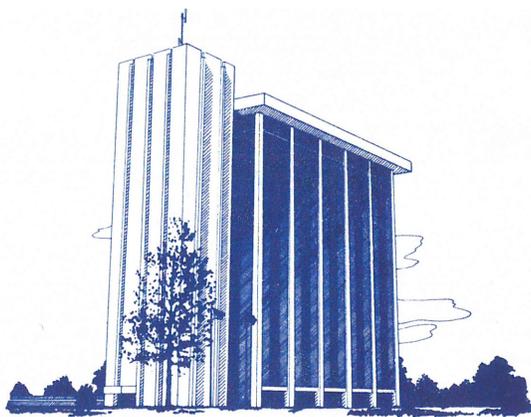


ARKANSAS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Volume 1, No. 1



EMPLOYEE NEWS LETTER

September 8, 1973

A message from your director

Since being named Director of Highways earlier this year, one of my primary objectives has been to do my best to make the Arkansas Highway Department a better place to work. Most of you already know that the Highway Department has long been one of the most efficient and best state agencies to work for. Realizing, however, that no individual or agency is perfect, I have tried to initiate new ideas and concepts to improve working conditions, to better employee relations and to give employees a chance to have a voice in solving the problems of the department. However, in an organization with 3,600 employees spread out across an entire state, communication is a big problem. This newsletter, which will become a regular publication of the Highway Department, is an effort to keep you better informed on actions by the administrative staff and the commission and other developments that directly affect you. I invite you to make any comments, suggestions or ideas concerning this newsletter to me. I hope you will read it thoroughly. I believe you will find that it will answer a number of your questions as well as correct rumors which occasionally get started. It is my belief that the newsletter will help establish a direct line of communication between this office and you.

Henry Gray
Director of Highways

Interest Grows Forming Employee Council

Response has really been good to the suggestion that an Employees Council be formed to discuss and work out our problems.

The District Engineers reported last week that they had received favorable reaction from several hundred employees. The Director's Office is moving ahead with plans to form the council, which tentatively will be composed of two or three persons from each district who will be elected by you to serve as councilmen. The councilmen will represent the employees of their district and will bring your problems to the Director and the Commission. Please continue to let your foreman, your superintendent, resident engineer, district engineer, or the Director know what you think about this idea.

New Pay Periods Cause Problems

On July 1, the state Finance and Administration Department changed state employee pay periods from twice a month or 24 times a year to once every two weeks or 26 times a year because of the increasing difficulty in meeting payroll dates regularly.

There has been a period of inconvenience caused by the withholding of a week's pay, the necessity of deducting an entire month's insurance premium during one of the pay periods and resolving our payroll procedures with Finance and Administration. There have been several meetings between AHD administrative personnel and Finance and Administration officials and it is believed that all of the "bugs" have been worked out clearing the way for future checks to arrive on time.

Many employees say they are pleased with the revised payroll policy of receiving checks every other Friday. Complaints from hourly employees, who have not received their paychecks regularly, were expected and hopefully in the future checks will be in your hands by the weekend.

Overtime checks are now being sent out separately and this is expected to reduce the chances of regular checks being late.

New Insurance Plan goes into Effect

A shortage of packets containing claim forms and instructions for filing claims with our new insurance company has resulted in some employees not receiving the material. For those who have not yet received a packet and need to file a claim, you should contact your District Engineer or the Accounting Division in the Central Office.

Hospital Admission cards were mailed out during the last week in August and all employees should have received them by now.

The decision to change insurance companies was made in order to take advantage of a premium allowance provided by the legislature in an amount of up to \$11.00 per month toward the health insurance portion of the premium. It is felt that the provisions of the law allowing premium participation and the provisions of the insurance plan are a beneficial combination to the majority of the employees, and the decision to accept the plan was made as a result of those benefits.

Grievance Procedure Explained

The Highway Commission has approved a Minute Order implementing a new grievance procedure that will give Highway Department employees prompt and considerate attention to grievances concerning working conditions and questions on wages and hours.

The procedure previously has been explained, but some employees have said they still do not completely understand how the system works.

