Highways and Transportation



ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION



Carl S. Rosenbaum
Chairman



R. Madison Murphy
Vice Chairman



John Ed Regenold
Member



Cliff Hoofman
Member



Dick Trammel
Member

Arkansas Highways

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department - Winter 2009/2010

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State Highway 9 in Izard County



Arkansas Highways is published biannually by and for employees of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department as a medium of departmental news and other information. It is also distributed free of charge to the public upon request.

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Arkansas Highways is printed on recycled paper with soybean ink.



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Memorial

Commissioner George Kell 1922 – 2009



George Kell, a former Arkansas State Highway Commissioner, died on March 24, 2009, at Swifton, Arkansas.

Kell was appointed to the Commission by Governor Dale Bumpers. He served from 1971 to 1981. The last four years of his term, he served as chairman.

He spent fifteen seasons playing Major League Baseball for the Detroit Tigers. In 1983, he was elected into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. At the conclusion of his playing career, Kell worked as a play-by-play announcer for the Baltimore Orioles, CBS television, NBC radio and the Detroit Tigers. He was inducted into the Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame in 1964.

A graduate of Arkansas State University, he owned and operated George Kell Motors in Newport.

Kell served on many boards during his lifetime including the Worthen Corporate Board in Little Rock, the First State Bank of Newport, Farmers Electric Co-op in Newport, the Detroit Tigers in Detroit, Michigan, and the Swifton School Board.

"George Kell's service and leadership, both on the Commission and in the community, were exemplary," stated AHTD Director Dan Flowers.

"We appreciate the commitment he showed to improving the transportation system in Arkansas."

Memorial

Commissioner Raymond Pritchett

1942 – 2009

Raymond Pritchett, who served on the Arkansas State Highway Commission for ten years, died on November 4, 2009.

Pritchett, a Certified Public Accountant (C.P.A.) from Maumelle, served on the Commission from January of 1981 to January of 1991. He was appointed by Governor Frank White. The last two years of his term, he served as chairman of the Commission.

Pritchett had been a self-employed C.P.A. since 1974. He was also past Executive Vice President and Treasurer of Jess Odom Enterprises, an assistant campaign manager for U.S. Senators John L. McClellan and William Fulbright, and Treasurer for Ronald Reagan's Presidential campaign in Arkansas.

A graduate of Lepanto High School, he received his Bachelors Degree in Accounting from Hendrix College.

Pritchett was active in his community. He was past President of the Conway Jaycees, past State Vice President and President of the Arkansas Jaycees and Past Treasurer of the United States Jaycees. He was a former Trustee of the United States Jaycees Foundation. In 1967, he received the honor of being Outstanding Local President of Arkansas Jaycees as President of the Conway Jaycees, and in 1971, was the first



Arkansan to receive the Clayton Frost Memorial Award as one of the five outstanding Jaycee State Presidents in the United States.

"Raymond Pritchett was successful in his career, in his service to the Highway Commission and in his tireless work for his community," stated AHTD Director Dan Flowers.

An Interview With Dick Trammel



Dick Trammel was sworn in as the newest member of the Arkansas State Highway Commission on January 12th of 2009. A resident of Rogers, Trammel currently serves as Executive Vice President, member of the Board of Directors and Board Secretary of Arvest Bank in Rogers. He is also a founding member of Northwest Arkansas Community College. He was chairman of the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board, a position he gave up when he was sworn in as Commissioner. His term will run through January of 2019.

In a recent interview with Public Information Coordinator Randy Ort, Trammel discussed his first months as a Highway Commissioner.

Ort: Commissioner Trammel, what were your feelings when Governor Beebe first approached you about a position on the Highway Commission?

Commissioner Trammel: Well, Governor Beebe and I have been friends for 20 years. We are good friends and he is my governor and I support him. At the time that he was elected Governor, I was serving on the Higher Education Board after being appointed by Governor Huckabee. Then I became chairman of the Higher Ed board. Governor Beebe kept saying "One of these days you are going to have to learn about some cars, Trammel." Well, I just thought he was joking. But every once in a while he would say, "You need to learn about these cars Dickey Ray." He never said "I am going to appoint you to the Highway Commission."

Then in December of last year, there was a fundraiser for one of the non-profits in Fayetteville. They roasted and toasted me, and the Governor came. I am sitting there with my family, some of the Governor's friends and State Senator Shane Broadway. All of a sudden the Governor says "By the way, I am now appointing Dick Trammel to the Arkansas Highway Commission." There was



no warning. But you know that is the kind of Governor he is, when he makes a decision he makes it and that is the kind of friend he is.

I asked him not long ago "Governor Mike, how am I doing? Am I doing Ok?" He said I haven't had any complaint calls yet but when I do, I will call you and let you know. Mike Beebe is a person that I respect as a leader, as a Governor and as a friend. I am just so honored and humbled that he chose me for the Commission. I just never thought I would have that kind of responsibility to our state and for our people.

Ort: Well, now that you do have this opportunity, what is it about being on the Highway Commission that is appealing to you?

Commissioner Trammel: There are two or three basic reasons why I am excited about being on the Highway Commission. Number one is, I am an Arkansas native, so it is very special to have an opportunity like this.

Number two, I really feel like I understand the needs of all four corners of the state, and Central Arkansas as well. I was born in northeast Arkansas and lived there for many years. I grew up as an agricultural person - I've been in cotton gins and grain elevators and all, so I can relate to those parts of the state. Then, I became a banker and moved to northwest Arkansas at the invitation of Mr. Sam Walton to work for his bank that he purchased 34 years ago. My first hometown was Pocahontas. I love Pocahontas.

However, Rogers is now my hometown. Also in my lifetime, I've served on five commissions, so I'm in Central Arkansas a lot. For example, I know you don't want to get off of Interstate 430 onto Interstate 40 at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. I did that once and I know not to do that again.

I serve as an advocate for the fifteen counties that make up District 4 and District 9. That goes from Mountain Home to Gentry, and from Bella Vista to Mena – that's a large area. But the Governor appointed me to serve all of Arkansas and do what is best for the state. The neat thing about my life is that I've lived half of it in one part of the state, and the other half in another. Plus, I've spent a lot of time in Little Rock. So, you see, I understand the metropolitan area and I understand the small town as well.

