

JULY/AUGUST 2018

Arkansas HIGHWAYS

A PUBLICATION OF THE
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MAGAZINE

FIVE LANES TO HOT SPRINGS

U.S. HIGHWAY 70 CONSTRUCTION COMPLETE

**ARDOT'S LEAD
AGRONOMIST**
Charlie Flowers

COMPOST:
Reduce, Reuse,
Recycle

**A DIFFERENT
KIND OF COMBAT**
Human Trafficking

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Our Actions Speak Volumes

MOST OF YOU HAVE HEARD ME SAY, AND YOU REALIZE, THAT WE DON'T ALWAYS GET THE THANKS AND THE CREDIT WE DESERVE FOR THE WORK WE DO. That is one reason it is really special when we do receive a compliment for a job well done. But there was one telephone call that came in to my office recently that stood out above any other, and it had nothing to do with paving, patching potholes, trimming trees, cleaning out ditches, mowing, or anything related to our daily activities.

The account that this kind motorist relayed was touching, to say the least. She wanted to pass along that there was a funeral procession on a rural highway, and that every one of our crew members along the route was very reverent and respectful as the procession passed through. The trip was between 15 and 20 miles long, and there were three of our crews that were encountered. One crew working in front of a school stopped, removed their hats and bowed their heads in respect. Farther up the road, there were two ARDOT vehicles pulled off on the shoulder, and both drivers removed their hats and bowed their heads. Finally, a mowing crew was working, and they stopped their machinery and removed their hats as the procession passed.

This lady was very thankful for the respect shown by ARDOT employees as the funeral procession drove through. Although I was not there to witness it, I am also very thankful for this show of courtesy and respect that is sometimes missing from society these days. Besides just doing our jobs to the best of our abilities, we should show courtesy and respect in everything we do. That means that what we do every day shows people who we are.

At the close of my last letter, I said to let our efforts and results speak volumes about us. Those ARDOT employees along the route of the funeral procession that day spoke volumes about themselves, and about our Department, and I am thankful someone took time out of her day to call and let us know.

The work we do is among the most visible work that anyone does in this State. The results of our efforts are used and noticed every day, but those things do not happen without our great staff. Thank you for all you do, and stay safe out there.

Scott E. Bennett, P.E., *Director*



FRONT & BACK COVER:
A stretch of Highway 70 from
Interstate 30 near Benton to Hot Springs.

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The magazine cover features a scenic background of a highway bridge over a river, a worker in a field, and a road construction site. The title 'Arkansas HIGHWAYS MAGAZINE' is at the top left, and the issue date 'JULY/AUGUST 2018' is at the top right. The word 'CONTENTS' is prominently displayed in the center. The table of contents is on the left, and a 'NEXT issue' preview is at the bottom.

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CONTENT!

JULY/AUGUST 2018

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A large graphic with a yellow background and a circular cutout showing a highway winding through a green landscape. The text 'LANES TO HOT SPRINGS' is written in large white letters across the cutout. Below it, 'U.S. HIGHWAY 70' is written in bold black letters, followed by 'CONSTRUCTION COMPLETE' in smaller black letters.

LANES TO HOT SPRINGS

U.S. HIGHWAY 70
CONSTRUCTION COMPLETE

BY DAVID NILLES

WITH THE CUTTING OF A RIBBON ON JUNE 1, U.S. HIGHWAY 70 FROM INTERSTATE 30 NEAR BENTON TO HOT SPRINGS OFFICIALLY BECAME A FIVE-LANE HIGHWAY.

ARDOT Director Scott Bennett and members of the Highway Commission joined Lieutenant Governor Tim Griffin, Hot Springs Mayor Pat McCabe and others to celebrate the completion of a construction project that widened 18 miles of the roadway to five lanes. The reconstruction of four bridges was also a part of the project.

"In February of 2017, members of our staff and representatives from the Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce, the Hot Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau, the National Park Service, Oaklawn and Magic Springs held a news conference to announce the start of this construction project," ARDOT Director Scott Bennett commented. "We wanted to let everybody know that Hot Springs was still open for business.

"Here we are today with a safer, more efficient way to go between Hot Springs and Benton. Not only did we widen the highway, we straightened curves, flattened hills and installed a traffic signal at Highway 128," he added.

The contract for improvements to the roadway was awarded to McGeorge Contracting Company, Inc. of Pine Bluff for \$78.5 million in December 2016. Construction began the following month. McGeorge also happens to be the contracting company that built the original highway in the 1950s.

Arkansas Highway Commissioner Tom Schueck recalled the first time he traveled the highway in 1965.

"It was a two-lane highway with trees that hung over the road giving a cave-like experience. Later ARDOT added passing lanes to make the road safer. As traffic increased, we realized that more lanes were needed. Today, three months ahead

of schedule, we celebrate the opening of five lanes while enjoying the surrounding beauty of a much safer thoroughfare. We thank everyone involved in the completion of this roadway."

Lieutenant Governor Griffin shared with the crowd the importance of a strong, growing highway system.

"You cannot have sustained economic development and growth without highways and infrastructure," Griffin explained. "I want to thank the taxpayers and voters of Arkansas for saying this is a project that is important. This is about quality of life. More people will want to come down to this area of the State with these improvements. When people come here from out of state, this is what we want them to see; we want them to wish they had roadways like this one in their state."

With a speed limit raised to 60 miles per hour, Lieutenant Darran Austin of the Arkansas State Police reminded motorists of the need for safe driving.

"The role of law enforcement agents will be to try and curb the dangerous driving habits of some of our motorists," Austin stated. "You can expect to see our troopers patrolling Highway 70 using radar, lasers and partially-marked cars to curb speeding. With summer upon us, more cars will be on the roadway. Our goal is to make this a safer Highway 70."

The improvements to Highway 70 were made possible with the passing of the half-cent sales tax in November of 2012. The widening project is part of ARDOT's Connecting Arkansas Program which is improving approximately 200 miles of Arkansas' highways and Interstates.

In the future, a portion of the new roadway will become part of the Southwest Trail, a 67-mile trail between Hot Springs National Park and Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site. ■



ARDOT Director Scott Bennett spoke at the ribbon cutting for the Highway 70 widening project.



Representative Les Warren, Hot Springs Mayor Pat McCabe, Judge Rick Davis, Commissioner Tom Schueck, ARDOT Director Scott Bennett, Lieutenant Governor Tim Griffin, Senator Bill Sample, Representative Lanny Fite, Commissioner Robert S. Moore Jr., and Representative Bruce Cozart cut the ribbon for the improved U.S. Highway.



Construction on U.S. Highway 70 began in 2017.

Charlie Flowers inspects a field of wildflowers near Interstate 430 and Colonel Glenn Road.



MEET ARDOT'S LEAD AGRONOMIST: CHARLIE FLOWERS

BY DAVID NILLES

STOP FOR A MOMENT AND THINK: DO YOU KNOW WHAT AGRONOMY IS? IF YOU ARE LIKE MANY, YOU KNOW THAT IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE LAND, THE SOIL OR PLANTS.

What is Agronomy?

ARDOT's Charlie Flowers can tell you. He has been an agronomist for the Arkansas Department of Transportation for 24 years.

"Agronomy is the scientific study of soil management," he explains. "It's kind of like being a farmer who works with crop production. Agronomists deal with planting, seeding, growing, irrigation,

and are also involved with pesticides including herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and fertilizers."

To become an agronomist, one needs a background in science. Flowers attended the University of Central Arkansas where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in General Science. Upon graduating from college, he put his degree to work for the Arkansas State Plant Board.

Flowers' Role at ARDOT

So how does Flowers' education and experience come into play at the Department?

"My role is to provide a safe, aesthetically pleasing roadside for the traveler," Flowers shares.

"I focus on the vegetative areas surrounding a new roadway or an existing one."

Flowers' has an office at ARDOT in Little Rock, but he spends about 50 percent of his time in the field. That is where the action is.

"I provide the oversight for the

establishment and maintenance of the turf as well as the roadside vegetation," he explains. "We want a nice, healthy vegetative grass or matte on our roadsides. It provides erosion control to help eliminate the undercutting of the road surface or loss of pavement. That matte also provides a good filter keeping the unwanted materials leaked on the roadside and trash from going into the adjacent water bodies. Bermuda grass is a good example."

Planting Grasses That Do Well

To keep Arkansas' roadsides looking their best, it is important to know what varieties of grass will thrive in each area's climate.

"We actually have a seed specification in the Standard Spec book," Flowers explains. "We use a mix of seeds that includes common Bermuda (hulled and unhulled), Lespedeza (Korean and Kobe), Annual Rye or other cereal grasses.

We use a mix of seeds that includes common Bermuda (hulled and unhulled), Lespedeza (Korean and Kobe), Annual Rye or other cereal grasses. We also plant red crimson clover that motorists enjoy seeing when it is in bloom...

We also plant red crimson clover that motorists enjoy seeing when it is in bloom. A wildflower mix may also be used depending on the location."

Arkansas is divided when it comes to what seed may work the best.

"As you look at a map of the State, we are divided into an east and west region," Flowers explains. "We may use a Kobe Lespedeza in the east region and a Korean in the west."

Care of the Grasses

Once a roadside is planted and growing nicely, proper care is important.

"We encourage our grasses to grow," Flowers explains. "We spot spray invasive plants, noxious weeds, Johnson grass and thistles."

As for fertilization, most of that is reserved for the Department's Arkansas Welcome Centers across the State.

"The roadsides and the Welcome Centers are two different scenarios. There is a higher level of maintenance at our Welcome Centers and a different chemistry," he adds. "You can't do to the roadside what you do to the Zoysia or Bermuda grass at the Centers. They require a higher order of maintenance because you are dealing with a fine turf grass. With that grass, we fertilize and use lime."

When Problems Crop Up

Flowers works closely with ARDOT Resident Engineers on construction sites across the State.

"I'm fortunate in that I can get out whenever the Districts need something," Flowers concludes. "I can address their needs as soon as possible."