Under the system an employee must first take up the grievance with his immediate supervisor. The supervisor will make a thorough investigation, give an impartial hearing and, if possible, make a decision which is mutually agreeable. The District Engineer may intercede at this point in an attempt to reach an understanding, however, this is not necessary and the employee may rather submit his complaint to the appropriate Highway Department Representative. The Highway Department Maintenance Engineer is the Representative for grievance dealing with working conditions and the Highway Department Personnel Officer is the person to contact for questions dealing with wages and hours.

The person who hears the grievance will immediately review all the evidence available and, if necessary make further investigations into the matter. After all the facts have been considered, a written report will be made to the Director for his consideration. The employee will then be notified in writing of the Director's decision.

Your supervisor or District Engineer will be happy to explain further any questions concerning the new grievance procedure.

Diesel Mechanics get Tool Allowance

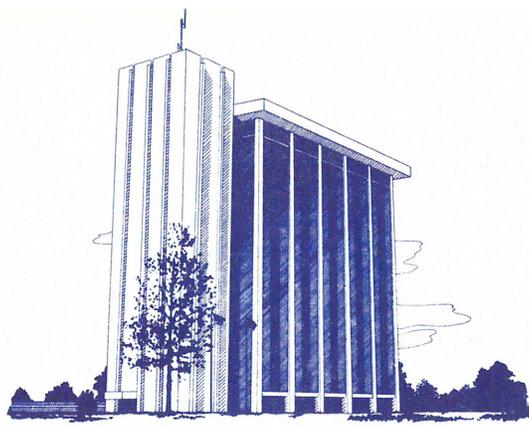
All automotive diesel mechanics and those who, by the requirements of their trade, are required to furnish and own a full set of tools are now authorized and are receiving a tool allowance of \$10 per month. The allowance is paid at the end of each month to the eligible employees who have been in a pay status for at least 50% of the calendar days of the month. Each district or division is responsible for preparing a requisition so that all eligible employees may receive the allowance.

Reimbursement Available for Auto Liability

Many employees apparently still are not aware that insurance premiums may be reimbursed for personal liability coverage on Highway Department owned vehicles. The actual cost is reimbursable up to a maximum of \$15 per year per employee.

The employee may request reimbursement by completing a "Reimbursement for Travel and Other Expense" (Form 19-103) and entering the expense, designated "Personal Liability Insurance Premium" in the Miscellaneous Section. A bill from the insurance agent, a copy of the insurance policy or a completed copy of Form 19-159 should be included.

ARKANSAS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT



EMPLOYEE NEWS LETTER

Volume 1, No. 2

November 2, 1973

A message from your director

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who contributed their time and effort to make the SASHTO convention in Hot Springs a tremendous success. It would be impossible to single out individually those who worked so hard, so I use this means to convey to you my sincere appreciation.

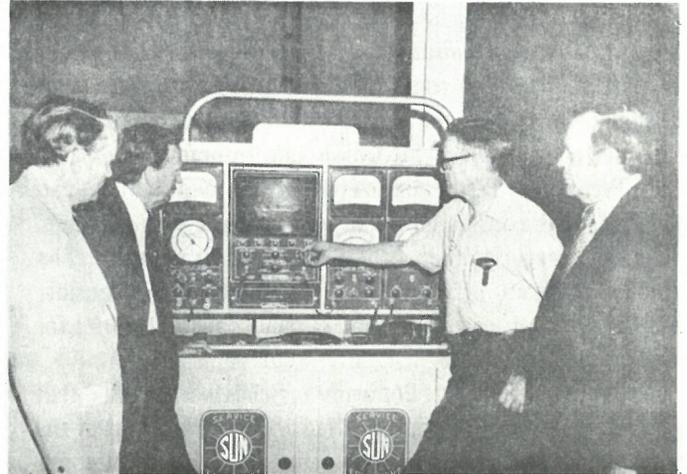
I know it took many, many people hundreds of man hours to make an event as large as our convention go so smoothly. I have had many letters and telephone calls since the convention from people who expressed their gratitude for the warm Arkansas hospitality and the interesting and informative meetings we had.

Again, I would like to say thank you for making possible what I think was the best convention SASHTO has ever had. Thanks are not only for those who worked at the convention, but also to those who stayed behind to carry on the regular and important business of the Highway Department.

