

Arkansas Highways
Fall/Winter 2003

Director's Message



This past year has been an exciting one for the Highway and Transportation Department. We participated in the first "regional" Equipment Operator's ROADEO and dominated the competition over the Mississippi Department of Transportation. It was a fun time for all and the superb skill of AHTD equipment operators was showcased. We expect this regional event to include other states next year.

The Department's annual equipment auction brought out


the usual large crowds as bidders looked over our inventory of used equipment. This year's auction netted the Department almost \$900,000.

Department employees continue to receive recognition from our peers. Sgt. Sammy Brown of the Arkansas Highway Police was honored with an award from the Drug Enforcement Agency and Highway Police MCSAP Inspector Jay Thompson, was honored with the prestigious "John Youngblood Award" for excellence in motor carrier safety.

In the past year we have stepped up our efforts to promote significant achievements across the state. We have broken ground for new projects, dedicated the completion of others, celebrated transportation enhancements and have named a couple of sections of highways.

Numerous department employees were activated as part of their military obligation, and are training in the U.S. or serving overseas. I thank them for their hard work on the job and know they will uphold that same work ethic as they serve their country. Their sacrifices have affected not only their family and friends, but also their co-workers. We look forward to their safe return.

All of this recognition and all of this construction would never be possible if it were not for the dedicated and loyal employees of the Department. From each Division and each District it takes all of us to excel, and Department employees do that on a daily basis.


DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Arkansas Highways

FALL/WINTER 2003

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Arkansas Highways is published biannually by and for employees of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department as a medium of departmental news and other information. Correspondence and material should be directed to Arkansas Highways, Public Affairs Office, P.O. Box 2261, Room 1004, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-2261. Arkansas Highways is distributed free to the public upon request and to all Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department employees.

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Arkansas Highways is printed on
recycled paper with soybean ink.

Arkansas Highways

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department
Fall/Winter 2003

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AHTD Wins First Regional Equipment Operator's ROADEO

	1ST PLACE	2ND PLACE	3RD PLACE
TRACTOR/ LOWBOY	Juan Hernandez <i>District 8</i>	Steve Sites <i>District 2</i>	Russell Curbo <i>District 1</i>
TANDEM AXLE DUMP TRUCK	Keith Carpenter <i>District 9</i>	Scott Horton <i>Mississippi</i>	Robert Caines <i>Mississippi</i>
SINGLE AXLE DUMP TRUCK	Wayne Hamilton <i>District 1</i>	Oren "Jeff" Mink <i>Mississippi</i>	Tracy Woods <i>Mississippi</i>
TRACTOR MOWER	Joey Hood <i>Mississippi</i>	Clarence Edwards <i>District 2</i>	Darrell Carter <i>District 8</i>
BACKHOE	Larry Otwell <i>District 3</i>	David Morton <i>District 3</i>	Rick Hale <i>District 1</i>
MOTOR PATROL	Randall Edgemon <i>District 9</i>	David Denson <i>District 7</i>	Howard Joe Smith <i>Mississippi</i>

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department was victorious as they competed in the first Regional Equipment Operator's ROADEO September 24, 2003 at the AHTD Central Shops in Little Rock.

Employees of the Mississippi Department of Transportation were the special guests and competition at the event.

Teams from both states had come to show their skills in Tractor/Lowboy, Tandem Axle Dump Truck, Single Axle Dump Truck, Tractor Mower, Backhoe and Motor Patrol events.

Tuesday, September 23rd served as a day of practice for the competitors, judges and staff. Wednesday morning, the competition began.

The events for the day featured the top three winners in each event from both states' finals held earlier in the year. There were six events and six participants in each event. Results are listed in the table above.

At the end of the day, after the points had been tallied, Dan Flowers, Director of Highways, announced that Arkansas was the winner of the first Regional Equipment Operator's Roadeo.

Those competing for AHTD included Steve Sites, Russell Curbo, Juan Hernandez, Keith Carpenter, Cavin Hall, Tim Henretty, Josh Higginbottom, Fred Riddenhour, Wayne Hamilton, Darrell Carter, Clarence Edwards, Larry Otwell, Rick Hale, David Morton, David Denson, Randall Edgemon and Robert Gray.

Although there were only two states competing, other Departments of Transportation from around the country were on hand to observe including representatives from North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Louisiana. Next year's Regional ROADEO may include teams from additional states in the region.



2003 Regional Roadeo participants from AHTD earned twelve of the eighteen awards available.

Roadcheck 2003 Helps Keep Highways Safe

Members of the Arkansas Highway Police Division spent three days in June 2003 participating in the sixteenth annual International Roadcheck sponsored by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA).

The nationwide, 72-hour roadside inspection program involved an estimated 9,000 truck and bus safety inspectors working around the clock for three days at inspection sites along major highways across the United States, Canada and Mexico. Their job was to perform safety inspections on commercial trucks and buses.

In Arkansas, a highway checkpoint was set up on Interstate 30 near Benton. Police also had extra patrols out around the state. By the end of the weekend, 519 inspections had been performed within the state. A total of 837 safety violations were detected.

“Roadcheck gives us an excellent opportunity to utilize our training and inspection skills while identifying equipment or driver-related safety hazards,” stated Chief Ron Burks of the Arkansas Highway Police.

“While the truck inspections we conduct often result in the detection of safety violations, we are also encouraged when we don’t find anything amiss,” Burks added. “To us, that is an indication that inspection programs work and a significant segment of the trucking industry is committed to highway safety.”

As a whole, the campaign resulted in 55,784 inspections being performed nationally, the highest number to date. The total is 6,405 higher than that of 2002. Of this year’s inspections, 43.4 percent of vehicles examined were declared free of critical safety defects.

Roadcheck 2003 also saw a slight increase in the number of vehicles that were placed out of service for mechanical problems. Logbook violations and brake-related problems were the top reasons drivers and their vehicles were placed out of service. Other areas of inspection included lighting, tires/wheels, load securement, suspension, steering and frames.

The roadchecks provide an opportunity to distribute educational and safety information to drivers. It also draws the public’s attention to the combined efforts of law enforcement and the truck and bus industries to save lives on North American highways.



Officers Tim Culver (top), Robert Sellers and Ross Batson (middle, l. to r.), and Todd Turman (bottom) perform checks on trucks on Interstate 30 near Benton.

CVSA’s President, Peter Hurst from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, says, “Roadcheck is a critical and unifying presence for advancing commercial vehicle safety and reducing crashes across North America. We are out there and we are getting results.”

Roadchecks have been conducted annually since 1988 with participation from enforcement agencies in Canada, the United States and Mexico.