The third thing that excites me about serving on the Highway Commission is the fact that I have a lot of respect for my fellow Commissioners. Our Chair, Carl Rosenbaum, and I are Sigma Chi fraternity brothers – we've been friends for 50 years. I'm familiar with his company, Safe Foods. He has an office here in Rogers. John Ed Regenold has a daughter that taught school here in Rogers. He also has a daughter in Fayetteville. I tease John Ed and say "You know, you have to take care of your grandkids. You and I are getting so old – it's not too important that we are safe, but those grandkids have got to be taken care of." I respect Cliff



Hoofman and Madison Murphy as well. Madison has an interest in northwest Arkansas. He just built a new Murphy Express here in my hometown. So, I'm excited about being a part of this. And, it's nice when you don't have to worry about appointments for ten years. My appointment is probably a lifetime appointment at my age! I've served on the Livestock Commission and then I was on the Arts Council for 17 years and then went to the Board of Education for two-and-one-half years. And now I am on the Highway Commission.

Ort: From the Livestock Commission to the Highway Commission – so you literally have gone from the horse and buggy to cars.

Commissioner Trammel: That's it, I have gone from horse and buggy to cars in my career on state commissions. And I have

enjoyed every one of them and I hope I have contributed to every one of them. It's particularly exciting to be a native of Arkansas and to have had a chance to contribute to the future of our state.

Ort: You've been involved in so many commissions and so many causes, how will some of that experience help you on the Highway Commission?



Commissioner Trammel: You know, I stand 5 foot 5 and ½ inches, but my life is as big as anybody's. I have found in my lifetime that it's where you are and the people you know that can make a big difference. I already mentioned Mr. Sam Walton as being the reason I am in Northwest Arkansas. David Pryor and I washed dishes one summer school at the University of Arkansas. We worked in the student union and washed dishes. Then there is Joe Ford, the founder of Alltel. I knew Joe – we were good friends in school and Joe became the leader of Alltel. Joe and his wife were leaders at UAMS when I served on the UAMS board. I have grown up with the leadership of Arkansas. They all became leaders at a young age. I had to wait until I was 71 to get there so I'm just hoping that I can be as effective as they are and remain active at my mature age while they are retired and playing golf and doing all that other stuff. But I think that my job as a part of the Highway Commission is to maintain credibility and integrity to the citizens of Arkansas. I hope that my decisions will be good for the community and for the state and that my decisions are based on facts—not fiction or whims. I can't do a thing alone, but, we as a Commission and a Highway and Transportation Department can do a lot for the state as a professional team.

Ort: You have been very active since you were appointed to the Commission. You've been talking to the people and listening to the people. What are you hearing from the citizens about their feelings about highways and what some of the needs are?

Commissioner Trammel: Around here, there is a great deal of interest in the Bella Vista Bypass. I tell people I used to dream about being a starting center for the Chicago Bulls, but now all I dream about is the Bella Vista Bypass, every night.

Seriously, I've done a great deal of speaking and visiting in the last eight months. The biggest thing I have learned is how unaware our people of Arkansas are about the great Highway and Transportation Department we have, the professionalism we have and particularly our funding and how little money we have compared to our needs. I think people are learning as we visit with them. Someday we are going to have something for the public to approve. If they are educated then they understand, they won't say "Hey, I'm not going to vote for that."



Ort: What are some priorities you would like to see addressed during your 10-year term on the Commission?

Commissioner Trammel: My first priority would be that I don't make decisions without the proper knowledge because there are consequences that affect our citizens whether it's a two lane rural road or an eight-lane Interstate 540. What I would like to be said about me is that I don't contribute to a "road to nowhere".

The other thing I want to be sure of is that I have the confidence and credibility of my friends in the Department and on the Commission. I want to be able to listen and be willing to change. I want to be aware of changes in the transportation industry and in such things as highway safety. I'm reminded of the days when Mr. Walton used to say, "Times can get tough, but you just got to accept change." He told me once that I made a mistake, and that it's OK to make a mistake once. Just don't make the same mistake again. So, if I make a mistake on the Highway Commission, I hope I'm smart enough to not make that mistake again.

In addition, I'm so pleased that Governor Beebe and the Legislature created the Blue Ribbon Committee on Highway Finance because they recognized we have to have more state funding for highways. Their mission is to create new ways of funding highways in the state. I'm hoping that we can come up with ways to fund better, safer highways. It is important not to tax our people to death. I'm not a big advocate of raising taxes particularly with the adjustments we have in our economy today. But we have to have more state money for our roadways.

Ort: What about specific projects? You've mentioned the Bella Vista Bypass and Highway 67.



Commissioner Trammel: I think it's good to realize that we have to work towards better access for our people traveling north, south, east and west. For example, I'm so pleased that Highway 67 is being improved up to Walnut Ridge. I've been driving that road since I was 11 years old. I had my own car when I was 11. I can remember when big trucks used to come through. You'd better get over to the side when one went by. I'm interested in Highways 264 and 265 in Benton and Washington counties being studied by the Department. I feel like the best and least expensive way to help alleviate congestion on Highway 71B and Interstate 540 is to provide an alternative north-south multi-lane route from Highway 16, east of Fayetteville, to Highway 62 east of Rogers. Of course, I'm looking forward to Interstate 49 particularly in the Chaffee Crossing (Fort Smith) area.

Ort: Not only have you been active with the public, you've been around Highway and Transportation Department employees quite a bit. You've made it a point to come to the Central Office in Little Rock and visit staff. What is your impression of the Department and staff so far?

Commissioner Trammel: When I walk through our building everyone from the receptionist at the front desk all the way on up to those on the top floor do a great job of marketing our Department and promoting our highways. They're the ones who go out and listen to the public, and sometimes the public can be upset about



something. But I just have the utmost confidence in the staff. I see a lot of smiles at the Highway Department and everybody that I visit with is pleasant and is smiling. That tells me that they have been there a long time and they are happy and their smile is much better than a frown because it takes less muscle. I will tell you right quick, a smile gets you everywhere. It's helped me in my lifetime.