*Henry Gray
Director of Highways*

Additional Holiday to be November 12

The Highway Commission has approved a minute order outlining nine holidays that will be observed by the Highway Department. The Commission, earlier this year, had verbally agreed to approve regular holidays as designated by the 1973 Legislature for other state agencies. This was stated in an earlier letter to all employees. The holidays are New Year's Day, Robert E. Lee's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. This year, Veteran's Day falls on Sunday and the Highway Department will observe the holiday on Monday, November 12.



Members of the Highway Commission and Director Henry Gray recently visited the District Headquarters at Harrison to meet and talk with employees there. In this photo, Marion Wray explains the operation of an electronic engine tester to Commissioner J. C. Patterson (left), Mr. Gray (2nd from left) and Commission Chairman Maurice Smith (right). The Commissioners and Mr. Gray commented that they hoped similar visits to other districts could be made more frequently in the future.

Plans Being Made for Improvement of Retirement System

Plans are being made to draft separate legislation or amend the present law to provide that a member of the Highway Employees Retirement System may receive free credited service in the System for up to two years service in the military.

The state Attorney General's Office recently ruled that Act 634 of 1973 which was thought to have provided that a member of any state-supported retirement system could receive credited service in the system for up to two years service in the armed services applies only to the Arkansas Judges Retirement System.

It is possible that the Legislature had some broader effect in mind when the legislation was passed, but the language used in Section I prevents the Act, in its present form, from having any effect on members of the Highway Employees Retirement System or other state retirement systems.

Negotiations Under Way on Insurance

The Director of Highways recently met with officials of the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States concerning the Highway Department's health and life insurance under the state program. The Director expressed to company officials that there were three major categories with which we are dissatisfied. They are:

(1) Compulsory Life Insurance. The Director has advised the company that highway employees are opposed to the compulsory term life insurance and Equitable officials agreed that this life insurance could be made optional on the part of the employees except for a nominal amount such as we had under the plan provided by Union Life Insurance Company.

(2) Premiums. Premiums are divided into only two categories. This is considered unfair as it places a high premium on certain categories than others for the same coverage. The insurance company officials agreed that they would reconsider this and set up at least three, and possibly four, categories for premium determinations.

(3) Deductible Period. Company officials were advised that highway employees were not satisfied with the shortness of the period of accumulations for the deductible, and after some conversation, they agreed to reconsider this.

These changes cannot take place until December or January. It is the feeling of the Director that if we cannot get relief on these three major items, and possibly some smaller items, we will ask the legislature to permit us to advertise for our own program.

Dues Check Off Ended

The Highway Commission has voted to stop the practice of collecting union dues through payroll deductions from the salaries of AHD employees who are members of the union. The Commission had determined that the administrative costs of the operation for the processing of union dues constituted an added clerical and office expense discriminating against the rights of the other employees of the Highway Department who are not members of the Laborers International Union. It is also felt that the move will benefit members of the union in that by paying dues directly to the union there will be closer contact between union representatives and members of the LIU.

It is the policy of the Highway Department that any employee who wishes, may join the union without fear of discrimination, interference, restraint or coercion, but the expense and difficulty of union dues collection must be borne by the union.

Job Vacancies Listed

It has always been the policy of the Highway Department to fill job vacancies from within the Department whenever possible. The Director has initiated a new policy of posting job vacancies, thereby giving employees an opportunity to apply for jobs for which they believe themselves to be qualified, and for which they might not otherwise have been considered. It is believed that this policy of informing employees of job vacancies in the Department will strengthen productivity and increase advancement opportunities.

Here is a list of some of the present job openings. Anyone interested in applying should contact the Personnel Office.