Arkansas' Future is Focus of Joint Meeting

The city of Fort Smith was the sight of a joint meeting, September 24th and 25th, 2003 between the Arkansas Highway Commission and the Arkansas Economic Development Commission.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways that the two Commissions can work together to insure continued economic prosperity for the state of Arkansas.

A highlight of the event was the opportunity for both Commissions to share successful projects and focus on the path to success for future growth.

Highway Commission Chairman Buddy Benafield addressed the group. "We must make our communities in Arkansas stronger for the future, and that can only be accomplished by planning for and meeting the demands that come with growth." He added, "The Highway Commission recognizes the fact that good roads are vital

to the growth being experienced here and elsewhere across our state."

Benafield congratulated the cities of Fort Smith and Van Buren, their Chambers of Commerce, as well as Sebastian and Crawford Counties for their commitment to better roadways in the area. Their dedication has resulted in a number of successful projects.

The two-day event was also an opportunity to showcase the city of Fort Smith and the growth in the area. The agenda included a tour of the business and industrial areas of town and a breakfast at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith.

A dinner event provided an opportunity to meet with the Fort Smith Manufacturing Executives Association.

Other cities that have hosted a joint meeting of the two Commissions include Jonesboro and Hope.



AHTD Director Dan Flowers (left) and Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman Buddy Benafield.

Bypass Named to Honor Wiley A. Branton, Sr.

Labor Day weekend at the Pine Bluff Convention Center was the setting for a large public gathering celebrating the naming of the Interstate 530 Pine Bluff Bypass in memory of noted civil rights activist and attorney Wiley Branton, Sr.

Branton was a noted civil rights activist attorney born and educated in Pine Bluff. He was one of the first black students to graduate from the University of Arkansas School of Law. He started his own law practice in his hometown and gained national prominence when he represented nine black students choosing to attend Little Rock Central High School in 1957.



James House, District 2 Engineer; Rodney Slater, Former U. S. Secretary of Transportation and Dan Flowers, Director of Highways and Transportation



Wiley A. Branton, Sr.

During the 1960s, Branton became known for his voter registration efforts throughout the South. He later served as executive secretary of President Lyndon Johnson's Council on Equal Opportunity and served as dean of Howard University's School of Law from 1978-1983.

The Highway Commission passed a Minute Order in January of this year to formally designate the Pine Bluff Bypass as the Wiley A. Branton, Sr. Highway.

Highway Department Director Dan Flowers shared the stage with numerous Pine Bluff officials as former Highway Commissioner and former U. S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater gave a keynote speech.

After the indoor celebration, police led a large motorcade to one of the highway signs for a ceremonial unveiling. Flowers, Slater and District Two Engineer James House joined local officials and numerous Branton family members for the occasion.



Members of the Branton family attended the sign unveiling.

New Interchange On Highway 63 Underway



Left to right: Arkansas Highway Commission Vice Chairman Prissy Hickerson, Commissioner Carl Rosenbaum, Commissioner Jonathan Barnett, Congressman Marion Berry, Commission Chairman Buddy Benafield, and Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Director Dan Flowers.

Members of the Arkansas Highway Commission and highway department staff joined Congressman Marion Berry and numerous local dignitaries to break ground for a new interchange at Highways 63 and 149 at Marked Tree July 3, 2003.

In addition to a newly designed interchange, the project will also include frontage roads and improvements at the Highway 75 interchange to the west.

"We are standing here on what has always been known as Highway 63,"

stated Commission Chairman Buddy Benafield. "The future of this road is Interstate 555, all the way from Jonesboro over to Interstate 55 near Marion."

Highway 63 in northeast Arkansas has been labeled a Congressionally-designated high priority corridor. Since 1991, special earmarked federal aid funding totaling over \$48 million has been received for improvements along the corridor. To date, ten projects have been constructed between Marked

Tree and Jonesboro to the west, at a cost of more than \$56 million. Four more projects between Marked Tree and Interstate 55 are scheduled for 2004 at a cost of almost \$30 million. Those jobs include improvements at Tyronza and Gilmore, as well as at Highway 135 and the tie-in at Interstate 55.

Highway 63, from Highway 49 in Jonesboro to Interstate 55, was officially designated as future Interstate 555 in 2001.



AHTD Summer Interns Visit Central Complex

Classroom instruction on campus is important, but a summer internship may be equally beneficial to prospective AHTD employees as they finish their formal education.

The AHTD Central Office Complex was the site of the 2003 orientation July 10th & 11th. Bob Walters, Chief Engineer, was the moderator for the two-day gathering.

The interns, who represented 13 universities from all over the United States, learned about the different aspects of the department including planning, design, operations, programs and contracts, administration and construction. They were led on tours of several divisions and were given the chance to see the department's state of the art materials lab.

The interns are assigned to different offices across the state. They are able to work in areas as diverse as the resident engineering offices, out in the field and roadway design at the central complex. They are provided with the opportunity to apply what they have learned in



Bob Walters, Chief Engineer, acted as moderator for this year's orientation.

school to everyday situations in the work force. These experiences compliment classroom knowledge to give the interns a stronger background when they graduate.

Brandon Ross is learning things he will be able to use in the future.

"I measure asphalt tonnage and figure out the quantities needed between stations," Ross said. "I have learned a lot about measuring tools."

"I interned with the Department for two years at RE 73 in Camden," said Daniel Eppinette. "I liked it

so much that when I heard they were hiring I decided to return."

Kelly Wallace's friend got her an application. When she met Rex Vines, Resident Engineer in Osceola she decided to apply.

"He was so nice and encouraging," stated Wallace.

At the end of the two-day orientation, the consensus seemed to be that the AHTD was a great place to work. The summer intern program wrapped up at the end of August in time for the students to return to school to finish their degrees.



The 2003 Interns visited AHTD Central Complex for orientation in July.

AHTD Hosts Boys State Delegates



Each summer, AHTD is proud to welcome a group of special guests from Arkansas Boys State.

Boys State is a program of the American Legion offering experience and education for high school juniors. It is, in effect, a government unit in which each boy participates in the operation of local, county and state government.

Twelve delegates visited the Central Office Complex at Little Rock June 6, 2003, to learn more about the operations of the Highway and Transportation Department.

After an overview of the Department, delegates heard from Phil McConnell, Assistant Chief Engineer/Design. Mr. McConnell talked with the

group about the role AHTD plays in advancing economic development in Arkansas. The group also learned about different techniques utilized in road construction and heard an update on major projects underway across the state.