The leadership at the Department is impressive. Director Dan Flowers is a great example. You know Dan has been there forty years, and if I remember right, Deputy Director and Chief Engineer Frank Vozel has been there around 39 years. People don't realize that we are the largest employer of engineers in the state of Arkansas, and many of them spend their entire careers with the Highway Department.

You know we have 3,618 employees. What corporate America and the citizens who pay taxes need to realize is that we have fewer employees now than we had 40 years ago. How many state agencies can say that? I'm proud of our Department. I wear my Highway and Transportation Department pin everywhere I can.

Ort: Being a highway commissioner can be a very time consuming job. How has being on the Highway Commission affected your business and your personal life?



Commissioner Trammel: I have a beautiful wife, Nancy, and we are celebrating two years of marriage. She is so good to me and she travels to Little Rock with me. She has gotten to know our Highway Department people and the President of my bank. She tells me "Whatever time you need, you do it." And let me also say I'm proud to be an employee of Arvest Bank. I'm here because my associates at Arvest have let me do all these things all these years. Arvest Bank has the attitude that we need to serve our community and they let me do that. So when you got me as a Commissioner you got the support of my primary family and the Arvest family. It's just wonderful the kind of support I've had.

My dad quit school in the 6th grade to educate his brothers and sisters. He had a great work ethic and he did real well. My



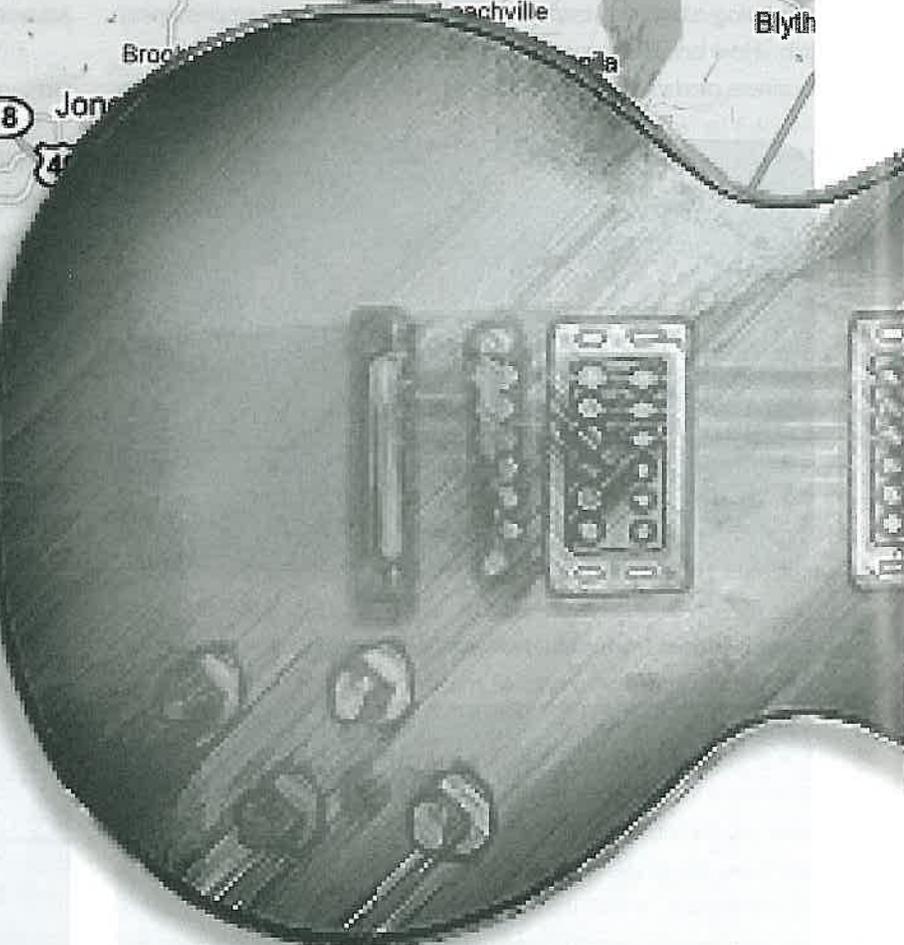
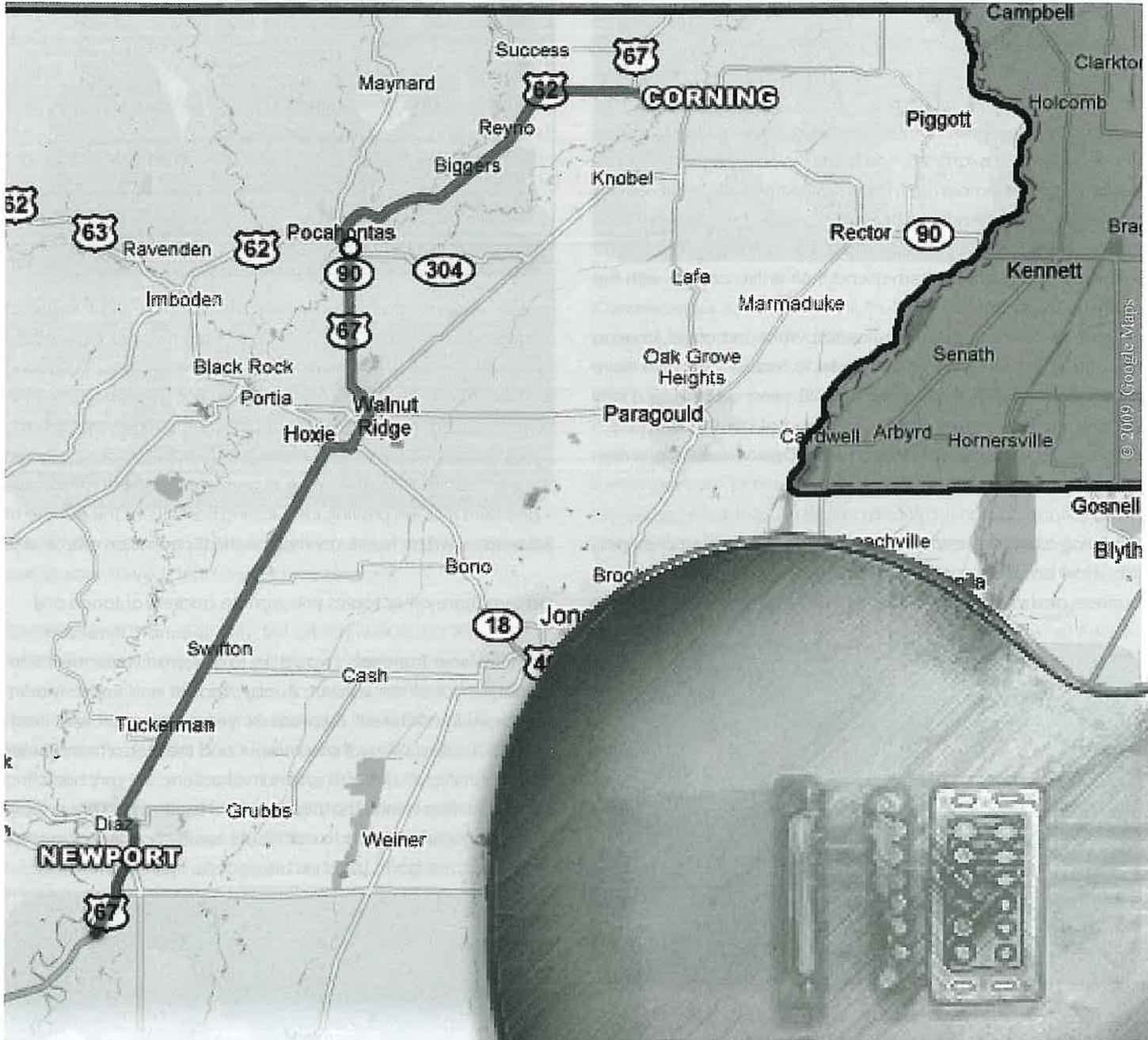
mother was a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse when they met and they didn't have much. When I went through high school and then college, I realized how fortunate I had been. My goal in life has been to give back, and the way you give back is to give something that is going to last. My job on the Highway Commission is to look at recommendations and have the wisdom to make the best decisions for the future of our young people in Arkansas – decisions that will provide long-lasting benefits for the people of Arkansas. I will try to use my time on the Commission effectively.