Draftsman – Grade 7 – Roadway Design
Draftsman – Grade 7 – Environmental Development
Mechanic, Auto Diesel – Grade 3 – Central shops, Jacksonville
Carpenter – Grade 3 – Central Shops, Jacksonville
Custodial Worker – Grade 1 – Bldg. & Grounds
Laborer – Grade 1 – District 6
Signman I – Grade 4 – Traffic
Computer Operator – Grade 8 – Computer Services
Geologist – Grade 13 – Materials & Tests
Engineering Aid II – Grade 6 – Material & Tests
Cartographer – Grade 9 – Planning & Research

United Way Campaign to End

The 1973 United Way Campaign will soon be winding up. If you have not already done so, you are urged to contribute to this worthy cause. We are all concerned about our community and the welfare of those who share it with us. The United Way campaign gives us a chance to show that concern. The United Way campaign benefits 38 community service agencies and the one campaign each year eliminates the 38 separate campaigns that would be necessary if each agency conducted its own fund-raising effort.

*Environmental Development is now located in Room 406.
The new telephone number is 2281.*



Energy Crisis Presents Problems

The energy crisis has confronted the Highway Department and the Highway Commissioners with serious problems that must be considered in planning for an adequate highway program. The work required is vast and the future projection of funds that will be available for the Six-Year Program is not good. Economical operation of the Department is imperative and every effort must be put forth to secure a full dollar's worth of work for each dollar spent. There is also no doubt that future operation of the Department will require some "belt tightening."

The demands of the public for rapid improvements are many — more roads must be built and antiquated facilities must be modernized. Construction and maintenance work of any kind calls for the spending of money and the money for such work can only be secured from the sources of revenue provided by the legislature. Seventy-Five per cent of the revenue is presently derived from motor fuel taxes. The energy shortage is expected to result in a 15-35 per cent cut in fuel consumption and if a rationing program is implemented, that figure may be even higher. It is almost certain that our highway program will be slowed.

Speed Limits Reduced Further

Due to federal legislation and statements made on national television last week by President Nixon, all Highway Department vehicles are to be driven at 50 miles per hour or less at all times.

Highway Director Henry Gray issued an Administrative Order two weeks ago that set a speed limit of 60 miles per hour on four-lane highways and 50 miles per hour on two-lane roads in an effort to conserve fuel. Since that time, however, it has become apparent that the fuel shortage is much more critical than it was thought to be.

In another measure to deal with the energy crisis, the Director has designated Mr. Jim Lowder, Assistant Chief Engineer; Mr. Gip Robertson, Assistant to the Director; and Mr. Charles Venable, Assistant Chief Engineer, to establish fuel conservation measures within the Highway Department. The committee will deal with fuel conservation in the planning, construction and maintenance of our highways and attempt to establish a means of eliminating all unnecessary use of fuels for vehicles and other facilities in the operation of the Department.

The Director also has asked that when possible carpools should be formed to save on gasoline. Some employees already have begun this practice and the Director has expressed his appreciation for their cooperation.

Assessor to be at Central Office Building

For the convenience of Highway Department employees, Mr. L. E. Tedford, Pulaski County Tax Assessor, will have available December 17 at the Central Office Building in Little Rock three assessors to prepare your 1974 personal property assessments. The service will be provided in Conference Room 104 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Persons wishing to assess their taxes should bring their 1973 assessment and 1972 paid tax receipt.

Policy Outlined on Jury Duty

A recent Administrative Order issued by Director Henry Gray states that any employee of the Highway Department called upon to serve as a witness or juror shall be entitled to full compensation from the Department in addition to any fee paid by the court. The time off for such service shall not be counted as leave time. It is felt that no employee should be penalized when he is called upon to serve in this capacity.

United Fund Campaign Ends

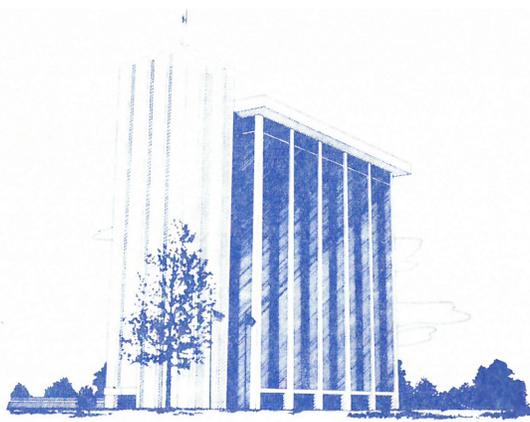
Employees of the Highway Department in the Central Office and District Six contributed a total of \$2,861.75 to this year's Pulaski County United Way Campaign. Planning & Research was the leading Division with a contribution of \$445.15. Next was Roadway Design with a total of \$285.00. Our campaign coordinator, Bill Looney, expresses his appreciation to everyone who helped make the drive a success. "The basic philosophy of helping ourselves by helping others again has prevailed throughout the Department," Looney said.