Following a question and answer session, delegates had the opportunity to tour the Department's Materials Lab. Among the experiments underway in the labs were the testing of the tensile strength of bolts, and tests on concrete compression limits.

"It was a privilege to share the Department's role with these students," McConnell stated. "The Boys State program is important in building our future leaders and we are proud to be able to participate."



Transportation Institute: An Opportunity to Learn

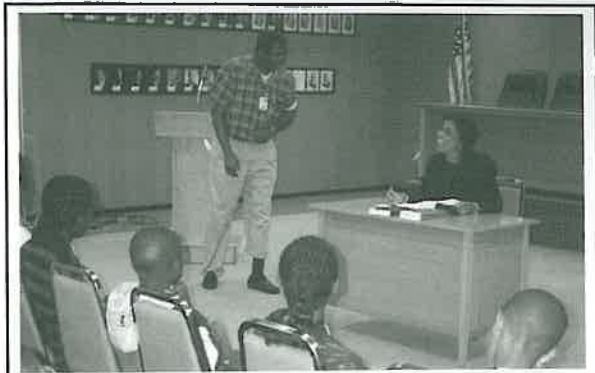
Twenty-five students participating in the National Summer Transportation Institute (NSTI) spent two days at the Highway Department June 17 & 18, 2003.

The NSTI, a program of the U.S. Federal Highway Administration, offers a four-week introduction to all modes and careers in transportation to students in middle and high school. The program is designed to encourage students to pursue transportation careers and to address the need for

focusing on the future and establishing objectives.

After lunch, the group toured the sign shop and learned the different procedures used for producing highway signage. A trip to the Materials Lab wrapped up the afternoon.

On a second trip to the Department the following week, students heard from Carroll Lathan, Safety Officer.



Staff engineers Emanuel Banks and Dorothy Rhodes perform a skit for students attending the Summer Transportation Institute at the Central Office.



Arkansas Highway Police Corporal David Smith gives students the opportunity to try the siren and flash the lights on a patrol car.

the 21st century.

Students spent a day with speakers and toured Department facilities. Activities began with a presentation by Tracy Duke, Government Transportation Specialist with 3M. Participants learned about retroreflectology – the study of reflection, and how it applies to road signs and pavement markings. Hands-on experiments with flashlights proved popular.

Following the presentation by 3M, AHTD Staff Engineers Emanuel Banks and Dorothy Rhodes presented a unique skit on careers in engineering and also addressed the importance of

driving through construction zones. Students enjoyed a visit from the Highway Police and had an opportunity to explore a patrol car and hit the siren. They spent the afternoon visiting construction sites in Little Rock and Maumelle.

The Institute is one of several educational initiatives of the U.S. Department of Transportation, to encourage youth of all ages and help them focus on math, science and technology skills so that they are prepared to serve in the transportation workforce of the future. NSTI programs are currently in 26 states plus

the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Students are selected on the basis of interest in engineering, science, transportation and technology, academic performance, particularly in science and math, and recommendations from counselors and teachers. Since the NSTI was started ten years ago, the institutes have served 4,652 students.

Commemorating the 10-year anniversary of the NSTI, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has announced two ambitious new goals: establishing the program in every state and introducing 10,000 students to careers in the transportation industry.



Students tour the Central Office Sign Shop with Staff Traffic Engineer Tony Sullivan.

SASHTO Scholarship Recipient Announced

The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) and the Mack-Blackwell National Rural Transportation Study Center (MBTC) have announced the first recipient of the newly established Southeastern Association of State Highway and Transportation

Officials (SASHTO) \$10,000 Scholarship Award. Lester James (Jamey) Wilhite of Westville, Oklahoma, was unanimously selected to receive the award.

Criteria for the scholarship were established through an agreement between AHTD and the MBTC.

Wilhite is currently working at the Resident Engineer's office in Fayetteville. He finished his junior year at the University of Arkansas in the spring of 2003, with a grade point average of 3.46. Wilhite has been named to the Dean's List three different times.

He is a member of the U of A student chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the treasurer of Chi Epsilon (the civil engineering honor society) and participates in the Razorback Marching Band, Concert Band and the Hogwild Basketball Pep Band.

His plans for the near future include completing his requirements to receive a B.S. degree in Civil Engineering and attending graduate school at the U of A. Upon completion of his education, he looks forward to the opportunity to continue his career with AHTD.

The qualifications specify that awardees:

- be of junior standing or higher, including graduate students
- must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0
- work on an AHTD sponsored research project
- shall be a U.S. citizen or have permanent resident status
- accept full-time employment with the Department for a period of one year following their graduation.

SASHTO

*Southeastern Association of
State Highway and
Transportation
Officials*

*2003 SASHTO Scholarship recipient, Lester
James "Jamey" Wilhite.*



Commission Grant Helps Restore Railroad Depot

Arkansas Highway Commission Vice Chairman Prissy Hickerson of Texarkana and Congressman Mike Ross of Prescott joined an array of local officials August 14, 2003 to officially dedicate the renovation of the Prescott Railroad Depot. The 1912 Missouri Pacific Depot houses the Nevada County Depot Museum.

Each year the Highway Commission awards grants for transportation enhancement activities. These projects are made possible through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century – otherwise known as TEA-21.

The Commission awarded almost \$165,000 for this project in 2001. The city of Prescott funded the remaining amount of \$69,000 with money from the city's one-cent sales tax designation for community funds. The entire renovation totaled \$234,000.

After receiving the grant, the Prescott City Council hired French and Harris Architects to draw up the plans. Bids were accepted in April of 2001 and construction began in August of the same year.

The restoration of the depot was not intended to return to a specific year in the past since the depot has undergone many changes through the years. The intention was simply to create a sense of the building's history through renovations.

The exterior of the building was restored closely to its original condition but was made handicap accessible. The 1940's era was the inspiration for the exterior since the large porch was used as a freight room at that time and featured exterior lighting.

Vice Chairman Prissy Hickerson noted that this was just one of 82 grants totaling \$13 million that were awarded in 2001.



Dedication attendees learn the history of the Railroad Depot building.

Safety and Resource Center Wins Design Award

“There is no other facility quite like it.”

That is how architect Phil Purifoy, AIA, describes Arkansas Transit Association’s new Arkansas Public Transit Safety and Resource Center in North Little Rock.

Purifoy’s peers in the Arkansas Chapter of The American Institute of Architects (AIA) must agree. The organization awarded the Little Rock architectural firm of Fennell Purifoy Hammock the *Honor Award for Outstanding Achievement in Architectural Design* for the new facility on October 14, 2003.