Ort: Are there other topics you want to address or touch on?

Commissioner Trammel: I would like to give credit to former Commissioners Jonathan Barnett, Bobby Hopper and Festus Martin. I've been in northwest Arkansas 34 years and even with inadequate funding, those three people and the Department have done a terrific job of building up infrastructure. It's very humbling to be following in their footsteps. But I'm excited and I'm happy, and I just hope I am able to contribute somewhat. As my mother would say, the good Lord has blessed me and I'm thankful.



The Rock & Roll History of Highway 67



Unveiling the "Rock 'n' Roll Highway 67" sign last December are (l. to r.) Walnut Ridge Mayor Michelle Rogers, Highway Commissioner Cliff Hoofman, State Representative J.R. Rogers, Arkansas Parks and Tourism Director Joe David Rice, Linda Collins-Smith of Pocahontas, District Attorney Henry Boyce of Newport, AHTD Director Dan Flowers, Sonny Burgess of the musical group The Pacers, Assistant Chief Engineer - Operations Emanuel Banks and Bill Masiogale of Pocahontas.

Highway 67 in northeast Arkansas is a somewhat quiet, two-lane highway paralleling the Union Pacific railroad tracks as it makes its way from Newport to Walnut Ridge. It then becomes a four-lane roadway up to Pocahontas. It's a major route for people heading towards Jonesboro or farther north into Missouri. It's also a highway that has something of a musical history. So much so that on March 20, 2009, Governor Mike Beebe signed legislation designating the highway from Newport to Pocahontas as "Rock 'N' Roll Highway 67."

The new designation is a salute to the musical history of the highway, which saw its share of "rockabilly" recording artists perform in the area back in the 1950s. Rockabilly can best be described as a mix of rock and roll and country and it was in its heyday during that time.

The bill to designate Highway 67 the Rock N Roll Highway was sponsored by Representative J.R. Rogers, (D – Walnut Ridge).

"We have a heritage here," Rogers states.

Rockabilly music was thriving along Highway 67 in the 1950s. The list of musicians that played in clubs along the roadway is impressive and includes Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, Sonny Burgess, Billy Lee Riley, Jerry Lee Lewis and Conway Twitty. Most of the venues, with names such as the Silver Moon and the King of Clubs, are gone now. However, Representative Rogers wants to bring back the history of the area with historical markers where the clubs once stood. Music festivals featuring rockabilly music are also in the works in the area. Eventually, tourism centers could be built along the way.

It is hoped that recognizing the history of the roadway will boost tourism in Jackson, Lawrence and Randolph counties. The AHTD plans to place two signs on either end of the designated stretch of highway.

"The more attention drawn to the roadway the better," adds Rogers.



One of the most important of the clubs on Highway 67 was, and still is, the King of Clubs, located just north of Swifton. This club was instrumental in the successful growth of rockabilly music. Among the artists that played here were Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Roy Orbison, Conway Twitty, Sonny Burgess and Carl Perkins.

National Work Zone Memorial Visits Arkansas



A traveling exhibition memorializing men, women and children who have lost their lives in roadway work zones was on display in Little Rock several months ago.

Titled "Respect and Remembrance: Reflections of Life on the Road," the exhibition is sponsored by the American Traffic Safety Services Association and its Arkansas Chapter.

Over the years, thousands of people including work zone workers, motorists, law enforcement personnel, children, public safety officials and pedestrians have died in work zones. This memorial, unveiled in 2002, pays homage to their memory.

Approximately 50 people gathered at the Capitol rotunda in Little Rock for a special ceremony on February 19th, 2009. At the ceremony, the names of those who had passed away in Arkansas were read aloud with a tolling of a bell for each. Two

AHTD employees were among the names read, Bruce Fick of District Five and Jerome Harris of District Six.

AHTD Assistant Chief Engineer for Operations Emanuel Banks spoke during the program.

