

INFORMATION RELEASE



Office of the Director

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NORTHWEST ARKANSAS TO RECEIVE NEW INTERSTATE HIGHWAY DESIGNATION

LITTLE ROCK (4-16) – Sections of Interstate 540 and Highway 71 in northwest Arkansas will be receiving a new highway designation soon, according to Scott Bennett, Director of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD).

The Department recently received approval from the Federal Highway Administration and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials to rename the route from Interstate 40 near Alma to the Highway 71B interchange just south of Bella Vista. Beginning next week, the route will be re-designated as Interstate 49.

“We are pleased to have this new designation,” stated AHTD Director Scott Bennett. “This is something we have been working on for several months. In addition, we are awaiting Federal Highway Administration approval to designate future sections of Interstate 49 between Interstate 40 and the Louisiana state line.”

The Bella Vista Bypass, which is currently under construction, will have a dual designation as Highway 549 and Future Interstate 49 until it is completed to Interstate standards.

“We are excited to be officially naming this section of roadway as Interstate 49 in Arkansas,” stated Highway Commissioner Dick Trammel of Rogers. “This is part of our ultimate goal to upgrade the Highway 71 corridor in western Arkansas to Interstate standards. When completed, Interstate 49 in Arkansas will stretch from the Louisiana border north to the Missouri border.”

AHTD crews are scheduled to replace road signs beginning the week of April 21st. Interstate 49 signage should be in place along the approximate 65-mile route within 30 days. The Department will be erecting nearly 700 new signs at a total cost of about \$70,000.

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