The building, which opened in November of 2002, is the first of its kind and is home to many new training programs which enhance passenger carrier safety and risk management, increase transit operational effectiveness and improve service delivery by Arkansas’ community transportation providers. The facility also serves the training needs of other federal, state and local transportation-related organizations.

The project began in 2000 when the United States Congress appropriated a special Federal Transit Administration discretionary grant to build a safety and resource center, the first of its type in the country. The Arkansas Transit Association, representing all the State’s transit systems and community organizations with transportation services, was already providing extensive training and technical assistance to the State’s public transportation industry through the Rural Transportation Assistance Program. The Association’s Board of Directors, who serves as an advisor group to the AHTD on training matters, accepted the responsibility to undertake the building project. The Center was to compliment the efforts of the Association and enhance training delivery through a dedicated facility.

The sleek exterior design combines corrugated metal with contrasting areas of stone and glass. Laminated trusses and window awnings add to the building’s appeal. The impressive combination of



glass and wooden trusses on the outside offer no hint of the vehicle bay found within.

Indoors, the building features three main components: a spacious open lobby area, a large classroom and vehicle bay for training, and ATA’s administrative offices. An exterior plaza at the back of the building lends itself to outdoor events.

At an Open House held in October, Fennell Purifoy Hammock Architects presented the Honor Award to the Arkansas Transit Association’s Board of Directors and Ann Gilbert, Executive Director.

Gilbert noted, “The architects understood our unique needs and created this excellent training facility where students learn in a high-tech, yet comfortable, classroom. The Center is beautiful, functional and environmentally friendly. Fennell Purifoy Hammock did an outstanding job, and we are very proud.”



Purifoy:
“There is no other facility quite like it.”

Department Receives Award for Highway Design



AHTD and Gilbert Central receive Awards for Excellence in "Highway Improvement on Publicly Owned Land." Pictured left to right: Sandra Otto, FHWA Division Administrator; Dan Flowers, AHTD Director; Dave Fintel and Chris Loeffler of Gilbert Central Corporation of Omaha, Nebraska.

The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department was recently the recipient of an award for highway design from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

FHWA's *Excellence in Highway Design Biennial Awards Program* highlights the best in highway design, including bridges, highways, pedestrian/bicycle facilities, Intelligent Transportation Systems and historic preservation.

Sandra Otto, Division Administrator with Federal Highways, presented the award to Director Dan Flowers for design of Forest Highway 65 in the Ozark National Forest. Also present for the ceremony were recipients Dave Fintel and Chris Loeffler of Gilbert Central Corporation of Omaha, Nebraska, who served as contractors for the job.

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The purpose of the award is to recognize the superior efforts and achievements of public agencies and private organizations. The winners were recognized for their efforts in designing highway related facilities that provide safety and mobility while being sensitive to the the human and natural environment as well as contributing to a more pleasing highway experience.

*"This is an example
of progress
harmonizing with
preservation."
Sandy Otto, FHWA*

"We received approximately 190 entries for 2002 and I am happy to announce that Arkansas' 'Cass to Oark' job on Forest Highway 65 in

the Ozark National Forest won the Award of Excellence in the category of "Highway Improvements on Publicly Owned Land," stated Sandra Otto.

The project upgraded the existing roadway from gravel to pavement to provide adequate, safe passage for current and future traffic, as well as to provide a spectacular view. The retaining wall was constructed with stones quarried just a half mile from the construction site.

"This is an example of progress harmonizing with preservation," added Otto.

Award recipients were the Federal Highway's Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, of Sterling, VA, the designer; Gilbert Central Corporation for construction; and AHTD for construction oversight.

AHP Golf Tourney Benefits Arkansas Special Olympics

The annual Arkansas Highway Police/Special Olympics Classic golf tournament was held June 17, 2003, at Harbor Oaks Golf Course in Pine Bluff. Despite the heavy rain, thirty-six teams participated, twenty-four of them being comprised of AHTD employees.

This year's tournament raised \$18,000 benefitting Arkansas Special Olympics. This was the ninth year the Highway Police Division has sponsored the event. Over the life of the tournament, the Highway Police have contributed \$113,000 to benefit the athletes of Arkansas Special Olympics.

"This event continues to grow each year and we are certainly looking forward to making next year's Tenth Anniversary Tournament even bigger," AHP Chief Ron Burks stated. "The AHP

employees who donate their time and effort year after year to this worthwhile cause are at the heart of the success of the tournament."

Special Olympics began in 1968 when Eunice Kennedy Shriver organized the First International Special Olympics Games at Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois. The concept was born in the early 1960s when Shriver started a day

camp for people with mental and physical disabilities. She saw

that these individuals were far more capable in sports and physical activities than many experts thought. Special Olympics currently serves in excess of one million persons with mental and physical disabilities in over 200 programs in more than 150 countries.



Special Olympics



Shad Overman, AHP Officer is pictured with his team. Left to right: Harold Moore, family friend; Jerry Overman, Shad's Father; Shad; Tyson Overman, Shad's brother.

Annual Equipment Auction Has Plenty To Offer

The size of the crowd was impressive as it gathered for the Highway and Transportation Department's equipment auction held in late October 2003.

Parking was hard to come by as potential bidders arrived at the Equipment and Procurement Division lot early in the morning to look over the items scheduled to be on the auction block.

There was something for everyone. Some guests closely inspected four-door sedans. There were 49 of them to choose from. Others revved the engines

on a large selection of pickup trucks. A group of larger machinery also attracted a crowd. Interest ran high on smaller items as well, including gas-powered weed trimmers and mowers. Overall, items up for auction ranged from small surveying tools to vehicles as large as a Bantam Excavator.

Blackmon Auctions, Inc. kicked off the bidding at 9:00 a.m. By the end of the day, 420 equipment units and 115 lots of miscellaneous equipment had been sold to the highest bidders. Final net proceeds to the Highway Department totaled \$879,017 for this year's event.



Sgt. Sammy Brown Receives National Award from DEA



(L. to r.) James Mavromatis, Director of the El Paso Intelligence Center of the DEA; Sergeant Sammy Brown and Chief Ron Burks of the Arkansas Highway Police Division; and William Bryant, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the DEA in Arkansas.

“The hardest audience to teach is your peers,” said Mavromatis. “And Sergeant Brown has done an outstanding job of doing just that.”

In a ceremony at the AHTD Central Office, Sergeant Sammy Brown of the Arkansas Highway Police was recognized by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) for his work in drug interdiction.