Job Vacancies Listed

The Personnel Office has listed 12 job vacancies that presently exist in the Central Office and District Six. Anyone interested in applying should contact the Personnel Office.

Draftsman – Grade 7 – Roadway Design
Draftsman – Grade 7 – Bridge Design
Auto Diesel Mechanic – Grade 3 – Central shops, Jacksonville
Carpenter – Grade 3 – Central shops, Jacksonville
Custodial Worker – Grade 1 – Bldg. & Grounds
Laborer – Grade 1 – District Six
Signman I – Grade 4 – Traffic
Geologist – Grade 13 – Materials & Tests
Cartographer I – Grade 9 – Planning & Research
Mail Clerk – Grade 2 – Mail & Supplies
Stereo Compiler – Grade 9 – Photogrammetry
Secretary I – Grade 7 – Photogrammetry

The Relocation Section of the Right of Way Division has been moved to Room 803. The new telephone number is 2304.



AHD Expected to Feel Effects of Fuel Shortage

It is becoming more apparent each day that the impact of the energy crisis will be felt by every Highway Department employee. The fuel shortage and the probable reduction in automobile use can only have an adverse effect on our highway program. Just how critical the situation will become cannot be predicted at this time.

Director Henry Gray has said, however, that highway revenue could decline \$1 million for each one per cent reduction in motor fuel sales. This does not include a proportionate decline in federal funds that would result.

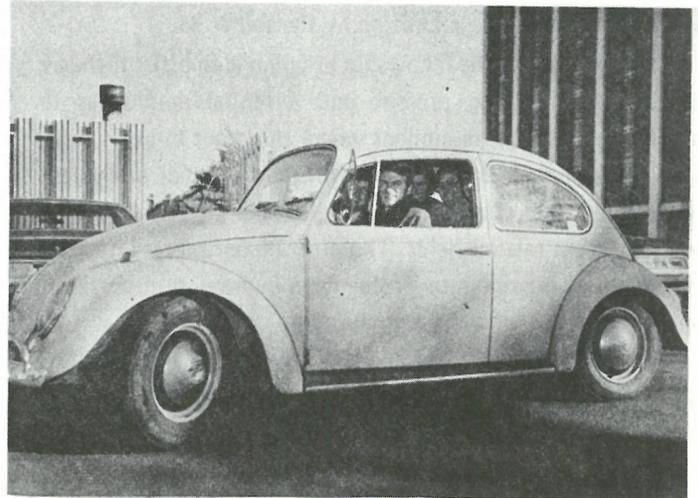
A 25-35 per cent reduction in the present consumption has been predicted. As an example of the possible effects upon the Highway Department, a 30 per cent cut could mean a \$40 million total annual cutback in the state's road program.

The AHD must maintain a program that will allow for continuing construction and major reconstruction to meet the needs of the future. If there is a reduction in revenue, it will be necessary to make cutbacks in other areas so that our construction program can continue. Ironically, the fuel shortage may help provide a solution to this particular problem because slower driving speeds, less traffic and the increasing popularity of smaller cars would result in longer road life and a reduced maintenance expenditure.

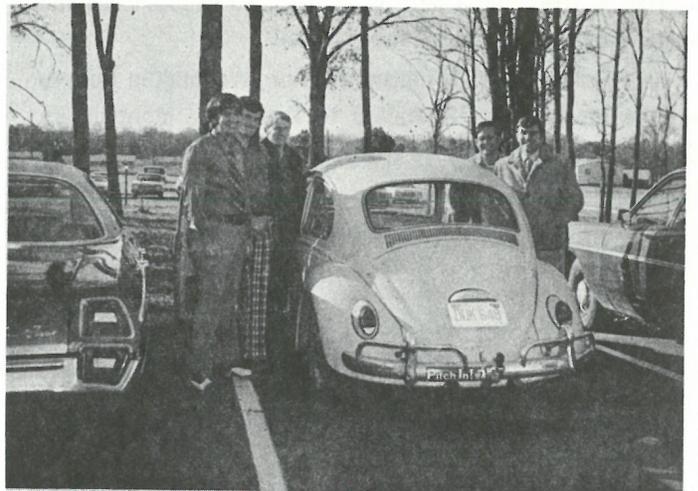
The Highway Department and the Highway Commission are very concerned with recent events concerning the energy crisis. As reported in the November 30 Newsletter, there must be some "belt-tightening."