"If we have a problem getting something to grow, the Resident Engineer will call me to come take a look at it," he shares. "I'll take a soil sample and study the nutrient values to determine what is missing and try to amend it so we get a desirable vegetative cover."

"If an area doesn't take, we need to determine the reason. Could it be a lack of proper nutrients in the soil? Alternatively, it may be a high salt content."

"We work with two agencies for our soil and plant diagnostics," he explains. "We utilize the University of Arkansas soils lab in Marianna. That lab runs all of the soil samples for the State. There is also a plant disease clinic up in Fayetteville. We utilize them for diagnosis of particular plant diseases be it grass, tree, shrub, et cetera."

"If a problem arises, I might take a soil sample and send it to Marianna. We see what needs to be added so we can get sufficient growth of our grasses."

Working with Wildflowers

In addition to making sure the embankments and medians along Arkansas' highways look healthy and green, Flowers is involved with a favorite of Arkansas motorists — the wildflowers.

"Everyone is familiar with our wildflowers, especially when they begin growing in the spring and summer."

(continued on page 10)

Milkweed plants are vital for Monarch butterflies.



Flowers does a great deal of work with Kayti Ewing, an ARDOT Environmental Analyst III.

“I work with Kayti on trying to prepare the sites with herbicide recommendations that won’t harm the wildflowers. We work to take out the woody stuff or residual materials that would cause harm to the wildflowers.

“We are currently trying to get those wildflowers out of the median and onto the shoulders and surrounding area where the vegetation management practice of less mowing and directed spot herbicides applications will allow the wildflowers to thrive.”

Flowers emphasizes the importance of pollinator plants that are vital for Monarch butterflies and bees. ARDOT has a roadside milkweed management program that has taken off in the last few years. (See the January 2015 issue of *Arkansas Highways*.)

A Good Mix of Knowledge and Herbicides

With over 16,000 miles of highways on Arkansas’ system, it takes a large team of staffers to care for the many miles of grasses along the way. ARDOT has 1,100 certified applicators that work along the roadways to ensure that grasses remain healthy.

“All crew members that apply herbicides have to take Certification Training Classes,” Flowers shares. “They must attend class and then pass the basic Environmental Protection Agency core exam and the Right of Way exam administered by the Arkansas State Plant Board. Once you pass the test, you are certified for three years.”

Initial training covers herbicide mixing, loading, personal protective equipment, ground water concerns, human exposure, safety, endangered species and pollinator issues.

“We have recertified 340 employees and will test 300 more this year.”

Training is conducted by the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service state office in Little Rock.

In addition to class work, Flowers works with the crews out in the field.

“We will work together on the calibration of our herbicide trucks. We apply 25 gallons of herbicide per acre. We have to calibrate the trucks to a given pressure and a given speed to get the correct application down.”

Flowers occasionally works with other DOTs outside of Arkansas’ borders. He has collaborated with his counterparts in Texas, Missouri, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.

“Being in this area of the country, they have similar concerns and problems.”

Whether in Arkansas or other neighboring states, the top priority for DOT agronomists is to provide a healthy, attractive roadside that serves its function. Judging from the view out the window of passing vehicles, it is easy to say that they are doing a good job. ■



Crew members attend certification training class in Little Rock.

Members of the Arkansas Highway Police and other dignitaries cut the ribbon on a new building in West Memphis.



AHP

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

MULTIPURPOSE BUILDING

Arkansas Highway Police were proud to officially unveil the new Multipurpose Building in Crittenden County on April 20, 2018.

The space doubles as a training facility and offices for the District Five headquarters. The new training room seats 40 personnel and is complete with a smart board, Bose sound system and projector. Offices for the commander and assistant commanders are also housed in the 3,500 square foot building.

Officers often have to travel to Little Rock for necessary training. The new facility allows more time working in the field and less time commuting.

“Not only does it serve as our district office, but it’s also a training facility for our officers,” Captain Jeff Holmes said. “Traveling takes away a whole day of an officer’s training. We reduce training costs by doing it here.” ■





WHEN IT COMES TO DRIVING WHILE DISTRACTED:

FOCUS. DRIVE. STAY ALIVE.

BY DAVID NILLES

MANY THINGS COMPETE FOR OUR ATTENTION WHEN WE ARE DRIVING—OUR ENDLESS “THINGS TO DO” LIST, CHANGING THE RADIO STATION, GRABBING OUR DRINK, EATING, ANSWERING TEXTS AND CHECKING OUT SOCIAL MEDIA TO NAME A FEW. HOWEVER, FOUR SIMPLE WORDS CAN HELP: FOCUS. DRIVE. STAY ALIVE.

The Arkansas Trucking Association has launched a statewide initiative to educate the public about the dangers of driving while distracted and to improve the safety of our streets and highways.

Governor Asa Hutchinson joined

Arkansas Trucking Association officials and officers from the Arkansas Highway Police (AHP) and the Arkansas State Police (ASP) on April 2 to introduce “Focus. Drive. Stay Alive.” at the State Capitol in Little Rock.

“One of our goals is to make Arkansas’ roads and highways safer for all drivers,” said Arkansas Trucking Association President Shannon Newton.

“Focus. Drive. Stay Alive.” will help educate Arkansans about the dangers of driving while distracted and safely sharing the road.

“We’ve all seen public service announcements warning against distracted driving. With our campaign,

however, we wanted to take it a step further and really try to get an understanding of who is most likely to drive distracted and then work toward creating messages that will help change those behaviors,” Newton explained.

To that end, the Arkansas Trucking Association surveyed Arkansas drivers about their driving habits and conducted focus groups to gain more insight and assist with campaign development. Among the more surprising findings: some of the most experienced drivers are the ones most likely to participate in activities that make their driving unsafe.

The “Focus. Drive. Stay Alive.” initiative will be actively working

with businesses to create policies that encourage safer driving and will also be using traditional advertising and social media to remind Arkansas drivers that focusing on driving is the best way to arrive home safely.

In 2015 alone, 3,477 motorists were killed in the U.S. and 391,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.

“Our ultimate goal is to reduce the number of accidents on Arkansas roads that are caused by distracted driving activities,” said David O’Neal, Arkansas Trucking Association Vice President of Safety and Industry Engagement.

“We want to make sure that all drivers — moms and dads trying to get home after work, busy professionals going about their daily lives or commercial truck drivers — are able to get home safely every day.”

“There are serious penalties for distracted driving,” Arkansas Highway Police Chief Jay Thompson reminds motorists. “There is a fine of \$250 for a first offense of texting and driving. It doubles to \$500 if you are found to be at fault for causing an accident.

“The AHP is introducing new surveillance measures to help our officers crack down on distracted drivers,” Thompson added. “The safest thing motorists can do is stay focused on the road.”

The “Focus. Drive. Stay Alive.” campaign is partially funded through a grant from the Arkansas Commercial Trucking Safety and Education Program. More information on the campaign is available at focusdrivestayalive.com. Adults and teenagers visiting the site are invited to take a pledge to put away the phone while driving. ■

660,000

drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving at any given moment.



391,000

distracted drivers injured people.

MORE THAN 10%

of all fatal crashes involve distracted driving.



percent of drivers admit to talking on a hand-held phone while driving.



percent of drivers say they have sent a text or emailed behind the wheel.



A Larson Davis sound level meter takes decible and frequency measurements.

NOT A RUMBLE... BUT A MUMBLE

BY DAVID NILLES

MOTORISTS EVERYWHERE ARE FAMILIAR WITH RUMBLE STRIPS. WE HAVE ALL OCCASIONALLY VEERED FROM OUR LANE, FELT THE VIBRATION AND HEARD THE NOISE THE STRIPS MAKE. EVERYONE PROBABLY APPRECIATES THE FACT THAT RUMBLE STRIPS ARE THERE FOR OUR SAFETY AND HELP TO KEEP US IN OUR TRAVEL LANE.

Data from the Federal Highway Administration indicates that from 2014 to 2016, an average of 18,779 fatalities resulted from vehicles departing the roadway. Installation of shoulder rumble strips has proven to have significant benefits in preventing those types of crashes.

In addition to installing them on the shoulders, rumble strips placed on a highway centerline have been effective in preventing head-on crashes. The National Cooperative Highway Research Program has found that, for head-on and opposite direction sideswipe collisions, center line rumble strips provide reductions in fatal and serious injury crashes of 45 percent on rural two-lane roads and 64 percent on urban two-lane roads.

These statistics are encouraging. They confirm that rumble strips are effective. However, shoulder and centerline rumble strips do have their critics. For example, residents living near highways featuring rumble strips say the noise the strips produce is a nuisance. In addition, rumble

strips can be difficult for bicyclists to traverse without slowing their speed significantly.

In an effort to solve the problem, several states have begun looking at ways to reduce the noise level produced by rumble strips.

Can changing the width, depth and scallop distance of the strips lower the noise level without sacrificing the safety aspects?

Early testing indicates the answer is “yes.” The outcome of this research has produced what researchers now call “mumble strips” or sinusoidal rumble strips — a continous wave pattern that's ground into the pavement.

MnDOT Mumble Strip Study

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has recently completed a study on the difference in noise levels produced by rumble strips and mumble strips.

MnDOT conducted the first phase of

their study at its MnROAD test track. Researchers milled various sinusoidal configurations into the test track. They also milled MnDOT's standard shape, which is the cylindrical design that reduces crashes significantly. Wavelength variations were made at 12-, 14- and 16-inches.

The broad consensus was that the mumble strip's 14-inch wide, 14-inch wavelength produced considerably less external noise compared to standard rumble strips and provided the optimal in-vehicle noise and vibration level.

In addition, bicyclists noted that they preferred the sinusoidal shaped mumble strip because it was less jarring to ride over than the standard design.

ARDOT Assesses the Possibilities

Is there a future for mumble strips on Arkansas' highways? ARDOT is using MnDOT studies as a baseline to build upon our evaluation.