"This exhibition honors the memory of those we have lost" Banks stated. "The Highway and Transportation Department is proud to work with the American Traffic Safety Services Association and with this memorial, we have an opportunity to raise awareness and make work zones a safer place."

The names of those who have died are inscribed on the Memorial. Since its creation, the Memorial has traveled to 50 locations across the country.

Motorists encounter at least one work zone for every 50 miles they travel.

Highway 412

Paragould

A Location Public Hearing that attracted 282 area residents was held on June 23rd at Paragould Junior High. Residents came to hear about proposed improvements to Highway 412 in the Paragould area.

The Department used aerial photos and impact numbers to show three proposed alignments for improvements to existing Highway 412 and/or construction of a bypass on new location around the city.

Highway 13

Searcy

The Department held a Location Public Hearing on June 30th in Searcy, at the Valley Baptist Church, to discuss plans for an extension of Highway 13 in the area. Approximately 120 area residents saw plans for the highway on new location.

The proposed extended highway would begin at Highway 267 and extend northward four or five miles to Highway 36.

Highway 54

Dumas

A total of 33 people attended a Public Involvement Meeting in Dumas at the St. Peter's Rock Missionary Baptist Church to hear about proposed improvements to Highway 54.

Plans call for widening approximately one mile of Highway 54 to three lanes with new curbs and gutters. The improvements would begin at Waterman Street and extend westward.

Highway 226

Cash

Local residents gathered at Cash City Hall on July 23rd to hear about plans for widening Highway 226 in the area of Cash.

About 75 people viewed aerial photos and maps to learn more about widening the highway to four lanes. The work would begin at Highway 67 and continue eastward through Cash toward Highway 49.

Highway 62

Berryville

A Public Involvement Meeting was held in Berryville on July 30th at Towering Oaks Church to discuss plans for improvements to Highway 62.

Approximately 90 people gathered to hear about plans to widen the highway to five lanes. The 2.8-mile project would begin at Highway 143 and extend eastward to Freeman Avenue.

Interstate 40

North Little Rock

Local residents that live in the area of 35th and 36th Streets in North Little Rock attended a Public Involvement Meeting at Liberty Fellowship Church on July 30th.

Approximately ten people gathered to hear about plans for a Noise Barrier Wall to be added along Interstate 40 in the area of 35th Street. The wall is planned in order to reduce the traffic noise in the neighborhood coming from the Interstate. Interstate 40 was recently widened to six lanes in the area.

Bella Vista Toll Facility

Bella Vista & Gravette

Two meetings were held in northwest Arkansas in August to discuss the possibility of constructing the Bella Vista Bypass, in Benton County, as a toll facility.

Meetings were held on August 5th in Bella Vista and on August 6th in Gravette to re-introduce the concept of tolling the roadway to the public and to provide an opportunity for public comment.

A total of 277 people attended the meetings. Information gathered at the locations was used to prepare an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant application and for an environmental reassessment of the project.



Harrison to Missouri Now Has Four Lanes

Former Congressman John Paul Hammerschmidt was among the distinguished officials to join Arkansas Highway Commissioners and AHTD staff June 19th last summer to celebrate the completion of the last widening project on Highway 65 between Harrison and the Missouri state line.

Congressman Hammerschmidt, a Harrison native, was instrumental in getting federal dollars to get work started on this section



(l. to r.) Director Dan Flowers, Highway Commissioner Dick Trammel, District 9 Engineer Ralph Fulton, State Representative Jonathan Barnett, Federal Highway Administration Division Administrator Sandra Otto, Highway Commissioner Cliff Hoofman, Former Congressman John Paul Hammerschmidt, State Representative Bryan King and Highway Commission Chairman Carl Rosenbaum.

of Highway 65. Former Highway Commissioner Jonathan Barnett, of Siloam Springs, who was instrumental in seeing the work completed, was also on hand.

Highway Commissioner Dick Trammel, of Rogers, joked to the crowd that folks can now easily travel the new four-lane highway "from" Branson to Harrison.

AHTD Director Dan Flowers recalled when the Highway 65 widening work began in the 1970s and noted that then Governor Bill Clinton helped to dedicate the new Welcome Center near Harrison in 1988.

The final project was an \$11 million base and surfacing contract awarded to Leo Journagan Construction Company in August 2007. That six-mile section on new location is between Burlington and Bear Creek Springs. A grading and structures contract for that work was let in 2004.

Also in 2004, a \$19 million contract was let to construct a new interchange at Highways 65 and 412.

Previously, four contracts let in the late 1990s for over \$42 million constructed the four lanes from Burlington to the state line – including the new Cricket Creek Bridge. The widening of Highway 65 between Harrison and Bear Creek Springs was completed in 1979.

In the past ten years, over \$152 million has been invested in improvements on Highway 65 between Interstate 40, in Conway, and the Missouri state line.

New Railroad Overpass Welcomed In Cabot

Highway Commission Chairman Carl Rosenbaum and AHTD Director Dan Flowers joined a contingent of Lonoke County supporters dedicating the new Highway 38 railroad overpass in northeast Cabot on July 10, 2009. Among those attending were Cabot Mayor Eddie Joe Williams, Senator Bobby Glover and Representative Davy Carter.

Over 50 trains travel underneath the overpass each day. An



(l. to r.) Cabot Mayor Eddie Joe Williams, Highway Commission Chairman Carl Rosenbaum, State Senator Bobby Glover and AHTD Director Dan Flowers.

integral part of Cabot's infrastructure plans, the \$6.4 million project not only eliminates an at-grade crossing, but provides the first step in the future expansion of Highway 38 to Highway 67.

Director Flowers pointed west and acknowledged to the crowd that, "we know where you want this road to go." He added that almost \$30 million in improvements have been made in the Cabot area in the past ten years and that another \$34 million in projects is scheduled.

Senator Glover addressed the crowd, praising the project for not only improving traffic but "the safety of our children."

M.J. Lee Construction Company built the new section of Highway 38 which connects to Highway 367 north of downtown Cabot. Commissioner Rosenbaum acknowledged the contractor's work noting that an extremely wet 2008 limited the charged working days, but they still completed the job in less than two years.

Cabot Mayor Eddie Joe Williams noted that the City will take ownership of the old Highway 38 between the new intersection and Highway 89.

