



# INFORMATION RELEASE

## Office of the Director

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND  
P. O. Box 2261 – Little Rock, Arkansas  
Telephone (501) 569-2227

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT  
ArkansasHighways.com  
Twitter: @AHTD

**Contact:**  
**Danny Straessle/Krista Sides**

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### **White River Rest Area to Close – Will Become Arkansas Tourist Information Center**

**PRAIRIE COUNTY (2-12)** –The White River Rest Area, located between the cities of Hazen and Fredonia on Interstate 40 at mile-marker 198, will undergo a complete transformation into an Arkansas Tourist Information Center; the work will require closure of the rest area for more than a year, according to the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation (AHTD) officials.

Both eastbound and westbound facilities are scheduled to be closed at **7:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 17, 2016** and will remain closed for the duration of the project. Weather permitting; the Arkansas Tourist Information Center at White River will open late-2017. Motorists should plan to use alternate facilities until the project is completed.

Transformation of the White River Rest Area will include demolition of the existing restrooms and construction of larger buildings to accommodate a greater number of restroom facilities that meet the latest Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, are more family friendly, and feature baby changing stations.

Unlike the Department's Welcome Centers, the new Tourist Information Centers will be unmanned, equipped instead with self-service kiosks that feature the AHTD's highly successful travel and construction information site, [IDriveArkansas.com](http://IDriveArkansas.com). Additional kiosks will provide weather conditions and forecasts as well as information about local amenities to include attractions, dining, lodging, and more. Limited public Wi-Fi access will also be made available.

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Transformation of the White River facility is one among several Rest Areas that will become Tourist Information Centers. See attached drawings of a typical facility. Later this spring, the Social Hill Rest Area is scheduled to undergo the same conversion and work has already begun on the Big Piney Rest Area. Additionally, the Arkansas Welcome Centers in Harrison and at the Red River (U.S. Highway 71 in Little River County) will be replaced with new facilities.

The White River Rest Area was originally constructed in 1972. Crow Paving of Morrilton was awarded the contract in January 2016 for transforming it into an Arkansas Tourist Information Center with a bid of \$4.8 million.

The location of all rest areas and Arkansas Welcome Centers, as well as the latest travel information, can be found on [IDriveArkansas.com](http://IDriveArkansas.com). You can also follow us on [Twitter @AHTD](https://twitter.com/AHTD).

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