“The Department has installed test mumble strips on a number of highways in order to study their effectiveness,” stated ARDOT Engineer John Lasley with the Transportation Planning and Policy Division.

Roadways with mumble strips include

...both rumble and mumble strips will be used in the future as life-saving measures.

State Highway 10 in Yell County, State Highway 35 in Chicot County, U.S. Highway 65 in Newton and Searcy Counties, U.S. Highway 67 in Saline County, State Highway 69 in Izard County, State Highway 139 in Clay County and State Highway 140 in Mississippi County.

The objective is to determine if mumble strips produce adequate interior sound to capture the attention of drowsy drivers in the same manner that existing rumble strips do.

Measuring the Difference: Did You Hear That?

The test mumble strips ARDOT is considering vary in size.

“The primary design for shoulders with widths greater than 5 feet, 6-inches will be 12 inches wide, ½-inch deep with a 14-inch wavelength,” Lasley explained.

This design is still under review.

“For narrow shoulders (less than 5 feet, 6-inches) the design will be 8 inches wide, with the same depth and wavelength.”

Centerline mumble strips will consist of two 8-inch wide strips offset from the center joint of the asphalt by 2 inches on either side.

“Our product evaluation is looking at the sound characteristics of these strips,” says Bentley Reynolds, a Research Assistant in the System Information & Research Division.

“We are taking decibel and frequency measurements of current rumble strips already installed on our highway system. Our crews are then coming back through and placing mumble strips where there were rumble strips or nothing at all. We want to determine if the mumble strips produce a comparable level of vibration and sound within the test vehicle that will be enough to alert a driver that they are leaving the roadway, while reducing external sound to the environment.”

Testing sites were selected based on current construction schedules. Most of the sites currently have rumble strips and are slated to receive centerline or shoulder mumble strips in the future.

“During our tests, sound data was collected using three Larson Davis sound

level meters,” Reynolds explains. “We recorded sound at distances of 0, 75 and 150 feet from the roadway surface. We used the 150-foot distance because it was estimated that most homes are about that far from the roadway.”

Sound was recorded for 30 minutes at each location using one-second intervals.

“For our testing purposes, we used a Department vehicle, a Dodge Ram 1500 with standard truck tires,” Reynolds added.

Test Results

After conducting tests on the roadways, the Department's findings concluded that mumble strips do indeed produce less noise. ARDOT staff also discovered that any deviations from optimal design standards could negatively impact sound and be louder than present rumble strips.

“Future analysis of mumble strip sites will give us better insight and help us improve their design,” Reynolds added. “In addition, we plan on measuring noise levels inside the vehicle.”

Additional Installations in the Works

Arkansas is one of just a handful of states that are presently experimenting with mumble strips. Both the MnDOT and ARDOT studies of mumble strips have shown promise.

Both rumble and mumble strips will be used in the future as life-saving measures.

“We have several mumble strip locations selected in upcoming projects,” Lasley stated. “Since we changed the design we plan to implement them in as many of next year's pavement preservation projects as possible.”

In addition, ARDOT has a 16-inch wide design for mumble strips on Interstate-type facilities, but there are no plans yet to install them.

With the safety of motorists always being a top priority at ARDOT, the work being done with rumble and mumble strips is promising and is leading these types of roadway safety measures in the right direction. ■

Mumble strips along U.S. Highway 67 near Haskell

The Ribbon Cutting symbolizes the completion of this segment of Future U.S. Highway 412.



SPRINGDALE BYPASS RIBBON CUTTING

GO WEST, YOUNG MAN

(And Maybe East A Little, Too)

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

A CROWD OF MORE THAN 150 PEOPLE GATHERED ON THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED FUTURE U.S. HIGHWAY 412, COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE SPRINGDALE BYPASS, TO COMMEMORATE COMPLETION OF ITS FIRST SEGMENT.

"This is not just a ribbon cutting, this is a celebration," said Arkansas Lieutenant Governor Tim Griffin. "This development is about connecting people and improving their quality of life."

The first segment of the Springdale Northern Bypass (Future U.S. Highway 412) is part of the Connecting Arkansas Program, funded by voter approval in 2012. The project cost \$100.6 million and connects Interstate 49 and State Highway 112.

Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman Dick Trammel thanked the citizens of Arkansas for passing the Connecting Arkansas Program constitutional amendment:

"You all stepped up. The Connecting Arkansas Program funded 36 projects. Because of you, we have better highways."

ARDOT awarded the contract to Eutaw Construction Company of Aberdeen, Mississippi, in December 2014. They began moving 5.5 million cubic yards of earth in February 2015, placing 2.3 total miles of storm drains and building 14 bridges totaling 1.25 miles of the 4.5 mile stretch of four-lane divided highway.

Northwest Arkansas is not only one of the fastest growing parts of our State, but it's one of the fastest growing places in the U.S. The rich culture, beautiful scenery and leading education standards

make it one of the most attractive places to live.

"We want jobs to grow," Lieutenant Governor Griffin said. "We want people to come here and visit, and we want them to come here and live. One of the key ingredients to growing jobs is highways and infrastructure. Roads are not like other spending; they are long-term investments."

Elected officials joined the Arkansas Highway Commission and ARDOT Director Scott Bennett to ceremoniously cut a ribbon after Springdale Mayor Doug Sprouse provided his comments:

"I'm thankful that voters all around the State of Arkansas made this possible. I'd like to quote American author Horace Greeley: "Go West, young man, go West." ...and we'd be happy if you went east a little ways, too." ■

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE: COMPOST

BY LINDSAY ZWEIFEL,
ARDOT ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYST



THOSE OF YOU WHO GARDEN ARE LIKELY FAMILIAR WITH COMPOST. TYPICALLY USED AS A NUTRIENT-RICH ADDITIVE TO BOOST THE SOIL'S POTENTIAL, COMPOSTING IS KIND OF LIKE MAKING SPECIAL DIRT.

Through the work of microorganisms and heat, organic matter is turned into a dark, earthy material that looks nothing like the original product. Compost is created from a variety of different organic ingredients; it can be derived from yard wastes like leaf litter and grass clippings, biosolids from wastewater

treatment plants, chicken litter or other animal manure and leftover food scraps from school cafeterias or home kitchens. What was once considered a waste product becomes a valuable resource through composting.

Home composting hits the trifecta of the three environmental R's: reduce,

reuse, and recycle. First, the amount of trash sent to the landfill is reduced when organic wastes found at the typical American home like grass clippings, leaves and food scraps are recycled. Recycling those common household wastes through the composting process creates a nutrient-rich product that gets reused right where it was created to renew the lawn and garden. At home you can bring your yard into full circle use by growing your own vegetables, composting food scraps with yard waste

(continued on page 18)



and using the new material to rejuvenate your garden soil to grow more vegetables. Instead of the latest farm-to-table movement, you get table-to-yard-to-table — keeping the activity micro-local.

Compost Power

The benefits of compost go beyond the home garden. Compost has special powers beyond the organic, nutrient boost usually associated with using it. First, consider the various soil amendments commonly used by gardeners. Lime or ground limestone is added to adjust the soil's pH to a more neutral level. Vermiculite and perlite help stabilize soils, prevent soil compaction and allow air to circulate. Manure adds organic nutrients while peat moss adds water retention

properties. A mature compost has the ability to do all those things and is the product of recycling materials otherwise considered waste.

Compost can improve and stabilize the pH, or acidity, of the soil. Most plants grow best in neutral soil conditions which would have a pH around 7. Arkansas generally has more acidic soils with some areas having soil pH as low as 3 or 4. Adjusting the pH to a more neutral level can allow plants to grow and thrive. With compost there is a tremendous capacity for holding water; it is an almost sponge-like quality. This water retention power reduces the amount of water needed for plant growth. Compost also creates more structural stability in sandy soil.

Stormwater runoff is greatly reduced and infiltration into the ground is increased leading to reduced erosion.

Beyond the Garden

It shouldn't be surprising that one product with so many benefits would have more varied uses than a simple garden additive. Compost can and is benefitting the Arkansas Department of Transportation. Several environmental regulations exist to protect water quality through limitations that are placed on stormwater runoff. These requirements are put on Departments of Transportation to manage runoff within the rights of way. Other restrictions apply directly to construction projects to manage runoff associated with large areas of ground disturbance that may occur with building roads and bridges. Amazingly, compost can help comply with these regulations.

The Department is already using Compost Filter Socks on construction jobs. Compost encased in a mesh tube is placed around storm drains. This practice allows rainwater to drain off the construction site while maintaining the safety of the adjacent roadway by preventing flooding. As the water passes through the filter sock, dirt and other pollutants become trapped and clean water is discharged. The socks can also be placed adjacent to sensitive water bodies to minimize the potential of stormwater pollution to affect the stream. Placement of compost as a mounded berm or spread like a blanket over disturbed soil allows for harnessing some of the other benefits. First, it can greatly reduce the volume of rainwater runoff, thereby reducing the erosion potential. As areas are converted from forest or field to roadways, the ability of the ground to absorb stormwater is reduced. The sponge-like nature of compost allows for capturing the stormwater and allowing it to soak into underlying soils. Compost can also bind to and break down certain pollutants. Tiny microscopic organisms



“Compost can also bind to and break down certain pollutants. Tiny microscopic organisms can break down petroleum compounds **essentially cleaning up spilled fuel.**”

can break down petroleum compounds essentially cleaning up spilled fuel. It also captures many heavy metals like those found in brake dust coming off traveling vehicles, thus keeping the metals out of waterbodies where they could cause more harm.

Boosting Poor Soil

Ideally, most areas have topsoil, which is the uppermost layer of soil that supports plant growth. Sometimes this layer is depleted of essential nutrients or requires a little boost to continue to grow and sustain vegetation. Adding decomposed organic matter, also known as compost, can provide just the boost the existing soil needs. But what is to be done when there is no topsoil at all? When ARDOT fulfills its mission by building roads and bridges, dirt undoubtedly gets

moved around. Frequently, cuts and fills associated with highway construction result in the removal of the nutrient-rich topsoil. When the roadwork is complete and the right-of-way is ready to grow grass and wildflowers, sometimes there is a struggle to get any vegetation to grow. It is often assumed the soil is depleted of necessary nutrients and simply adding more fertilizer will fix the problem. Yet the site continues to struggle to grow vegetation. It becomes likely the area is lacking more than nutrients.

