

Arkansas Highways

SUMMER/FALL 2007



Director's Message

The legislative session that ended earlier this year has provided the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department with a significant opportunity to make improvements to many of our highways in the state.

With surplus monies in the General Revenue Fund that were projected to reach \$919 million by the end of the fiscal year, Governor Beebe and the Legislature made the decision to make funds available to various state agencies around the state. That decision was good news for public school facilities, colleges and universities, cities, counties and the Highway and Transportation Department. It has provided the AHTD with \$56 million in funding this year and has allowed us to begin a statewide resurfacing program.

This summer we began resurfacing projects in many counties statewide. We hope to receive an additional \$14 million in the months ahead that will allow us to expand the program to include all of the counties in Arkansas in the coming year.

Without the consideration of the Governor and the Legislature, it was doubtful that we would have a resurfacing program this year. But with their help, we have been able to move ahead with many roadway improvements. Although resurfacing can be considered a regular part of maintaining a highway, it goes beyond that. In addition to the importance of extending the life of a roadway, resurfacing provides a smooth, safe surface for motorists to travel on. The ability to put this program in place now puts us that much farther ahead in maintaining our highway system.

We are certainly appreciative of the Governor and the Legislature for providing us with the opportunity to make these much needed improvements.

Our goal is to operate as efficiently as possible and together, we are accomplishing that goal. Compared to other transportation agencies in the nation, Arkansas ranks 49th in departmental administrative costs. That says a great deal about the job that the Department is doing on a daily basis and the efficient way that we are managing the highways in Arkansas.

I want to thank all of our employees for the good work that you perform throughout the year.



Paul Howers
Director of Highways and Transportation



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Member

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Contents

- 4 An Interview with Commissioner Cliff Hoofman
- 7 Resurfacing Program Utilizes Surplus Funds
- 8 Cotter Bridge in National Spotlight
- 10 Roadcheck 2007
- 11 Boys State Delegates Visit
- 12 History Unfolds on County Maps
- 13 Interstates Receive New Signage
- 14 Summer Transportation Institute
- 15 Engineering Interns Come Together



Features

- 16 Dedications
- 18 Public Hearings
- 20 Letters to the Department

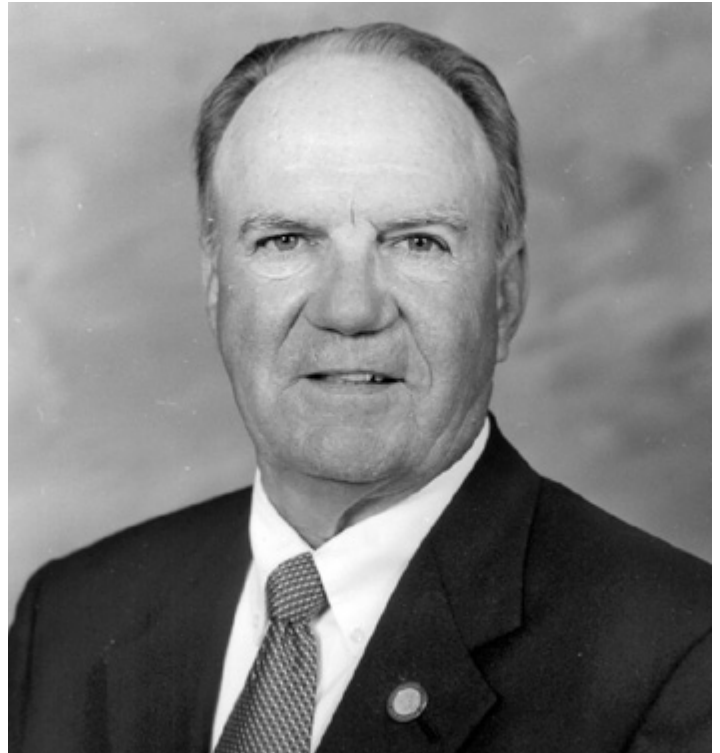


Cover

Front: Highway 70, Prairie County

Back: The Highway 79 bridge over the White River at Clarendon, Monroe County

An Interview with Commissioner Cliff Hoofman



Cliff Hoofman was appointed to a ten-year term on the Arkansas State Highway Commission by Governor Mike Beebe on January 18, 2007. He was sworn in as Commissioner on January 19th. A native of Judsonia, Hoofman served in the State Senate for twenty years and in the House of Representatives for eight years. While in the Senate, he was chairman of the Budget Committee and chair of the Legislative Council. After his tenure in the legislature, Hoofman served four years in the Attorney General's office as Director of Legislative Affairs. Prior to his service at the Capitol, Hoofman served two years as City Attorney for the City of North Little Rock.