Sergeant Brown, of West Memphis, was presented a national award as the “Instructor of the Year for 2003” for the DEA’s Operation Pipeline/Convoy Program. Presenting the award to Brown was James Mavromatis, Director of the El Paso Intelligence Center of the DEA.

“The hardest audience to teach is your peers,” said Mavromatis. “And Sergeant Brown has done an outstanding job of doing just that.”

The Operation Pipeline/Convoy class focuses on safety by teaching law enforcement officers what to look for when stopping commercial vehicles on the road.

“I teach participants how to look for things that may be red flags,” says Brown. “We want students to be aware of situations that may not be normal.”

Brown, stationed in West Memphis, has been teaching the class nationally for six years. In 2003, he taught the class seven times with class sizes ranging from

30 to 150 students. Nationally, 1,800 officers went through the program last year. Selection of “Instructor of the Year” is based on class critiques furnished by the students.

“This is awesome,” stated Brown. “I appreciate all of the support that I have received.”

“I feel a true sense of pride as one of our own is recognized,” added Chief Ron Burks of the Arkansas Highway Police Division.

Also on hand for the presentation was William Bryant, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the DEA in Arkansas.

“I want to take this opportunity to thank the men and women of the Arkansas Highway Police for the hard work they do here in Arkansas,” Bryant stated. “The DEA has a great working relationship with the Arkansas Highway Police.”

The illegal drug market in the United States is one of the most profitable in the world. As such, it attracts the most ruthless, sophisticated and aggressive drug traffickers. Amid this voluminous drug trade, traffickers conceal cocaine, heroin, marijuana, MDMA and methamphetamine shipments for distribution in U.S. neighborhoods.

Drug law enforcement agencies

face an enormous challenge in protecting the country’s borders. In 2002, there were 27,635 DEA arrests.

The availability and rate of drug abuse in Arkansas remains high, coinciding with the smuggling of methamphetamine, cocaine and marijuana, the drugs of choice for local consumption and further distribution. Though smuggling methods involve all forms of transportation, the largest quantities of drugs are seized on Arkansas highways via interdiction programs. Each year, tens of thousands of pounds of marijuana and hundreds of kilograms of cocaine are seized on Arkansas’ Interstates, particularly Interstate 40. Most large seizures involve tractor-trailers, although private vehicles account for a significant percentage of total seizures, particularly methamphetamine seizures. Significant quantities of drugs are also seized from other forms of transportation including commercial air and bus service.

Statistics and information for this article were obtained from the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Forrest City Bypass Set for '04 Completion

Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman J.W. "Buddy" Benafield and AHTD Director Dan Flowers were on hand on November 5 as local officials gathered to open a completed section of the new Forrest City Bypass.

An eight-mile project, the Forrest City Bypass is a two-lane roadway on new location on the west side of town. Right-of-way was purchased for four lanes to meet future traffic volume increases. Completion of the project is expected by the summer of 2004.

APAC-Tennessee chose to construct the bypass in two complete phases and opted to open the 3.7-mile section on the south end – connecting Highway 1 and Highway 70. A ceremony to dedicate the opening of the entire project will be held upon completion in 2004.

The first contract for grading and structures was awarded in September 1999 to Holman Construction Company, of Lamar, for \$3.278 million. In September 2000, APAC was awarded a \$22.3 million contract for the remaining grading and structures, and construction of the base and surfacing for the entire length of the project.



Moving the barrels to open a new section of the Forrest City Bypass are (l. to r.) Rujay Burke - APAC Tennessee, Rep. Danny Ferguson, Rep. John Eason, County Judge Carl Cisco, AHTD Director Dan Flowers, Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman J.W. "Buddy" Benafield, Mayor Larry Bryant, Senator Steve Higginbotham and District 1 Engineer Ray Woodruff.

New Bypass South of Flippin

May 8, 2003

Approximately 115 people attended a public hearing held May 8, 2003, at the Flippin Community Room to hear about plans for a new four-lane bypass on new location south of Flippin.

The new four-mile bypass will provide four travel lanes on Highway 62/412 for improved traffic flow at Flippin. These improvements are part of a long-range plan to upgrade the Highway 412 corridor across the state. The proposed project will feature 12-foot travel lanes with an 11-foot painted median and eight-foot shoulders.

Highway 35 West - Highway 25 Connection

May 6, 2003

A public hearing was held May 6, 2003, at the Monticello Chamber of Commerce to give residents an opportunity to learn more about a new 1.5-mile highway on new location to connect Highway 35 and 425, north of Monticello. Approximately 60 citizens visited the session. AHTD Environmental, Roadway and Right-of-Way staff along

with District personnel participated as well.

The proposed project will begin on Highway 35 West near the Rose Hill community and proceed eastward on new location to Highway 425. The new highway will consist of two twelve-foot travel lanes with 8-foot paved shoulder.

Highway 62 Widening - Mountain Home

July 24, 2003

A crowd of over 200 citizens participated in a public hearing held July 24, 2003, at the Holy Cross Lutheran Church to hear about plans for the widening of Highway 62 to five lanes. AHTD Environmental, Roadway and Right-of-Way staff along with District personnel participated in the meeting. The proposed construction plans were available for public viewing.

The proposed project will widen Highway 62 in Baxter County to five lanes extending from Mountain home eastward to Highway 101. Improvements also include a curb and gutter section.

Highway 63 Interchange at Gilmore

August 14, 2003

A crowd of approximately 50 citizens visited a public hearing held August 14, 2003, at the Gilmore Community Center to learn more about plans for a new interchange on Highway 63.

Plans call for a new interchange at Highway 63 and Menasha Road in Gilmore. The project will construct an overpass and ramps and will provide access to Highway 63. Frontage roads will also be provided for local access to the existing road network.

Additionally, the location and design was presented as the proposed improvements and revisions to the interchange of Highway 63 and Interstate 55. The project would provide freeway-to-freeway access for Highway 63 as part of its conversion to Interstate standards.

Highway 412 Widening - Nob Hill

Plans to widen Highway 412 to four lanes from Nob Hill eastward to the Madison County Line were presented

to the public at a hearing held September 23, 2003, at the Sonora Baptist Church in Sonora. Approximately 100 people attended the meeting.

The proposed improvements to Highway 412 will consist of four twelve-foot divided travel lanes, with 8-foot outside shoulders and 6-foot inside shoulders.

The purpose of the project is to extend the four-lane cross-section as a continuation of the widening from Beaver Lake east, to improve the level of service of the route through north Arkansas, and to improve the safety to the traveling public.

Highway 118/63 Interchange at Tyronza

October 7, 2003

Approximately 70 people visited a public hearing held October 7, 2003, in Tyronza to learn more about plans for constructing a new interchange on Highway 63.

