



INFORMATION RELEASE

Contact:
Danny Straessle/Krista Sides

NR 17-314
July 31, 2017

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department by law today becomes the Arkansas Department of Transportation

LITTLE ROCK, AR (7-31) – In a historical transition today, the state’s transportation agency begins a new chapter in its more than 100 years of existence.

Senate Bill 589, now Act 707 of 2017 – which goes into effect today, changes the name of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department to the Arkansas Department of Transportation. The 128-page bill was a recommendation of the Legislative Task Force on Intermodal Transportation and Commerce (the length of the bill was the result of changing the name of the Department in every location within the Arkansas Code).

Among its charges, the Task Force considered combining the Arkansas Department of Aeronautics and the Arkansas Waterways Commission with the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department to become the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

Although the Task Force recommended the Department not take in the Arkansas Aeronautics Department and the Arkansas Waterways Commission, it did recommend changing the name of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department in order to:

- Bring the Department into the mainstream of the vast majority of transportation entities;
- Align the Department with specific language in Federal law which refers to the various “Departments of Transportation”; and
- Identify the Department as the point of contact for intermodal development in coordination with Aeronautics and Waterways, for purposes of economic development.

“We are the backbone of economic development in the state,” says ArDOT Director Scott Bennett. “And nothing makes job creation more possible than the work we do.”

In 1929 the Arkansas Highway Department was separated from the State Department of Lands and remained until 1977 when the name was changed to the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. Now 40 years later, a new name emphasizes the agency's continuing role in improving the quality of life for Arkansans.

"Although we have a new name, we still have the same commitment to safety, efficiency, quality and trust," Bennett concludes.