It's possible that actions like removing excess material from one area and placing it in an area needing fill unintentionally eliminates something more than the nutrients in the soil. Life-yielding topsoil does not regenerate quickly. The process to create an inch of new topsoil can take hundreds of years. Topsoil is not just dirt.

It also consists of fungi, earthworms, bacteria and more. When you think about dirt or soil, it's typically the mineral composition that comes to mind: sand, silt and clay components. What gets overlooked is the organic matter and the microorganisms that help sustain life. There is a great challenge to support plant life without the organic matter and microbes. Compost is one way to reinvigorate the existing soil. Research, Environmental and District 2 Maintenance crews are joining forces to determine if adding compost in areas of sterile soil will allow us to establish vegetation where it has repeatedly failed to grow. A location has been selected and hopefully a test will be underway soon. The initial test will use different site preparation techniques to determine what produces the best results. ■



THE TRC CONFERENCE:

Keeping Pace with Highway Construction Technology

BY DAVID NILLES

THE DESTINATION WAS HOT SPRINGS FOR ALMOST 250 PARTICIPANTS AT THE 106TH TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING CONFERENCE PRESENTED BY ARDOT'S TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH COMMITTEE (TRC). THE CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN MID-MAY AT THE HOT SPRINGS CONVENTION CENTER.

The TRC conference is held each year to discuss the world of research as it applies to highways...how we build them, repair them, those who use them and the challenges and changes to be faced in the world of transportation as we plan for the future.

"This year's conference had an attendance increase over last year's," Elisha Wright-Kehner, Staff Research Engineer, shared.

"The attendees included not only ARDOT employees but consultants, transportation officials from around

the State and equipment and service vendors."

This year's forum featured speakers from across the country as well as ARDOT staff members. Kevin Thornton, ARDOT Assistant Chief Engineer for Planning, kicked things off with a presentation on ARDOT innovations such as the Multi-Media Highway Information System, the Intelligent Transportation System, Superpave and traffic simulation models.

Peter Jilek from the Federal Highway Administration - Arkansas Division presented an update on federal funding in Arkansas.

Following Jilek, Transportation Research Committee Chairman Jessie Jones discussed the Department's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan for 2017-2022 provides a guide for accomplishing the Department's priorities over a five-year period.

Breakout sessions over the following few days examined developments and projects from around the country

including Colorado's RoadX Program, an overview of the National Concrete Pavement Technology Center in Iowa, the Interstate 240 Bridge replacement project in Memphis and the Interstate 75 reversible express lane in Atlanta.

Other areas of discussion included concrete pavement preservation, hot in-place asphalt recycling, the use of mumble strips, school bus stop safety and roadside vegetation management practices.

In addition to the presentations, participants had an opportunity to visit with representatives from 24 design and construction companies in the exhibitors' area of the conference.

"Planning for next year has already begun," Wright-Kehner added. "We are going to be back at the Hot Springs Convention Center.

"Mark your calendars for June 5-7. Next year we will be including an equipment show and equipment management topic track. We invite everyone to join us for an expanded event on transportation innovation." ■



Peter Jilek from the Federal Highway Administration - Arkansas Division



Kevin Thornton, ARDOT Assistant Chief Engineer for Planning



Jessie Jones, Transportation Research Committee Chairman

SPECIAL EVENTS AROUND THE STATE



BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS



SEARCY BYPASS

More than 60 people gathered on May 29th to attend the official unveiling of the Searcy Bypass, including former Governor Mike Beebe. The ribbon cutting symbolized the completion of Phases II and III of the \$50 million project. Rogers Group and McGeorge Contracting completed the project ahead of schedule. The new bypass extends 13 miles and will meet needs of future growth in the area while offering safer travel for Searcy and White Counties.

MANILA BYPASS

ARDOT Director Scott Bennett joined Arkansas Highway Commissioner Alec Farmer in Manila on May 31st to open a new bypass. The \$14.5 million project widened a four-mile section of State Highway 18 from two to five lanes. Meadows Contractors began work in October 2015 and completed the project early. This project is a step closer to having a continuous multi-lane highway between Jonesboro and Blytheville.



U.S. HIGHWAY 64 WIDENING

A crowd gathered under the shade trees at the city limits sign of Crawfordsville on June 2nd for a ribbon cutting on a newly widened section of Highway 64 in Crittenden County. ARDOT Director Scott Bennett welcomed Senator Keith Ingram, Crittenden County Judge Woody Wheelless and representatives from Governor Hutchinson's office to kick-off the event. The completed project widened a 5.5-mile section of Highway 64 to five lanes. The new improvements stretch from State Highway 147 westward to County Road 375. Crisp Contractors was awarded the contract in August 2016 for just over \$23.3 million. Commissioner Alec Farmer told the crowd the project is one of five located in eastern Arkansas that is under construction or under design as a part of ARDOT's Connecting Arkansas Program. With completion of the project, motorists now have five lanes of travel on Highway 64 between the city of Marion and County Road 375. The distance is approximately 11.5 miles. A future project will widen Highway 64 to the west.

RESURFACING ON U.S. HIGHWAY 64 IN RUSSELLVILLE

A recent project in Russellville resurfaced 5.7 miles of U.S. Highway 64. The improvements begin at State Highway 326 and extend to Tyler Road. "Projects like this improve quality of place," Russellville Mayor Randy Horton told those gathered for a ribbon cutting. Blackstone Construction, LLC of Russellville was awarded the \$2.6 million contract in May of 2017. Crews performed all of the work at night between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. "Working at night caused a minimal amount of disruption to daily life around here," Mayor Horton added. "I can't imagine a better partnership than the one we had with ARDOT. This is exemplary of the partnerships we are so thankful for." Luke Duffield, owner of Blackstone Construction, explained the asphalt mix used on the project. "This is a mix that sheds water instead of letting it permeate through. It meets and exceeds expectations, and we thank ARDOT District Engineer Scott Mullis for working with us on it." The Highway 64 improvements were completed on time and under budget. "This project shows what can happen with true collaboration," Duffield added. "The City and State can be proud of these improvements."





WEEKEND

ROAD TRIP:

DESHA COUNTY

BY DAVID NILLES

OUR WEEKEND ROAD TRIP THIS MONTH IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DRIVE OUR “CHEVY TO THE LEVY” IN SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS. WE WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT ARKANSAS’ PAST IN MCGEEHEE AND THEN EXPLORE THE OLD MISSISSIPPI RIVER PORT OF ARKANSAS CITY.

U.S. Highway 65 is the main highway leading into McGehee, population 3,888. The first stop on this trip should be McGehee’s Visitor Center, housed in the local railroad depot.

The **Missouri Pacific Railroad Depot** was built in 1910 in the Mediterranean/Italianate style. The building is important to the history of McGehee because the town grew up around the depot once it was in operation. At one time, there were nine passenger trains that passed through

McGehee in any 24-hour period. The station featured a Van Noy Eating House where passengers could get a good meal in the days before dining cars. With a decline in ridership, regular passenger service stopped in 1965. Today, the depot houses the area’s Visitor Center and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Also housed in the railroad depot is the **World War II Japanese American Internment Museum**. Just outside of McGehee are two Japanese internment

camps dating to the early 1940s. The museum is the starting point before touring the camps and showcases the history of Japanese American internment in Arkansas during that time.

After the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor and upon entering World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt created the War Relocation Authority (WRA), resulting in 10 incarceration sites for Japanese-Americans for national security. Camps at Rohwer, in Desha County, and Jerome, in Drew County, were established in March 1942, and were the WRA’s easternmost camps. The two would eventually house over 17,000 men, women and children.

The museum vividly shares the trials of daily living for those held within the fences of the camps. Internees who

had previously worked jobs such as electricians, teachers, mechanics and butchers were able to continue working in these positions within the camp though their wages were reduced. Others had to learn new trades. The Center tells the story in first person letters, artwork and displays and is a good place to start before traveling to the actual camp locations.

The depot and museum are open Tuesday through Saturday at 100 S. Railroad Street.

After a visit to the Internment Museum, our road crew recommends traveling to the actual internment sites.

Both sites operated from 1942 through 1944. The **Rohwer War Relocation Center** is closest to McGehee and is located approximately ten miles north on State Highway 1. The camp sits on

500 acres and housed as many as 8,475 Japanese Americans forcibly evacuated from California. The land was heavily forested and included some swampy terrain, being just five miles from the Mississippi River. Extensive clearing and draining was necessary. Crews were still doing construction work when the first residents began to arrive. The center eventually included administrative offices, schools, a hospital and 36 residential blocks with communal dining, all contained within a guarded barbed-wire fence.

The camp is largely lost to history today. After the centers closed, the barracks and other buildings were auctioned off and removed from the site. The land was converted for agricultural farming. Today, visitors will see historic markers that

share the layout of buildings and display photos from the camp. Audio recordings tell the story of the camp at each marker location. A large smokestack still stands on the grounds, and a monument marks a memorial cemetery where a number of residents were laid to rest.

Twenty miles south of McGehee, on U.S. Highway 165, is the **Jerome War Relocation Center**. It was the last camp in the country to open and the first to close. Almost 8,500 residents were housed there. The Jerome Center featured 14 residential barracks, a recreational building, a mess hall, a hospital, a laundry building and a communal latrine. Being the first camp to close, the Jerome location was later used as a German POW camp until the end of the war. Like Rohwer, a hospital smokestack remains, and a



“The whole thing was very anxiety provoking, because you didn’t know how long you would be staying; if you were going to be able to go back to your homes in California, or whether you’re going to be shipped to Japan, or whatever.

The future was so unknown.”