The purpose of the public hearing was to present the proposed project of constructing an overpass and ramps at the Highway 118/63 intersection in Tyronza. The project was one part of the overall plan to upgrade Highway 63 to Interstate standards from Interstate 55 to Payneway.



Congratulations

2002

GRADUATES



Miranda Allison
Paragould High School
John Allison - District 10



Bethany Ball
Arkansas State University
David Ball - Bridge



Marcus Banks
North Little Rock High School
Emanuel Banks - Construction



Elliot Bastress
Central Arkansas Christian School
Bill Bastress - Planning & Research



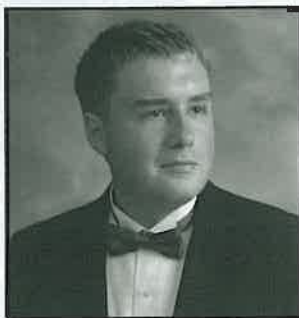
Matthew Boozer
Bigelow High School
Janet Boozer - District 8



Jessica & Josh Buchanan
Arkansas Tech University
Kenneth Buchanan - District 8



Michael Chad Burke
Hope High School
Larry Joe Burke - District 3



Adam Caplener
Midland High School
Stacey Caplener - District 5



Lindsay Michelle Crow
Marshall High School
Mike Crow - District 9



Dilynn Dodd
Springdale High School
David Dodd - District 4



James Roy Douglas, Jr.
Bryant High School
Roy Douglas - Programs & Contracts



Chris Foster
Paragould High School
Calvin Foster - District 10



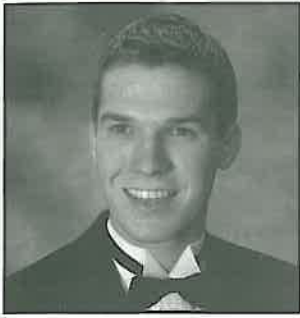
Amanda Giles
Arkansas High School
Mike Giles - District 3



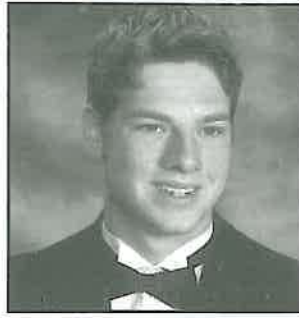
Danielle Gorham
Hope High School
Donna Gorham - District 3



Scarlett Hill
Des Arc High School
Billy Hill - District 6



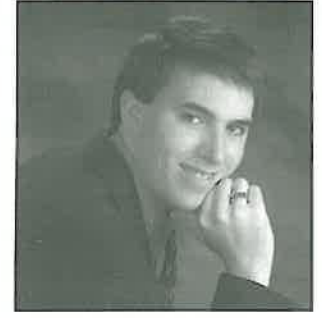
Michael Holmes
Parkview High School
Ken Holmes - Bridge



Benjamin Klinck
Parkview High School
Claude Klinck - Roadway Design



Billy Martin
Harrison High School
Roy Martin - Ark. Hwy. Police



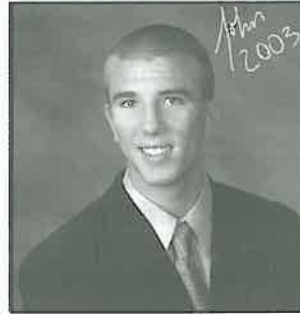
Daniel Maze
Springdale High School
Teresa Maze - District 4



Jessica McMillan
Paragould High School
Walter McMillan - District 10



Brandii Mulder
NW Ark. Community College
Delores Alberty - District 4



John Mulder
Springdale High School
Delores Alberty - District 4



Lance Perrin
Bentonville High School
Doug Perrin - District 4



Amanda Lynn Rice
Westside High School
Johnny W. Rice - District 8



Justin Sheets
Dardanelle High School
Steve Sheets - District 8



Amy Lynn Stone
Springhill High School
Wayne Stone - District 3



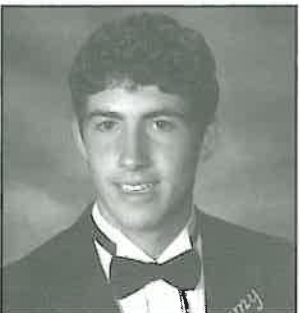
Nancy Tipton
Greene County Tech High School
Darsha Tipton - District 10



Jamie Tribo
Mount St. Mary Academy
Jim Tribo - Bridge



Misty Vines
Benton High School
Colleen McClure - Ark. Hwy. Police



Jeremy Westerman
Benton High School
Jerry Westerman, Materials



Kimberly Williams
Dover High School
Don Williams - District 8

Letters to the Department

To: Bud McMillan, Resident Engineer;
Frank Russenberger, District Engineer;
Dan Flowers, Director

This letter is to make you aware of the heroism and kindness that was shown by one of your employees, Mr. Anthony Walker of Plummerville, Arkansas. I feel sure that he is as valued an employee as he is an outstanding gentleman. You are blessed to be associated with him. I feel intense gratitude for all that he did for me and hope that you can recognize him in some way for his goodness.

I am a 62-year-old widow and was driving alone, without a phone, from Winnsboro, Louisiana, to Russellville, Arkansas, to attend my step-granddaughter's graduation. On May 15, 2003, about 6:00 p.m., my transmission went out on I-40 about two miles east of Blackwell, Arkansas. This was a construction zone and a road crew was working about ¼ mile from me, which seemed unusual at that time of day. I started walking toward them, asking God to let me get there before they left. None of the passing traffic stopped to help. Mr. Walker saw me coming and drove to meet me. He took me back to my car, checked it and said it needed to be towed. He let me use his cell phone to call my stepdaughter in Russellville to come get me and she called a tow truck. He then took me to Atkins to meet her. Instead of leaving me, he insisted on waiting with me to be sure I was safe and that we connected. That was exceptionally kind and thoughtful.

You don't often meet strangers who will go out of their way and spend that much time helping a stranger. It renews one's faith in mankind. Besides attending to my immediate needs, he was very congenial and helped me to regain my composure.

Needless to say, I was in a very emotional state. He was my "earth angel" that day.

I pray that God will richly bless him for being such a kind and generous man. I hope that all of you appreciate his virtues and will give him recognition for his good deed.