"The safest way for traffic to get from one side to the other is an overpass," stated Rosenbaum. "There are a lot of children in this area that no longer have to cross the tracks to get to school."

Highway 165 Extension Includes Stuttgart RR Overpass

A typical large Stuttgart crowd welcomed Highway Commission Chairman Carl Rosenbaum and AHTD Director Dan Flowers, as the community celebrated the beginning of a new railroad overpass on August 4, 2009, with a ceremonial ground breaking.

It was December, 2005 when 2.5-miles of new Highway 165 opened between Highway 79 and Highway 63 on the northeast side of town. That \$3.3 million project, constructed by D.B. Hill Contracting Company, was what Senator Bobby Glover described that day as just the beginning of the Stuttgart Bypass.

Glover was on hand again as dirt was turned to signify the beginning of a \$14.5 million contract to extend the bypass improvements over the railroad tracks just south of the intersection with Highway 79. Estimated completion of the Dement Construction Company job is early 2010.



(l. to r.) Congressman Marion Berry, AHTD Director Dan Flowers, Highway Commission Chairman Carl Rosenbaum and Stuttgart Mayor Marianne Maynard.



Commissioner Rosenbaum noted that this project combines safety and transportation improvements by eliminating the at-grade crossing and also enhancing infrastructure.

"An estimated 35 trains travel through here each day," said Flowers. "Train-vehicle accidents never happen when vehicles go up and over the tracks rather than across them."

(l. to r.) State Representative Tiffany Rogers, Arkansas County Judge Sonny Cox, Former Stuttgart Mayor Butch Richenback, Stuttgart Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice President Stephen Bell, William Dement of Dement Construction, Congressman Marion Berry, AHTD Director Dan Flowers, State Senator Bobby Glover, Highway Commission Chairman Carl Rosenbaum and Stuttgart Mayor Marianne Maynard turn dirt on the new project.

Ceremonies Mark the Opening of Two New Arkansas Welcome Centers

Friday, August 7, 2009, was a busy day in Blytheville as officials of two of Arkansas' largest agencies – the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department and the Department of Parks and Tourism – gathered to dedicate the new Welcome Center on I-55 near the state line.

Commission members from each agency, local elected officials and plenty of staff members were on hand to cut a ceremonial ribbon for the new Welcome Center.

"We have a great relationship with Parks and Tourism," AHTD Director Dan Flowers told the large crowd. "Our agencies jointly operate 12 facilities across the state. We build and maintain the



(l. to r.) Tourism Division Director Joe David Rice, AHTD Director Dan Flowers, Parks and Tourism Director Richard Davies, Parks & Tourism Commissioner Danny Ford, Parks and Tourism Research Manager Joanne Hinson and Highway Commissioner John Ed Regenold.



With scissors, Highway Commission Chairman Carl Rosenbaum (l.), Highway Commissioner John Ed Regenold (r.) and other dignitaries from the AHTD and Department of Arkansas Parks & Tourism officially open the Blytheville Welcome Center.

Welcome Centers and they staff them. Tourism is an extremely large industry and we are fortunate to have a great tourism department."

"Plans to rebuild several of our old Welcome Centers began in 2003," said Highway Commission Chairman Carl Rosenbaum. "The Commission has approved almost \$30 million to build centers in El Dorado, Texarkana, Fort Smith/Van Buren, Corning, Blytheville, Lake Village and West Memphis."

"This new Welcome Center in Blytheville is a 6,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility on just over 10 acres," noted Highway Com-

missioner John Ed Regenold, of nearby Armorel. "This was a \$3.6 million project and we are so proud to have it in part of the state."

Regenold also noted, there are 11 picnic pavilions available, as well as ample parking with 40 parking spaces for cars, room for 12 semi-trucks, eight RV spaces and four designated spots for tour busses.

Olympus Construction Company, of Lowell, Arkansas, was the prime contractor.

On January 12, 2010, a cold winter breeze off of Lake Chicot chilled a large gathering of people for the dedication of the



Dignitaries prepare to cut the ribbon on the new Arkansas Welcome Center at Lake Village on January 12th.

new Lake Village Welcome Center on January 12th. Governor Mike Beebe led a parade of elected officials in a ribbon cutting ceremony to recognize completion of the project.

Commission members and staff of both the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department and the Department of Parks and Tourism were also on hand for the festivities. A large local crowd, including many school aged students, joined the event.

Beebe praised the work of the two state agencies that jointly operate 12 welcome centers across the state. The new center is located at the same Highway 65/82 location as the old facility. The original Lake Village Tourist Center was built in 1978 for \$420,000.

Highway Commissioner Madison Murphy informed the crowd that the new Lake Village Welcome Center is a 3,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art, rock and log facility. Total cost was \$3 million.

"But the most impressive feature is the unique 3,700-square-foot, multi-level fishing and observation deck looking over Lake Chicot," said Murphy. "It has to be one of the most unique welcome center features in the country."

Morris Beck Construction Services of Little Rock was the prime contractor for the project.

The new West Memphis Welcome Center will begin construction in 2010 with \$10.5 million of Federal Enhancement funds provided through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009.



Guests filled the lobby of the Welcome Center in Lake Village the day of the ribbon cutting.



Students from Saint Mary's School pose for a photo with Governor Beebe.

Purple Heart Trail Sign Unveiled During Ceremony

Highway Commissioner Dick Trammel, AHTD Director Dan Flowers, Assistant to the Director Ralph Hall and others, took part in a ceremonial sign unveiling at the August 12, 2009, meeting of the Military Order of the Purple Heart in Rogers. Former Congressman John Paul Hammerschmidt was a special guest for the event.

Opened in 1999, Interstate 540 is known as the John Paul Hammerschmidt Highway. It is now a part of the Purple Heart Trail.

"We are here to unveil a new sign that will be on Interstate 530,"

Flowers told a crowd of over 600 Purple Heart award recipients. "Not signs to replace the Hammerschmidt Highway signs, but ones to compliment them. A fitting tribute to an elected official that served his state and country in so many ways and to the many Purple Heart recipients that so bravely defended our country."