- Paul S. Sakamoto, Rohwer inmate



Monument at Rohwer War Relocation Center

(continued on page 24)

monument tells the history of the former camp. A railroad line linked the two relocation centers with McGehee. The Jerome War Relocation Center is located approximately ten miles south of Dermott on U.S. Highway 165.

Returning to McGehee, for those who appreciate historic architecture, plan to drive by the **Parnell-Sharpe House**. The brick house was built in 1936 and is probably the only example of French Eclectic architecture in Desha County. The style was popular in the late twentieth century. The house was constructed using local materials including red tapestry brick. It was built and occupied by Duren Sharpe and his wife, Mildred. He was a self-taught bricklayer and carpenter who built a number of residential and commercial buildings in town. The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is located at 302 N. Second Street.

Our exploration of southeast Arkansas leads east out of McGehee to the Mississippi River town of **Arkansas City**, just a ten-minute drive on State Highway 4 to its end.

Between the years of 1873 and 1927, Arkansas City was one of the most important river ports on the Mississippi River. The town had a steamboat landing as early as 1834 and the river town prospered as a major trade and cultural center. That all changed with the Flood of 1927. With the rising water, the river changed its course and the port channel was, suddenly, no longer navigable to the many paddlewheel boats and other watercraft traveling the Mississippi. The channel had moved about a mile to the east.

With no access to the river and the commerce it brought in, Arkansas City's prosperity was diminished. Through the years, the town's population has dwindled but there is still plenty to see in the old port city.

Our road trip crew joined Highway Commissioner Robert S. Moore, Jr. for a



Parnell-Sharpe House. This brick house was built in 1936 and is probably the only example of French Eclectic architecture in Desha County.



The Delta Heritage Trail State Park Building is nearing completion.



An upper balcony at Red Star Grocery in the Commercial District in Arkansas City.

tour around town. Moore grew up in Arkansas City, and he and his wife Beverly own Moore Farms and continue to call Arkansas City home.

There are numerous historical buildings to be seen in Arkansas City, nine of them are listed on the National Historic Register. There is also new construction in town that is expected to bring a wave of new activity and tourists to this area of Desha County.

Construction is nearing completion on a building that will showcase Arkansas' newest State Park, the **Delta Heritage Trail State Park**.

Arkansas City now serves as the southern trailhead for the Delta Heritage Trail, an 84-mile hiking/biking trail. Starting at Arkansas City, the trail follows the Mississippi River levee northward to Rohwer where it connects to the "rail to trail" conversion of the former route of *The Delta Eagle* on the Union-Pacific railroad. From Rohwer, the trail continues to the north and the town of Lexa.

With the new trailhead facility, Arkansas City makes a great place to begin a bicycle or walking trip up the trail or a great place to end your trip if traveling south from Lexa. The new multi-use building is designed in the style of a historic railroad depot. In addition to tourist information, the new trailhead facility will feature interpretive panels that share information on the trail and the surrounding area. The new center is expected to open in

October and is located at the corner of Weatherwood Street and Desota Avenue.

Just a block down the street from the new visitor center is the Arkansas City Commercial District. The district consists of three two-story masonry structures—the **Cotham Drug Store** built circa 1900, the **Red Star Grocery**, built in 1900 and the **Ramus Brothers Market**, built in 1910. These three buildings are the oldest surviving commercial structures in the District and probably the most photographed. They stand now much as they appeared when completed in the 1900s and represent the last vestiges of a once thriving commercial center.

With the opening of the Delta Heritage Trail facility just down the street, work is under way that will bring new life to the buildings. The Cotham Drug Store and Red Star Grocery are adjoining brick structures sharing similar architectural details. The drug store will become an internet café providing healthy food offerings to travelers. The Red Star Grocery will become a weekend "fish and rib" restaurant featuring live blues music. A vacant lot next to the buildings will become an outdoor stage area where local musicians can perform. The second floors of the buildings will become guest rooms for visitors on the trail. Both structures are located on Desota Avenue.

The **Dickinson-Moore House** will also house visitors when its renovation is complete. Built circa 1915, the house was built

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on a tall foundation to protect it from the high water that often inundated the area. This adaptation makes the house a unique example of Craftsman architecture in Arkansas City. The structure was home to Robert S. Moore, Sr. and his wife Dorothy. Moore, father of Highway Commissioner Robert S. Moore, Jr., served in law enforcement for 25 years in Desha County including 13 consecutive terms as Desha County Sheriff. When renovations are complete, the house will open as a five-room bed and breakfast. The house is located at the corner of Robert S. Moore Avenue and Capitol Streets.

Being the county seat for Desha County, one of the most prominent of the nine historic buildings in Arkansas City is the **Desha County Courthouse**. This two-and-a-half story Romanesque Revival brick building was built in 1900 from a design by Little Rock architect Rome Harding. It took forty train cars of Delta-made brick to complete the building. Its most distinctive feature is its four-story square tower, which features doubled rectangular windows on the first level, a round arch window on the second, an open round arch on the third and clock faces on the fourth level. The tower is topped by a pyramidal roof featuring a finial. The courthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is located at 608 Robert S. Moore Avenue.

Located next to the courthouse is the old **Arkansas City Jail**. It was built in the same year as the courthouse. Desha County Judge Jack May and members of the community are close to completion on a restoration of the building to its original condition. The jail will house historic artifacts from the Desha County area and will soon be open to the public as a museum.

Just a block from the courthouse is a replica of the home of **John H. Johnson**, founder and publisher of *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines. Johnson was born in Arkansas City and spent his boyhood there. He and his mother moved to Chicago where he graduated from high school. In 1941,



Desha County Courthouse



Opera House in Arkansas City



Restored home of John H. Johnson, founder and publisher of Ebony and Jet magazines.



Governor X.O. Pindall Law Office

Johnson married Eunice Walker and the couple formed the Johnson Publishing Company. The company founded and still publishes both *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines. They also created the Fashion Fair Cosmetics line and produce the Ebony Fashion Fair, the largest traveling fashion show in the world.

The Johnson home now houses the **John H. Johnson Cultural and Educational Museum**. The museum tells the story of Johnson's life, from his childhood in Arkansas City to the beginning of his career in Chicago to his overwhelming success as the head of Johnson Publishing Company. The museum, built from the original wood from Johnson's boyhood home, features photographs and video of Johnson, as well as items from his childhood. The museum is located in the courthouse square just east of the courthouse.

On the corner of Kate Adams and Capitol Streets, in what was once the thriving business district, is the **Law Office of Arkansas Governor X.O. Pindall**. The single-story, red brick building was constructed in 1882 in the Italianate style of architecture. The bricks used in construction of the building are said to be made of local clay. X.O. Pindall served terms in both houses of the Arkansas

legislature and reached his highest degree of political notoriety in 1907 when he took office as Governor of Arkansas. He maintained his law practice in Little Rock and Arkansas City after his tenure as state senator ended in 1911. The law office is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Just down the street from the Pindall law office stands Arkansas City's **Opera House**. The two-story structure was often packed when touring opera companies entertained residents and visitors to the port city. The building held dances that often featured bands from Memphis. The Opera House was also home to boxing and wrestling exhibitions including exhibitions by John L. Sullivan in 1891 and by Jack Dempsey in 1924.

After touring Arkansas City, it is just a few blocks out White Hill Road from Arkansas City to the historic **Old Mound Cemetery**. The cemetery represents the presence of important cultural activity in southeast Arkansas from the days of Native Americans to the twentieth century. Native Americans likely constructed the mound between 1200 and 1600 A.D. At a glance, it is easy to see where the cemetery got its name. The oldest portion of the cemetery is located on top of a Mississippian culture mound,

one of the few places the early American settlers of the area found to be safe from periodic flooding by the Mississippi River.

For those who enjoy wildlife, the **Choctaw Island Wildlife Management Area** at Arkansas City is a must stop. This habitat for wildlife covers 8,300 acres. Within the Wildlife Management Area (WMA), there are nine miles of nature trails to get you up close to the many birds and other wildlife that inhabit this area. The walking trails were made possible with funding from ARDOT's Arkansas Recreational Trails Program. Choctaw Island provides stopover habitat for many migrating birds. The area is also popular for hunting and fishing. Hunting opportunities include squirrel, as well as white-tailed deer hunting using bow and arrow or a muzzleloader. The WMA is considered one of the better "big buck" areas in the State. To get to the wildlife area, follow President Avenue to its intersection with Kate Adams Street. Continue on President Avenue just east of this intersection and cross the Mississippi River mainline levee.

Whether exploring towns like McGehee and Arkansas City or enjoying the unique wildlife found in this area of eastern Arkansas, Desha County makes a great destination for a weekend road trip. ■



Arkansas City Jail



A DIFFERENT KIND OF COMBAT

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) joined a national initiative by signing the Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking pledge.

ARDOT Director Scott Bennett presented the signed pledge during the April meeting of the Arkansas Highway Commission.

The United States Department of Transportation's initiative is comprised of transportation and travel industry stakeholders working jointly to maximize their collective impact in combating human trafficking. The partnership focuses on five key areas: leadership, education and training, policy development, public awareness and outreach, and information sharing and analysis.

"Awareness is critical. Knowing what to look for and how to respond is essential," Bennett said.

Human trafficking is defined as modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain

some type of labor or commercial sex act. According to the United States Department of Transportation, as many as 20 million men, women and children are held against their will and trafficked into forced labor and prostitution. It can happen to anyone, regardless of age, race, nationality or gender.

On May 4, 2017, the Arkansas General Assembly passed a law requiring any individual applying for a commercial driver license to complete human trafficking training and provide a certificate to the Department of Finance and Administration. More than 1,900 ARDOT employees have participated in the Truckers Against

Trafficking training in order to receive their license.

Arkansas Highway Police participate in human trafficking training as well. Officers are required to take a three-hour course through the Criminal Justice Institute.

"Our officers in the field conduct surveillance at high-volume traffic facilities," Arkansas Highway Police Chief Jay Thompson said. "We are committed to providing a safer environment in our State."