With deepest gratitude,
Margaret Maloney, Winnsboro, LA

To: Dan Flowers, Director

I am the owner of Walters Trucking of Conway and Little Rock, Arkansas. On June 4, 2003, I was driving my 1990 Kenworth, tri-axle dump truck on I-30 near Benton. There was an inspection for all commercial trucks at this location. I had made numerous trips through this inspection site, whereas my trips entailed hauling rock from Malvern to Benton. I was waved through this inspection site for two consecutive days. On the third day of my eastbound trip, I was waved to the inspection lanes.

Officer Timothy Gushing was the officer that waved me over. He was extremely courteous and polite. I am a new trucking company owner and had not been through this type of procedure. I asked questions and he replied in a manner that made me feel comfortable. He *thoroughly* inspected my truck: creeper underneath, hood, brakes, lights and even places I didn't think would be inspected.

Upon what I perceived to be his conclusion of the inspection, I asked him if he was completed with the inspection. He quickly stated he was. I then introduced myself to him as a retired Captain with the Little Rock Police Department. I *never* mentioned anything regarding my former employment prior to his completion.

He relayed to me what fine road condition my truck was in.

I want you to know what a fine officer you have in this young man. I retired from LRPD in January 2000. I was the Patrol Division Commander at the Southwest Substation.

The purpose of this communication to you is to tell Officer Gushing how impressive his behavior was. I know what it is like to have some officers treat citizens without due respect, and I also know how great it feels when someone tells you the good things officers do.

Sincerely,
Horace L. Walters

To: Ark. Hwy. Police Chief Ron Burks

On behalf of the 14,000 Special Olympians in Arkansas, thank you very much for your help and support of the 2003 Law Enforcement Torch Run that benefits Special Olympics.

The Flame of Hope was carried over 1,200 miles throughout the state this year by over 750 law enforcement officers. Federal, state, county, and city departments, plus corporations, businesses, schools, associations and individuals participated to raise money and awareness of the world's largest program of athletic training and Olympic-style competition for children and adults with mental retardation. We are grateful to all of you for your dedication and commitment to our movement.

Congratulations to Captain Fran Hall of the Sebastian County Sheriff's Department for winning the grand prize for raising the most money. We applaud the top fundraising departments - Arkansas Highway Police, Sebastian County Sheriff's Department and Searcy Police Department. We must also give very

honorably mentions to the Arkansas State Police, Jonesboro Police Department and Cabot Police Department for their efforts throughout the year.

Thank you again, we appreciate your carrying the torch in your heart and helping to keep the Special Olympics Flame of Hope burning year-round.

Sincerely,
Bobby Doyle, Executive Director
Shelly Yielding, Special Olympics/Torch Run Liaison

To: Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written as a commendation of one of your exemplary employees.

We were returning to Tennessee from a trip to the Santa Fe area when, just east of Little Rock, a tire blew out. Being an old man with bad back and knees, I was having a very difficult time getting down on the shoulder pavement to get the axle jack in position to lift the vehicle.

We learned later that your employee passed and saw our problem, so he drove to the next exit and came back to lend assistance. As I was still struggling with the jack, he took over the tire change and soon had us back on the road to Little Rock to get a replacement tire. I think it would have taken me an hour or more to complete the job because I would have had to stop frequently and rest my back and knees. What a "life saver" this man was!

Once again please give our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Eddie Tanner, a Safety Inspection Officer, for his good Samaritan act of kindness in helping a stranger in need by the side of the road. Whatever the State of

Arkansas is paying this man is not likely commensurate with the level of service he renders to your citizens and those passing through your state.

The State of Arkansas should be proud to claim Eddie Tanner as one of its bright stars in public service.

Best regards,
J.D. & Peggy McCormick
Columbia, Tennessee

To: Ark. Hwy. Police Chief Ron Burks

My daughter and I had a flat tire while driving from Batesville to Searcy. We had a phone with us, but decided to try and change it ourselves. I remembered reading somewhere that women really should be able to change a tire in an emergency. Apparently the women they meant are much larger and stronger than the two of us put together. After ten minutes, all we had managed to do was wrestle the spare tire out of the back of the vehicle.

With owner's manual in hand, we proceeded to locate the proper tools and attempted to remove the lug nuts. After several failed attempts, we decided our vehicle had non-removable lug nuts. Amidst the pulling and tugging on those things, we saw a set of blue lights pull up.

Officer Butch Stephens arrived to help us out. Talk about a welcomed sight. He immediately tackled those lug nuts as easy as turning a door knob (guess they do come off after all).

He had the tire changed and we were on our way again in a very short time. His helpfulness and courteous manner made our delay much less of a problem. Our thanks to your department and sincere appreciation to Officer Butch Stephens.

Best regards, Rebecca Carlile

To: Mr. Jason Berry
Cc: Mr. Dan Flowers

It is difficult to find words adequate to express my thanks for your daring efforts to rescue my son, Wayne Clayton from drowning in Lagrue Bayou on June 25th. I am overwhelmed with your unselfish thoughts of rescuing him without regard for your own safety. The Arkansas Highway Department is fortunate to have caring dedicated employees, as you are. May you be richly rewarded for your kindness.

Sincerely,
Dorothy Clayton

To: Ark. Hwy. Police Chief Burks

I would like to commend two of your officers. On Tuesday, July 29th, my two sons and myself were on our way home from vacationing in Arkansas. We were traveling east on I-30 when another motorist motioned that there was something wrong with my vehicle. I pulled over on the shoulder of the highway and discovered that my truck had a fuel leak. I knew that I could not drive very far but did see an exit just up the road. I limped the vehicle up to the exit only to discover that it was a weight station. I parked the truck on the shoulder of the highway and my sons and I walked to the building at the station. I was greeted by Officer Bounds and Officer Medlen. They were both very courteous and professional. Once I explained my predicament, they both offered to help. Not having any family or friends in Arkansas and not being familiar with the area, I graciously accepted their help. Officer Bounds arranged for a wrecker to pick up my truck and take it to a local shop that could repair it. Officer Medlen gave my sons and me a ride

Letters to the Department (cont.)

to a local hotel. While Trooper Medlen was transporting us to the hotel, I noticed just how desolate the area of highway that we were traveling on was. Had they not been so helpful I fear that this misfortune could have been disastrous. I am very appreciative of these Officers and their courtesy and professionalism. Please include a copy of this letter in their permanent personnel file.

Thank you,
Lieutenant James Foster, Management Services Division Commander,
Dallas Area Rapid Transit Police Department, Dallas, Texas

To: Mr. Currie,

My elderly uncle (78) and I (nearly 60 years of age) were traveling from Michigan back to our hometown Trumann, Arkansas, when we experienced car trouble. The air conditioner froze, breaking the alternator belt and then drained the power of the battery. We arrived at a rest area just outside Blytheville. We could see Wal-Mart from the rest area but it was too far for my uncle to walk.