The Purple Heart Trail was established in 1992 to create a symbolic and honorary system of roads, highways, bridges and other monuments that give tribute to the men and women who have been awarded the Purple Heart.

"Arkansas has honored that system since 2004 when Interstate 430 in Little Rock was added," said Trammel. "Today, the Arkansas Highway Commission is very proud to partner with the Military Order to add Interstate 540 to the system."

Before retiring in 1993, Congressman Hammerschmidt served 13 terms in the U.S. House of Representatives from Northwest Arkansas and served as the ranking member of the Public Works Committee (Transportation and Infrastructure).

Her served in the United States Army Air Corps during World War II. In 1942, Hammerschmidt joined the Third Combat Cargo Group of the Air Corp and served in southeast Asia until the end of 1945.



(l. to r.) AHTD Director Dan Flowers, Highway Commissioner Dick Trammel, Former Congressman John Paul Hammerschmidt, Department Commander E.S. "Vess" Lawbaugh of Chapter 460 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department of Arkansas and Department Senior Vice Commander Jim Buckner of Chapter 460 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department of Arkansas.



Highway 133 in Crossett Widened

Completion of the \$3.7 million widening of Highway 133, between Highway 82 and Highway 133 Spur, was officially dedicated with a ribbon cutting on July 23, 2009. Commissioner Madison Murphy and AHTD Director Dan Flowers were joined by a crowd of local residents for the event. Ideal Construction Company was the contractor. An estimated \$4.5 million project to continue the widening north to Highway 52 is programmed.



With scissors, AHTD Director Dan Flowers (l.), and Highway Commissioner Madison Murphy (r.) and other local dignitaries cut the ribbon on the Highway 133 project.

Eureka Springs Highway 23 Has a New Passing Lane

Highway Commissioner Dick Trammel and AHTD District 9 staff joined elected officials and other local residents on July 29,

2009, to officially open a new passing lane on Highway 23. The \$2.5 million project is located south of Eureka Springs.



Commissioner Dick Trammel, with scissors, AHTD staff and local dignitaries open the new passing lane on Highway 23 on July 29th.

New Highway 67 Location Opens North of Newport

Travel to Northeast Arkansas recently got easier and safer as 17 miles of new four-lane location of Highway 67 opened north of Newport. Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe cut a ceremonial ribbon to dedicate the opening on October 9, 2009. Beebe was joined by Highway Commission Chairman Carl Rosenbaum, Commissioners John Ed Regenold and Cliff Hoofman, AHTD Director Dan Flowers and a throng of Department employees.

Several local elected officials, the Chambers of Commerce from Newport, Jonesboro and Walnut Ridge, and numerous local residents also attended the event.

The Highway 67 corridor basically follows the old "Southwest Trail" which dates back to the early frontier days. Plans for a northern four-lane Highway 67 corridor from Central Arkansas date back to the 1950s. Completion of that first project was in 1962 when 15 miles were completed to the Pulaski/Lonoke County line. That project cost \$8 million.

This latest 17-mile section to open cost just over \$93 million. It extends Highway 67 from Highway 18 at Newport to Highway 226. The project was built in two phases – from Highway 18 to Highway 37 and from Highway 37 to Highway 226. The work included modifications on Highway 226 west to the existing Highway 67 intersection near Swifton. The work also included 5.4 miles of resurfacing, a traffic signal and installation of crossing signals at a relocated Union Pacific Railroad crossing.

The total investment on Highway 67 for 102 miles from Interstate 40 north to Highway 85 is almost \$230 million to date.

Construction on the next 16 miles of new location up to the Highway 63 Walnut Ridge/Hoxie Bypass is underway with three contracts totaling \$36.5 million. Estimated completion of that work is 2012 and that will leave only the base and surfacing work.

The 11-mile, \$65.2 million Highway 63 Walnut Ridge/Hoxie Bypass was completed in 2003. An Environmental Impact Statement is underway to identify a route for continued widening of Highway 67 from the Bypass north to the Missouri state line.



With scissors (l. to r.), Highway Commissioner Cliff Hoofman and Governor Mike Beebe cut the ribbon on Highway 67 with AHTD Director Dan Flowers.

Letters to the Department

July 2, 2009

AHP Chief Ron Burks,

I want to commend and thank you for having an employee like CPL Mark H. Willis on your force. We were traveling from Grand Prairie, Texas on June 30th. All the years I've been driving, I've never had a blowout. This day I had two of them. When I had the second one, I didn't have a spare. We called 911 and they gave us the number of a towing service, but they wouldn't be able to get us for three or four hours. The second towing service said it would be about six hours. So I called my neighbor, who was about 70 miles away.

After about 90 minutes, Officer Willis showed up and took charge from dropping my grandchildren off at a service station so they would be out of the heat, to taking me to get a tire and bringing me back to my vehicle, and making sure everything was in good working order before he left. At all times, we engaged in productive conversation about his job and life. He uplifted our spirits. The situation didn't seem so bad after he made his arrival. Thanks to you and Mark Willis.

Ms. Bessie M. Bennett

May 15, 2009

AHP Chief Ron Burks,

I am writing you in reference to one of your employees, CPL Mark Willis. He came upon a crash I was in last week. He was very professional and put me at ease after this unnerving event. I just wanted you to know he was very helpful. I work in criminal justice as the records manager for Texarkana PD. All too often, letters are written complaining about employees, not praising them for help.

Helen Greenwood
Texarkana, TX

June 15, 2009

AHP Lt. Ross Batson,

Today at about 6:00 p.m., I happened upon a vehicle that was broken down on the westbound ramp at the I-530 and I-30 intersection. Standing at the back of the vehicle was an elderly lady, an elderly gentleman, a pregnant woman, and a small child. I safely pulled to the apron and as I was walking back to their vehicle, I realized the reason they had pulled over was due to a flat tire on the right front passenger side. It was evident that from talking with them they had fallen on tough times. Both elderly people had heart conditions and it was 90-plus degrees. As I discussed their dilemma with them, I soon discovered they had no lug wrench, no jack, or a spare tire. My lug wrench was not compatible with their lug pattern. As I quickly went through a mental "what is my plan now," PFC Alvin Todd pulled in behind their vehicle. He was most professional in offering help. He brought out a 4-way lug wrench but neither of us could break the impact wrenched lug nuts. PFC Todd then called a State Highway employee who came to the scene and was kind enough to break the lug nuts loose for us.