"ARDOT is proud to be a partner in this initiative. If we work together, we can help put an end to human trafficking," Bennett emphasized. ■

"Awareness is critical. Knowing *what* to look for and *how* to respond is essential."

- ARDOT Director Scott Bennett

FREE ONLINE TRAINING

is also available to the general public to help identify signs of possible human trafficking.

Visit www.helpingtraffickedpersons.org for more information.

If you suspect human trafficking, report a tip at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/report-trafficking> or call the toll-free hotline

1-888-373-7888.

Big Maumelle Canoe Float
Photo Courtesy of Arkansas Parks & Tourism



OUT & ABOUT

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AROUND THE STATE

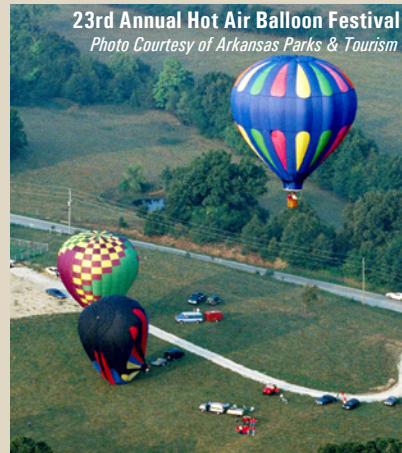
As you travel Arkansas over the next two months, consider checking out some of the listed events. Our State is full of interesting things to do, no matter what highway you take. For additional event listings, check [Arkansas.com/events](https://arkansas.com/events).

- * **34TH ANNUAL FRISCO FESTIVAL:** Vendors, live music, food and fun for the entire family. • AUGUST 31 – SEPTEMBER 1
- * **3RD ANNUAL GREAT SOUTHERN STONE SKIPPING CHAMPIONSHIPS:** We have all skipped stones on a lake or river. Now there is a competition to see who does it best. There will be flights for men, women and children. Cash prizes to the top three winners in each flight. Proceeds benefit Arkansas Foodbank. • SEPTEMBER 1
- * **HOT SPRINGS BLUES FESTIVAL:** Hot Springs hosts its outdoor Blues Festival for the 22nd year in a row. This year's lineup includes the Spa City Youngbloods, Heavy Suga' and the SweeTones, Soaker, the Akeem Kemp Band, Charlotte Taylor & Gypsy Raine and Jarekus Singleton. • SEPTEMBER 1
- * **23RD ANNUAL HOT AIR BALLOON FESTIVAL:** The fun starts Friday evening with the Hare and Hound Balloon Race. Saturday night will feature a balloon glow. Tethered rides are available on Saturday and there will be several balloon race competitions. • SEPTEMBER 7 – 9
- * **HUNTER EDUCATION COURSE:** This is the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's preferred hunter education class. It is a 10-hour instructor-led classroom and hands-on demonstration. The final class concludes with a test to pass the course and for participants to receive their hunter education card. Interested students will need to go online to www.agfc.com to reserve a seat. • SEPTEMBER 8

Great Southern Stone
Skipping Championships



23rd Annual Hot Air Balloon Festival
Photo Courtesy of Arkansas Parks & Tourism



Hunter Education Course



AUGUST 23

ART STROLL
Downtown galleries
Bentonville, AR

AUGUST 25

BIG MAUMELLE CANOE FLOAT
Pinnacle Mountain State Park
Boat Ramp
Little Rock, AR

AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 1 *

34TH ANNUAL FRISCO FESTIVAL
Downtown area
Rogers, AR

SEPTEMBER 1 *

GREAT SOUTHERN STONE
SKIPPING CHAMPIONSHIPS
Fairfield Bay Marina
Fairfield Bay, AR

SEPTEMBER 1 *

HOT SPRINGS BLUES FESTIVAL
Hill Wheatley Plaza
Hot Springs, AR

SEPTEMBER 7 - 9 *

23RD ANNUAL HOT AIR
BALLOON FESTIVAL
Boone County Regional Airport
Harrison, AR

SEPTEMBER 8 *

HUNTER EDUCATION COURSE
Daisy State Park
Kirby, AR

Dear ARDOT

As I gained speed entering I-630 on a busy Thursday, I was alarmed to hear the report of a 12-gauge shot gun over my shoulder. The thought of another "drive by shooting in Little Rock" flashed through my mind with me the victim. It was calming to have the blast transcend into the unmistakable rumble of a blown out tire. A quick glance in the mirror of my truck revealed a rearward neighbor's flashing lights. Now the challenge was to make it to the outside lane safely and hope my spare was still firm and my tire tools were in place. It was a challenge to slide across to open the passenger door, which was adjacent to all of the necessary equipment under the front seat. My back was facing the door as I groped for the small jack. It startled me in that cacophony of highway sound when a hand appeared in my peripheral vision. I noticed a tattoo on the top of a left hand.... John 3:16 was boldly visible. I craned my neck and stated "hello" to today's angel when I definitely need a savior! He said, "We are with ARDOT and our job is to keep our weed eaters operational on I-630 if we are not helping people in harm's way. Keep your seat and more help will arrive with our tool truck." Soon enough, the flashing lights of a one-ton truck eased in behind us and five uniformed workers joyfully appeared "ready for work!" My jack would not provide the leverage I needed. No problem, they had a selection of jacks and other tools "at the ready!" They quickly operated in a hostile, combat-comparable environment to provide air for my almost flat spare. They dispatched several orange cones to the east, then posed for this picture taken by my son Steve. They protected our re-entry to Arkansas's busiest strip of road with a minimum of stress.

Ed Snider
Former Member of the Arkansas Good Roads Council



(L to R) Terry Johnson, Keith Davis, Ed Snider, Randy Cummings and Dom Moses.

RIGHT OF WAY WORK

Recently Chris Cole, supervisor of the District 6 Maintenance Department and her maintenance crew performed badly needed right-of-way work on Highway 294 near where I live. This will now allow me to keep the ditches and embankments clean and much safer and help stop erosion.

She and her team were very responsive and knowledgeable, and I want you to know how much the public appreciates their work.

Michael K. Wilson,
Attorney at Law

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Dear Governor Hutchinson,

I am writing to tell you how pleased I have been with my interaction with the employees of several divisions within the Arkansas State Department. I have recently had to take responsibility for areas of business new to me, which have required various state approvals and permits. In each situation, the state employee guided me through the process until completion. Every employee, without exception, was knowledgeable, very patient, and always courteous and pleasant. I want to mention those whose names I remember and give their Department:

Eddy Campbell, Dept. of Finance & Administration
Todd Cockrill, Dept. of Finance & Administration
Corlett Warmath, Dept. of Finance & Administration
Nate Williams, ARDOT
Ruby Jordan, ARDOT
Mandy Miller, Arkansas Tobacco Control

Marcia Rachel,
Owner, Northern Properties

HIGHWAY 70 PROJECT COMPLETION

I do a lot of traveling on Highway 70 from Benton to Hot Springs and have done so for many, many years. Just recently there was a huge project completed on that stretch of the highway. The work these fellas did is just beautiful! Besides making the highway MUCH safer and more convenient, somehow it made the whole drive more scenic. Listen, that has been the most boring, dreaded drive ever for me until this project was completed and that is no exaggeration! Plus highway projects (no offense intended) seem to drag out for years, I-40 is a good example of that, but this one was super fast! The whole deal is pretty impressive. Well, for someone who works 70-80 hours a week to take the time to send this message, you know it must be something quite spectacular! Thank you so much to all involved in this undertaking! It is appreciated more than you can even imagine.

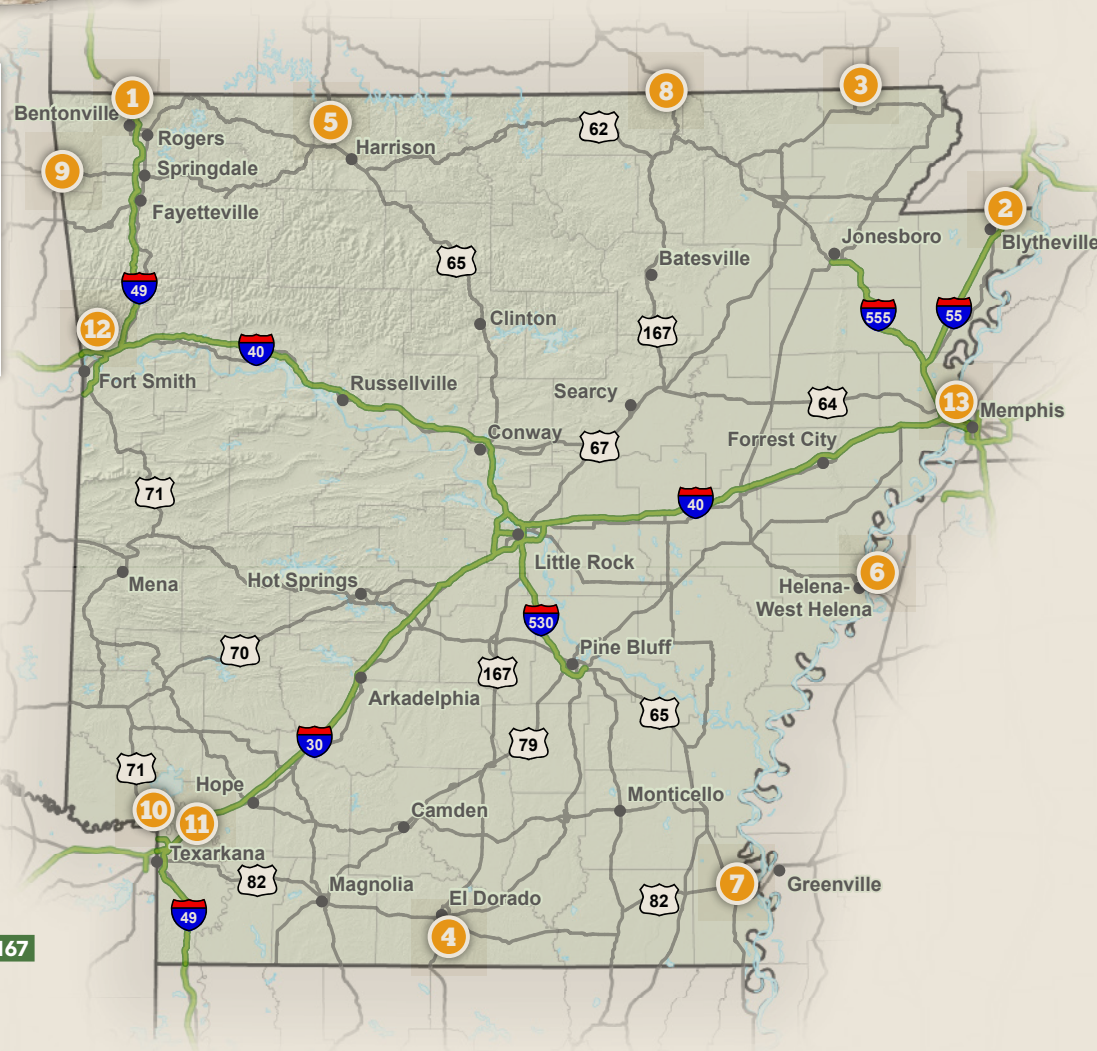
Michelle Goshien,
Brandon Moving & Storage