Mr. Chester Sanders, a man in your employ at the rest area, drove my uncle to purchase a new battery. Mr. Sanders installed it so quickly for us and refused to take any money. It was Sunday and we would not have been able to find help.

I want to thank you for employing such fine people like Mr. Chester Sanders. The grounds were so well kept and I enjoyed the break while they went for the battery. I thought you would like to know what a man of integrity, generosity and humility is in your employ. Please thank him for us once again.

Sincerely,
Mary Juhas & Joe Moody

To: AHTD

I am writing to commend two employees who helped me when I needed it the most, for my retirement. They are Judy Prewitt out of Retirement and Mary Morton from Insurance.

My medical doctors advised me to retire. It was a very emotional and stressful decision for me. The two people I named above really made it easy for me. They worked with me through the process.

Never once did I have to repeat a step in the process due to every question having a correct answer. AHTD employees are very fortunate to have such professional and knowledgeable people working to help other employees.

Nora A. McLaughlin, AHTD Retiree
Searcy, Arkansas

To Whom It May Concern:

Thursday morning while driving to work I had a tire blowout on my car. I-540 during the morning rush hour is a pretty scary place to drive sometimes, much less have car trouble. I was just hoping I could figure out the jack that came with the car and get it changed without getting plowed into.

About that time a white truck pulled up. The guys pulled behind me to make a block between my car and the oncoming traffic, and they proceeded to change my tire for me. Which turned out to be harder than it should have been. The jack was pretty pitiful and one of the lugs was cross-threaded, then it started drizzling. Through it all they were very pleasant and it was more like chatting with friends than being stranded on the side of the road. When it was all said and done, the only thing they'd accept for

their time and effort was a handshake and my heartfelt "thank you."

I am very grateful for the help that Russell Daniel and Brandon Keeton gave me so graciously. It's comforting to know that there are still such gentlemen out there.

I just wanted to say THANK YOU to both of them again and let them know I REALLY appreciated them.

You have some good guys working for you and I wanted you and them to know it's appreciated!

Best wishes and thanks!
Sherina Bockman, Oklahoma

To Whom It May Concern:

My wife and I would like to extend our appreciation for the availability of your Motorist Assistance Patrol and the superior service provided by your MAP representatives. Without your Motorist Assistance Patrol program and their aid, my wife and I would have had a bad experience become substantially worse.

On July 13, 2003, the vehicle I was operating on Interstate 40 West became disabled due to a transmission failure. This failure occurred while we were driving to Colorado on a business/vacation trip. Being strangers to the state of Arkansas, my wife and I were completely bewildered as to what to do and how to best handle the situation at hand. Your MAP operators (Brasfield and Samples) were true professionals. They provided immediate analysis as to probable cause for the breakdown, tried to exercise some possible remedies, then worked through a plan of action to have us towed in a timely manner from an unsafe area to a dealership capable of handling the necessary repair work. I would hope that the state of Arkansas plans to continue the Motorist

Assistance Patrol. Without it, my wife and I would have been at a real disadvantage in handling this vehicle breakdown incident. I would also hope that you continue to have such fine people as Brasfield and Samples representing your organization. This service and these people certainly create a very positive impression of Arkansas in a person's mind.

Sincerely,
Tom Schlager, Inspection Supervisor
Office of County Inspection & Services

To: District One Motorist Assistance
Patrol, West Memphis

I just wanted to send a letter to commend one of your patrol officers that assisted us May 23. Our car had broken down just feet before entering the bridge to cross the Mississippi River into Tennessee. Donn Fowler really went beyond the call of duty with all he did for us. He transported my daughter & me to the restroom at the weigh station and then, after waiting for a tow truck, he took us to the Information Center at the state line to wait for my husband to get a rent car and pick us up. It sure is nice, when you are so far from home, for someone to help us out the way he did.

I wanted to thank your department and Donn Fowler for all that you did for us... even though we were Texans.

Thanks again for everything,
Paula Banks, Irving, TX

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm a retired police officer with 30 years of service. Recently I was traveling alone in my motorhome and was westbound on I-40 west of Memphis on my way to my children in

Russellville, Arkansas. All of a sudden I lost my power steering and I found I had lost 3 belts. I called my highway assistance. They advised they would be to me in approximately 40 minutes. Shortly after I made the call, Officer William Person stopped to check on me. He advised me I was in the middle of nowhere and to be careful. He stayed with me for some time. When he had to leave he said he'd be back to check on me. This he did and I certainly appreciated it.

I've traveled this road for the past two years and have never had any problems. The only time I had to use my highway assistance they let me down. I finally used my phone until it went dead. I was left on the road for six hours. Thanks to Officer Person he called someone for me. They arrived in about 30 minutes and I was ready to roll again in about 30 minutes. I could not believe how this man charged me much less than I expected. The officer stayed there with me while the two men replaced my belt. I cannot express to you how much I appreciated this.

It was so nice to meet such a fine officer. You certainly can be proud of him. Having been in administration the last few years of my employment, I realize just how important a good officer is to your department.

Respectfully,
Lerline "Beauty" Gueldow

To: Ralph Burge, Saline County Area
Maintenance Supervisor, District 6

I would like to thank you and your crew (Shane Martin, Paul Percord, John Ballinger, Teresa Wood & Tommy Bowling) for the prompt, professional and courteous service provided to our

residence on Highway 5 after a recent storm. The work of your crew removing the large tree that was blown down is greatly appreciated. Removing the tree, limbs and debris from Highway 5 and from the drainage ditch was a life saver.

I realize that the storm caused similar damage throughout Saline County; that fact alone made the prompt service even more impressive. I am sure that your crew and equipment were spread thin. Again, thanks to you and your crew members listed above for your hard work and dedication to the citizens of Saline County.

Sincerely,
Sam W. Tatom, Jr.

To: Ark. Hwy. Police Chief Ron Burks

I would like to commend one of your officers for being kind and helpful to me in a distressful situation. My car overheated on Westbound I-30 at about 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 13, I noticed the Highway Patrol car had a truck stopped on the opposite side of the freeway, so I walked over and asked if he could take me to the closest Wal-Mart for water and oil.

Officer Mark Willis was just wonderful. He gave me a ride to get oil and water, then took me back to my car, and even assisted with the car. He then followed me to the nearest gas station to make sure the car was going to run.

It is very comforting to know that there are good people like Officer Willis on the highways. Thanks for everything!

Sincerely,
Rhonda Yates, Hot Springs, Arkansas

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& Transportation Department**
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