December 24-25 are Holidays

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (Dec. 24-25) will be holidays for Highway Department employees. The two holidays, which bring this year's holiday total to eleven (11), will



Carpools are really becoming popular as employees have found they can save several dollars a week on gasoline while helping ease the fuel shortage. One carpool has even created real "togetherness" among five employees as shown in the top photo. The five are (from left to right in bottom photo) Mike Shaw, Accounting; Jim Darnell, Bridge Design; Wayne Major, Bridge Design; Bill Duncan, Roadway Design, and J. D. Sumner, Bridge Design.



provide AHD personnel with a "four-day weekend" at Christmas.

The Highway Commission wishes each employee a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

NHI Fellowships

Available

Applications are available in the Personnel Office for National Highway Institute Fellowships in Highway Transportation Research and Education. Anyone interested in applying for a fellowship should contact Mr. H. L. Wadley, Personnel Officer (telephone 2452) as soon as possible because applications should be submitted by December 31.

The objective of the fellowship program is to assist highway agencies by enabling present and potential employees to develop expertise in disciplines where shortages of skills exist. The program enables individuals with Bachelors or equivalent level degrees to perform research and to take support courses in transportation related fields. The program encourages free and unstructured inquiry into problems in highway transportation and its relationship to the community.

For the 1974-75 academic year, approximately 40 fellowships will be awarded at \$5,000 each for tuition, books, and living stipends.

District Changes Made

Effective January 1, Washington, Montgomery and Lafayette Counties will be transferred to different districts. The Highway Commission authorized the transfer in an attempt to equalize mileage so there could be a more balanced maintenance and operation program between the districts.

As a result of the Commission action, Washington County will be moved from District 9 to District 4, Montgomery County from District 4 to District 3, and Lafayette County from District 3 to District 7.

Red Cross to be at Central Office

The Red Cross will be at the Central Office Complex on Friday, December 21, from 8:30 a.m. until noon to accept blood donations. The Highway Department quota is 130 units and through November only 81 had been received. There will be an increased need for blood during the Christmas holidays. Your blood may save a life!

Confusion on Speed Limits

There has been some confusion among Highway Employees regarding the speed at which Highway Department vehicles may be driven.

Director Henry Gray says that speed limits outlined in Administrative Order 73-10 (issued November 16) are still to be observed. That order states that a 50 mile per hour speed limit should be observed at all times except where such a speed would create a hazardous situation. If, while driving on an Interstate-type facility, traffic would be obstructed, you may drive at a speed up to 60 miles per hour. On two-lane primary and secondary facilities, your speed should not exceed 50 miles per hour.

There have been several reports received of employees driving in excess of the outlined speed limit. Neighboring states have begun taking action against persons defying set limits. These actions range from entering a letter of reprimand into the employee's personnel file to denying the employee use of a state vehicle.

It is hoped that each AHD employee will have enough respect and pride in the reputation of the Highway Department to voluntarily observe the set limits so that punitive action will not have to be taken.

Training Program to be Held

An In-Service Training Program administered by the Training Section of the State Personnel Office will begin January 21, 1974. The classes will be held at the Little Rock Adult Vocational School at 14th and Scott Streets. Each class will meet from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., twice a week. Twenty-four hours of classroom instruction will be offered during a twelve week period.

Courses will be offered in Beginning Shorthand, Intermediate Shorthand, Advanced Shorthand, Advanced Typing, Business English, Office Practices, Accounting I and II, and Advanced Accounting.

Any employee in the Little Rock area who wishes to attend should contact the Personnel Office. There is no enrollment fee for state employees, however, there is a fee for workbooks. This is a good opportunity for employees who are seeking a chance to improve their basic skills.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!