ARKANSAS WELCOME CENTERS

They're positioned at strategic locations across the State, welcoming motorists to Arkansas. Attractive and inviting places to take a break from the road. They are the State's thirteen Arkansas Welcome Centers (AWC). Each Center is open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily (6:00 p.m. during summer months). Restrooms are available at all hours. An interactive map of AWC locations can also be seen at IDriveArkansas.com. Just click the "Traveler Information" tab.



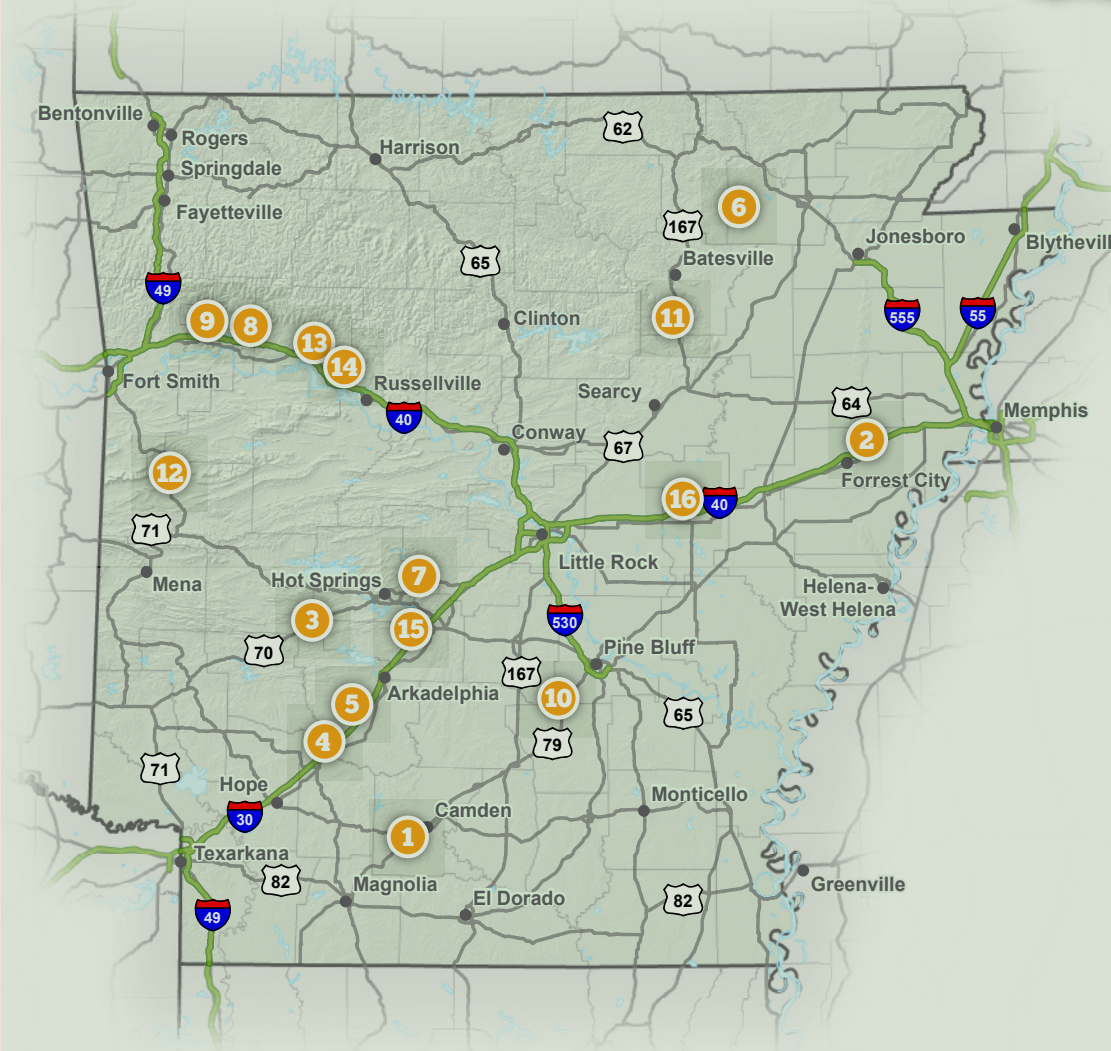
- 1. BELLA VISTA — HIGHWAY 71 B**
13750 Visitors Center Drive
Bella Vista, AR 72714
Phone: 479-855-3111
- 2. BLYTHEVILLE — INTERSTATE 55**
5241 Interstate 55
Blytheville, AR 72315
Phone: 870-762-2512
- 3. CORNING — HIGHWAY 67**
6717 Highway 67
Corning, AR 72422
Phone: 870-857-6014
- 4. EL DORADO — HIGHWAYS 82 & 167**
3315 Junction City Highway
El Dorado, AR 71730
Phone: 870-881-9160
- 5. HARRISON — HIGHWAY 65 N**
3391 Highway 65 N
Harrison, AR 72601
Phone: 870-741-3343
- 6. HELENA-WEST HELENA — HIGHWAY 49**
1506 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
Helena, AR 72342
Phone: 870-338-7602
- 7. LAKE VILLAGE — HIGHWAYS 65 & 159**
3697 S. Highway 65 82
Lake Village, AR 71653
Phone: 870-265-5832



- 8. MAMMOTH SPRING — HIGHWAY 63 N**
17 Highway 63 N
Mammoth Spring, AR 72554
Phone: 870-625-7364
- 9. SILOAM SPRINGS — HIGHWAYS 412 W & 59**
2000 Highway 412 West
Siloam Springs, AR 72761
Phone: 479-524-4445
- 10. TEXARKANA — HIGHWAY 71**
12555 Highway 71
Texarkana, AR 71854
Phone: 870-772-7511
- 11. TEXARKANA — INTERSTATE 30**
10000 Interstate 30
Texarkana, AR 71854
Phone: 870-772-4301
- 12. VAN BUREN — INTERSTATE 40**
2915 Interstate 40
Van Buren, AR 72956
Phone: 479-474-9515
- 13. WEST MEMPHIS — INTERSTATE 40**
704 East Service Road
West Memphis, AR 72301
Phone: 870-735-3637

In addition to Arkansas Welcome Centers, travelers will find Rest Areas and Tourist Information Centers (T.I.C.) at locations across the State. Like our Welcome Centers, each location offers restrooms and picnic tables and is a great place to rest and enjoy some time off of the road.

ARKANSAS REST AREAS



- 1. BUENA VISTA — HIGHWAY 79**
Location: 1 mile south of the intersection with Highway 376
Direction: Both
- 2. FORREST CITY — INTERSTATE 40**
Location: Mile marker 242.6
Direction: Westbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending
- 3. GLENWOOD — HIGHWAY 70**
Location: 1.8 miles east of Highway 70B
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking
- 4. GURDON — INTERSTATE 30**
Location: Mile marker 57.5
Direction: Westbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending
- 5. GURDON — INTERSTATE 30**
Location: Mile marker 56.1
Direction: Eastbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending
- 6. IMBODEN/BLACK ROCK — HIGHWAY 63**
Location: 1.2 miles north of Highway 117
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking
- 7. LONSDALE — HIGHWAY 70**
Location: 5.2 miles east of Highway 70B
Direction: Both
- 8. OZARK — INTERSTATE 40**
Location: Mile marker 35.3
Direction: Eastbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending
- 9. OZARK — INTERSTATE 40**
Location: Mile marker 36.5
Direction: Westbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending
- 10. RISON — HIGHWAY 79**
Location: Intersection of Highway 79 and 212
Direction: Both
- 11. SALADO CREEK — HIGHWAY 167**
Location: 4.3 miles north of Highway 87
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking
- 12. WALDRON — HIGHWAY 71**
Location: .8 miles north of Highway 71B
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking
- 13. BIG PINEY T.I.C. — INTERSTATE 40**
Location: Mile marker 67.5
Direction: Eastbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending
- 14. BIG PINEY T.I.C. — INTERSTATE 40**
Location: Mile marker 72.5
Direction: Westbound
RV and Truck parking, Vending
- 15. SOCIAL HILL T.I.C. — INTERSTATE 30**
Location: Mile marker 93
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking, Vending
- 16. WHITE RIVER T.I.C. — INTERSTATE 40**
Location: Mile marker 198.8
Direction: Both
RV and Truck parking, Vending

DISTRICT 1

CONSTRUCTION



CORNER

In recent years, the Arkansas Highway Commission has placed a focus on the preservation of Arkansas' existing highway system. With that in mind, the Arkansas Department of Transportation awarded a contract in July 2017 to resurface the 61-mile section of U.S. Highway 64 in eastern Arkansas. The project stretches across ARDOT Districts One and Five as it crosses through White, Woodruff and Cross Counties. Beginning at State Highway 367 in Bald Knob, and extending eastward to the Crittenden County line, it is the longest single overlay project in the history of the Department. Improvements also include resurfacing six bridge decks within the Highway 64 project area.