As we went to plan "B" regarding how to get a replacement tire to the vehicle, PFC Todd helped comfort the stranded motorists in a very personal way. As I had to continue to my scheduled appointment, PFC Todd offered to stay with the people until help from a tire shop arrived to mount another tire. He wanted to make sure they would be taken care of on this hottest day of the year.

Please convey my thanks to PFC Todd for stopping to help render aid to someone that really needed help. I can truthfully say that you have a "good Samaritan" representing the Arkansas Highway Police in PFC Todd.

Sincerely,
Larry Cole
President
Trucking Experts, Inc.

July 2, 2009

AHP Chief Ron Burks,

I was pleased to have been assisted recently by CPL Clyde Crookham and PFC Dan McArthur on Highway 80 just off Interstate 30, south of Benton. I hope you will pass my thanks and appreciation to these two excellent officers. My wife was driving when she suddenly and abruptly realized she was out of gasoline. These two officers helped us to get underway again. They certainly went out of their way to help us in a time of need!

I was particularly proud of them because as a former Chairman of the Arkansas Commerce Commission and then Chairman of the successor Arkansas Transportation Commission, I had the pleasure to work closely with the forerunner of your fine organization. My wife also sends her thanks and blessings to those officers. These officers are a credit to your organization and to the State of Arkansas.

Joe D. Woodward
Magnolia, Arkansas

May 28, 2009

Joseph Valliant, RE #23 Construction
Project Coordinator

I just wanted to thank you again for all of your help last Friday. I don't know what I would have done without my guardian angel! Thank you also for helping me with the job opportunities. I've never had anyone go above and beyond to help me like you have! I will never forget it!

I told my son what all you have done and he said, "Well mom, his name is Joseph... from the Bible."

You have been a blessing in my life and I hope that I can be a blessing in yours someday! God bless!

DeDe Evans
Sheridan, Arkansas

July 8, 2009

Ralph Fulton, District 9 Engineer,

Thank you for sending work crews to Highway 341, south of the Sheid Bridge in Baxter County. We had a lot of trees from the ice storm sticking out toward the highway. They were tall pines which had fallen across the road and just enough was cut off to enable traffic to flow. It looked like they would impale someone who ran off the road! The highway workers chipped these trees and left everything looking nice - no limbs or anything. We really appreciate the good maintenance work these men have done. Thanks!

Jo Wilson
Norfolk, Arkansas

April 27, 2009

Larry Dickerson, Chief Fiscal Officer,

After meeting with Toni Barnes recently on two occasions, relative to my retirement, I felt it necessary to advise you of the following. During our meetings, Toni exhibited professional competence and proficiency in her advice to me, relative to options that are available that I was not aware of at the time. Her keen insight and administrative skills were apparent the more we talked about my retirement.

Her unselfish devotion to her job, applications of her knowledge and efforts to ensure that I understood each item completely, reflects great praise upon herself, Fiscal Services Division and the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department.

Mike Dudoich
Division Office Manager
Equipment & Procurement

March 29, 2009

Mike Beebe, Governor of Arkansas,

I am writing you to let you know about an outstanding officer, PFC Felix Carr, with the Arkansas Highway Police. On the evening of January 7th, my wife was returning alone from a family funeral in Tennessee when she hit a large pothole on the I-40 river bridge. The impact blew out her front tire. She was able to safely steer the vehicle to a nearby weigh station.

At that time, PFC Carr saw what happened and pulled into the weigh station to ensure that she was safe until a tow truck arrived. When the first tow truck did not arrive, Carr took the initiative to arrange for another. Once he felt sure that everything was fine, he sent her on her way, only after giving her his name and cell number so she could call him once she arrived home in Little Rock. The entire ordeal lasted over 4 hours.

As a husband and father of two girls, I am thankful that Arkansas has officers of the caliber of PFC Carr. His professionalism, devotion to duty, determination to see the solution through to the end, and most importantly, his genuine sense of concern for the safety and well-being of others is a credit to him and the the Arkansas Highway Police. I am unable to sufficiently articulate just how appreciative I am for his actions. I can only acknowledge a job well done and encourage you to do the same.

Patrick Studer
Little Rock, Arkansas

April 15, 2009

AHTD Director Dan Flowers,

My husband and I recently had company from Canada to stay with us and as we toured our city, they kept commenting on how nice our roads are. I wanted to pass the compliment along.

Ron & Kathy Parson
Little Rock, Arkansas

March 18, 2009

AHP Captain Don Hastings,

I am writing to commend Arkansas Highway Police PFC Alvin Todd. On February 18th, I was driving home to Bryant from Hot Springs. At the old weigh station on Interstate 30, near exit 114, I had a flat tire. I had to pull over immediately on the shoulder in what I considered a less than safe location.

Due to a shoulder injury years ago, I can not change a tire by myself, although I know how. I felt like I was in quite a dilemma. I was way too close to the outside lane for comfort, with large semi trucks passing. As a female, I was not feeling very safe from whomever might come along. I used my cell phone to call my family. Of the four I could rely on, two were in Little Rock, one was working on an ambulance in Saline County, and the other was out of state. I had no one who could come to my immediate assistance.

I was in a predicament, but had only been there for a few minutes when PFC Todd pulled up and turned on his emergency lights. I explained my situation and he volunteered to change my tire for me. I know this is not necessarily in the scope of his duties and that he has plenty of other things to do. He offered to follow me to Exit 116 at Benton, but also said I could take old Highway 67, where there was less traffic into Benton. I took his advice and drove Highway 67 into Benton and straight to a tire shop.

I want to thank PFC Todd. He is an exemplary officer, sincere, courteous, and professional. His appearance and uniform were impeccable. He did a great service to me above and beyond what is called for in changing my tire. He also made me feel very safe. I also wish to thank the Arkansas Highway Patrol for employing such well-trained and professional personnel as PFC Todd. His actions reflect very positively toward him and the AHP. He is certainly a credit to your Department.

Crystal Kindervater
Bryant, Arkansas



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