In a recent interview with Public Information Specialist David Nilles, Hoofman discussed his first months as a Highway Commissioner.

Nilles: Before we begin discussing the Commission, let's back up and talk about your familiarity with Arkansas' highways from your years spent in the Senate.

Hoofman: I served eight years in the House and followed that with twenty years serving in the Senate and I guess the best friend I ever had was former AHTD Director Henry Gray. Through our friendship, I learned a great deal about highways and developed an interest in Arkansas' roadways.

Nilles: What was your reaction when Governor Beebe asked you to serve on the Commission?

Hoofman: Actually, I asked the Governor to appoint me to the Highway Commission because of the interest I have in our highways. When he advised me that he was going to appoint me, I was elated. I have always thought that our roadways are second only to education in what the responsibility of government is to the people of the state. So naturally, I was excited to have the opportunity to participate in the maintenance and construction of highways in the state.

Nilles: As you look at the next ten years serving on the Commission, what do you find appealing about that service?

Hoofman: In light of the high regard I have for roadways in our state, it is exciting to have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process as to how we make our transportation system better.

Nilles: How can your experience or knowledge of the Arkansas highway system benefit you on the Commission? Doesn't it give you a leg up?

Hoofman: If I have a "leg up" as you say, it would be my experience in the legislature that will be most helpful to the Commission

and to the Highway Department. The Mack-Blackwell Amendment leaves the issue of funding up to the legislature. That puts the Highway and Transportation Department in a precarious position. Consequently, the Commission must work very closely with the legislature. Because I served as Governor Beebe's chief liaison during the legislative session, I remain close to the legislature and work with them on many matters. I think that relationship will be helpful to the Commission.

It is not necessarily my knowledge of roadways which might be helpful. I will rely on the Department's staff for that knowledge. Hopefully, I will be able to offer some direction with policy and be able to contribute toward a good working relationship between the Commission and the Legislature, as well as the Governor.

Nilles: You mentioned the highway department staff. What has been your impression of working with the staff?

Hoofman: Well, I have been quoted many times throughout my years of experience with the legislature as saying I find the Highway and Transportation Department to be the most efficient and properly managed department of state government in Arkansas. And now, having spent a good portion of the past year on the Commission, I have not altered that opinion of the Department.



Cliff Hoofman with Governor Mike Beebe.



Nilles: Now that you are on the Commission, what do you hear from people across the state about Arkansas' highways? Have they come to you?

Hoofman: Right now, I hear a great deal about the damage being caused by the drilling for gas in the Fayetteville shale. Most of the Fayetteville shale counties are in the two Districts that I serve as an advocate for, Districts 8 and 5. So I hear a lot about that damage and we are dealing with that as best as we can. Generally, what you hear from the public is the need for improvements to specific roadways that they travel day in and day out. The problem we have in responding to that is the woefully inadequate funding that the Department has to work with. When the Department was created, they established funding that was adequate at the time. But with the development that we see today, and the many things that affect funding and costs, it is a different story. We now have flat funding and spiraling costs. That puts us in a position where we are without the resources necessary to respond to all

the needs of the public. As a result, they contact me and the other Commissioners to talk about roadways that need repair.

Nilles: Serving on the Highway Commission can be time consuming. Has being a Commissioner affected any of your other businesses or personal endeavors?

Hoofman: As far as finding time is concerned, I am committed to finding the time necessary to contribute as a Commissioner. I have taken time from other things to conduct Highway Commission business, but I don't feel any negatives about that.

Nilles: You are involved in various business interests. How can that experience help you as a Commissioner?