Atlas Asphalt, Inc. of Batesville, Arkansas, was awarded the \$19.1 million contract in July 2017. Crews arrived on location in September of that year.

Crews expect to have the resurfacing completed by late summer of this year. ■



ArDOT PEOPLE

NEW EMPLOYEES

CONSTRUCTION • William Bryles, Construction Aide; David Greenwood, Engineer; Dennis Zimmerman, Engineer

EEO/DBE • Arabryana Simmons, EEO Specialist

BRIDGE DESIGN • Nicole Compton, Engineer; Daniel Trotta, Engineer

HEAVY BRIDGE • Darryn Thornsberry, Bridge Repairer

MAINTENANCE • Trace Honeycutt, Sign Erector; Bryan Hann, Striping Helper; Tyler Hardy, Striping Helper

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & POLICY • Hillary Boshers, Office Assistant

DISTRICT 1 • Joseph Robinson, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 2 • Jackson Marshall, Maintenance Aide I; Derrick Strickland, Maintenance Aide I; Mark Smith, Maintenance Aide I; Reginald Wallis, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 3 • Franklin McGlone, Maintenance Aide I; Colby Harberson, Maintenance Aide I; Brandon Smith, Maintenance Aide I; Jacoby Mixon, Maintenance Aide I; Chance Steed, Maintenance Aide I; Mitchell Zitano, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 4 • Justin Williams, Body Repairer & Painter; Jacob Berry, Maintenance Aide I; Rocky Craig, Maintenance Aide I; Joseph Hess, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 5 • Cal Holmes, Maintenance Aide I; Christian Osier, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 6 • Clifton Davis, Maintenance Aide I; Coby Walker, Maintenance Aide I; Austin Crookham, Maintenance Aide I; Randy Cummings, Jr., Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 7 • William Pye, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 8 • Francisco Sierra, Maintenance Aide I;

DISTRICT 9 • Kenneth Barnett, Mechanic; Andrew Patrick, Mechanic; Ethan Ragland, Mechanic; Jacob Luper, Maintenance Aide I; Dylan Coley, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT 10 • Gary Sharpe, Maintenance Aide I; Robert Lee, Maintenance Aide I; Charles Nichols, Maintenance Aide I; Brandon Hendrix, Maintenance Aide I; Jonathon Pierce, Maintenance Aide I; Amelia Real, Maintenance Aide I

PROMOTIONS

ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE • Jeff Bickerstaff, Arkansas Highway Police Major

COMPUTER SERVICES • Charles Brown, Assistant Division Head

CONSTRUCTION • Yulissa Mendoza, Administrative Assistant; Spencer Tapp, Construction Aide; John Ballard, Senior Engineer; Chancie Acosta, Construction Inspector; John Bigham, Construction Inspector

HEAVY BRIDGE • Brian Barnett, Lead Bridge Repairer; Keyshawn Pittman, Lead Bridge Repairer; Richard Frazier, Jr., Maintenance Supervisor; Clinton Young, Lead Bridge Repairer

ArDOT employs approximately 3,700 people. We welcome our new employees, congratulate others on promotions and service and say goodbye to those retiring.

MAINTENANCE • Paul Forst, Striping Superintendent

RIGHT OF WAY • Catherine Mitchell, Lead Abstractor

ROADWAY DESIGN • William Clark, Senior Engineer; Richard Dail, Senior Engineer

SYSTEM INFORMATION & RESEARCH • Vu Nguyen, Senior Engineer

DISTRICT 1 • Tony Gatlin, Maintenance Aide II; Rodney Armstrong, Maintenance Aide II;

DISTRICT 2 • Louis Dow, Lead Bridge Repairer; Calvin Barnett, Maintenance Aide II; Phillip Cunningham, Maintenance Aide II

DISTRICT 3 • Carol Ridling, Storeroom Assistant; Nicholas Parker, Mechanic

DISTRICT 6 • James Lee, Maintenance Aide II; Joshua Smith, Maintenance Aide II;

DISTRICT 8 • Matthew Duvall, Maintenance Aide II; Josh Boyd, Maintenance Aide II; Freddie Armstrong, Jr., Maintenance Aide II; Clayton Lee, Maintenance Aide II; Jeffrey Gunnels, Maintenance Aide II; Ronald Henson, Maintenance Aide II

DISTRICT 9 • Daniel Morgan, Assistant Bridge Inspector; Lance Baker, Tractor Trailer Driver

DISTRICT 10 • Gerald Ellis, Maintenance Specialist

SERVICE

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE • Scott Bennett, Director, 30+ yrs

ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE • Seth Debord, Law Enforcement Officer, 5+ yrs

CONSTRUCTION • Billy Riley, Construction Project Coordinator, 40+ yrs; Cheryl Davis, Resident Office Technician, 30+ yrs; William Reddell, Staff Engineer, 25+ yrs; Katherine Aughenbaugh, Resident Office Technician, 20+ yrs; Mark Lowtharp, Construction Inspector, 10+ yrs; Lance Wilburn, Construction Aide, 5+ yrs; Joseph Blackburn, Construction Aide, 5+ yrs; Ira Steed, Construction Aide, 5+ yrs; Janelle Blair, Construction Aide, 5+ yrs; Dillard Fletcher, Jr., Construction Materials Inspector, 5+ yrs

ENVIRONMENTAL • Brenda Price, Assistant Division Head, 35+ yrs

HEAVY BRIDGE • Kelly Dull, Office Assistant, 15+ yrs

HUMAN RESOURCES • Maddison Wendland, Employee Relations Coordinator, 10+ yrs

MATERIALS • Celestia Howard, District Materials Supervisor, 30+ yrs; Henry Williams, Senior Materials Technician, 15+ yrs; Bernard Eldridge, Senior Materials Technician, 15+ yrs; Jonathan Brill, District Laboratory Technician, 15+ yrs

RADIO/COMMUNICATIONS • Kamara Durham, Communications Operator, 10+ yrs

RIGHT OF WAY • Tammy Green, Realty Appraiser, 5+ yrs

SYSTEM INFORMATION & RESEARCH • Christopher McKenney, Research Assistant, 5+ yrs

SURVEYS • William Allen, Surveys Crew Chief, 25+ yrs; Garry Stewart, Engineer, 5+ yrs

DISTRICT 1 • Larry Thomas, Maintenance Specialist, 15+ yrs

DISTRICT 2 • Kennedy Junior, Maintenance Aide II, 10+ yrs; Angela Glover, Bookkeeper, 10+ yrs; Joseph Kasiah, Maintenance Aide II, 5+ yrs

DISTRICT 3 • David Lively II, Maintenance Aide II, 20+ yrs; James Sandefur, Maintenance Aide II, 10+ yrs; Carol Crow, Maintenance Aide II, 10+ yrs

DISTRICT 4 • Rita Stone, Area Headquarters Attendant, 35+ yrs; Eric Brigrance, Maintenance Specialist, 15+ yrs; Michael Frazier, Lead Bridge Repairer, 5+ yrs; James Henderson, Maintenance Aide II, 5+ yrs

DISTRICT 5 • James Johnson, Bridge Repairer, 5+ yrs; Toby Dallas, Maintenance Aide II, 5+ yrs

DISTRICT 6 • Deborah Neal, Guard, 5+ yrs

DISTRICT 7 • Phillip Rowen, Parts Runner, 25+ yrs; Donnie Mahan, Maintenance Aide II, 15+ yrs; Donald Juniel, Maintenance Specialist, 10+ yrs; Lindsey Down, District Clerk, 10+ yrs

DISTRICT 9 • Clifford Moore, Maintenance Aide II, 15+ yrs; Rowan Dunn, Crew Leader, 15+ yrs;

DISTRICT 10 • Brandon Sutton, Assistant Bridge Inspector, 15+ yrs; Corey Weatherford, Maintenance Specialist, 15+ yrs; Brittany Monette, Maintenance Aide II, 10+ yrs; Jesse Carter, Body Repairer and Painter, 5+ yrs; Rickey Johnson, Maintenance Aide I, 5+ yrs; Clinton Durham, Maintenance Aide II, 5+ yrs;

RETIREMENT

CONSTRUCTION • Claire Rita Rockwell, Administrative Assistant, 28+ yrs

MATERIALS • Brian Casto, Geotechnical Specialist, 32+ yrs

DISTRICT 1 • Donnie Peeler, Maintenance Aide II, 6+ yrs

DISTRICT 3 • Bobby Sharp, Maintenance Aide II, 18+ yrs;

DISTRICT 4 • Rita Stone, Area Headquarters Attendant, 35+ yrs

DISTRICT 6 • Kim Staton, Station Attendant, 28+ yrs; Scottye Courson, Construction Inspector, 18+ yrs

DISTRICT 8 • Andrew May, Maintenance Specialist, 31+ yrs; Walter Kordseier, Maintenance Specialist, 28 yrs

DISTRICT 9 • Anthony Breedlove, Crew Leader, 28+ yrs; Jeffrey Thompson, Maintenance Aide II, 11+ yrs

DISTRICT 10 • Debbie Myrick, Maintenance Specialist, 23+ yrs

MEMORIALS

DISTRICT 1 • Thomas Bridges, 5/4/2018, retired; Claude Willis, 6/7/2018, retired

DISTRICT 3 • Roy Neiman, 6/2/2018, retired

DISTRICT 9 • Jimmie Davis, 5/15/2018, retired

DISTRICT 10 • Jimmie Rogers, 6/2/2018, retired; Jerry Brown, 6/9/2018, retired

ArDOT
PEOPLE



Arkansas Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 2261
Little Rock, AR 72203-2261

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Little Rock, AR 72203
Permit No. 2556

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