Hoofman: Any improvements you make to any business enterprise results in costs that have to be funded. You have to manage the resources that you have, so, hopefully my business experience, as well as the experiences of the other Commissioners, will help us get through this funding crisis that we are in as a Department.

We will be working hard in the future to deal with the inadequate funding and spiraling costs. We will have to allocate our resources in the best possible manner for the Department.

Nilles: Looking at the next nine and a half years on the Commission, what are some priorities that you would like to see met during your tenure?

Hoofman: Well, as we look at specific roadways, I would like to see the North Belt Loop completed. I can name a few others but I think the most important thing that we as a Commission need to address in the next few years is finding a funding source for the Highway and Transportation Department that will grow with the cost of living and the increased cost of construction. Presently, all of the funding of the Department comes from taxes on the sale of fuel, permits and licenses. None of those grow as rapidly as the increased cost of doing business. So, if I can assist in finding a funding source that will allow the Commission to address the needs of the state, then I will feel like I have made a fair contribution in the time that I serve on the Commission.



Cliff Hoofman was sworn in as an Arkansas Highway Commissioner on January 18, 2007.

State Surplus Provides Funding For Paving Projects

A one-time infusion of funds from the State's General Revenue Surplus earmarked for highways has allowed the Highway and Transportation Department to proceed with a statewide repaving program.

The funds were earmarked by Governor Beebe and the Legislature during the 2007 Legislative Session and will allow for resurfacing projects in all 75 counties over the next two years. To date, the Department has received \$56 million for the program.

"This is good news," stated AHTD Director Dan Flowers. "There was a possibility that the Department would not have had a resurfacing program this year or next without this funding. But with it, we can have a good, aggressive program."

The Department wasted no time in putting the program in place. The May 23rd bid letting for new projects included 22 resurfacing jobs totaling approximately \$14.4 million.

"That is a total of approximately 75 miles of resurfacing awarded in May," Flowers added.

The July bid letting included 20 jobs on 81.7 miles of highway, totaling just under \$12 million. One additional job, in August, brought the total number of miles for 2007 to approximately 162 at a cost of over \$26 million.

"An important thing to note is that these projects are underway and will be completed on time and within budget," added Flowers.



Resurfacing on Highway 321 near Cabot.

Restoration of the Cotter Bridge Receives National Recognition

Standing on a bluff looking down on the town of Cotter, the first thing to catch your eye is the Cotter Bridge. When it was built in 1930, the bridge on Highway 62B over the White River was one of the largest bridges of its kind in the country. It became Arkansas' only National Civil Engineering Landmark in 1986. Today, 77 years later and after a major rehabilitation project, the bridge is still receiving recognition.

Recently, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) presented the AHTD with an "Excellence in Highway Design Award" for the project. From urban roadways that celebrate the communities around them to stunning modern structures, the FHWA's Excellence in Design Awards Program recognizes the best in today's roadway design.

"One of the critical challenges facing our industry is providing context sensitive highway solutions that improve safety,



mobility and meet our transportation needs, while at the same time consider their surrounding environment and desires of local communities," stated Dwight Horne,

Director of the FHWA Office of Program Administration.

"These award winners showcase outstanding design projects and are





A rededication of the bridge in the fall of 2004 drew a large crowd.

exemplary examples of innovative initiatives and practices that have embraced this challenge with resounding success," Home added.

The Cotter Bridge, also known as the R.M. Ruthven Bridge, is an excellent example of the Marsh Rainbow Arch construction technique in which steel arches were assembled on the ground, then lifted into place on piers and encased in concrete.

The contract to build the bridge was awarded to Marsh Engineering Company of Topeka, Kansas, which was famous for its patented rainbow arch design. The bridge was uniquely constructed in that a cableway, suspended across the river, was used to transport all the necessary materials and tools out to various parts of the bridge. This was the first major use of a cableway to carry material over swiftly running waters. The Hoover Dam, built about the same time, was the only other project in the United States to use cableways to move construction materials at that point.

"The bridge, over the years, has become if not the symbol of the city, a symbol of this part of Arkansas," said Sonny

Sharp, who plans the annual Cotter Fall Festival.

But after 70 years of continuous use and exposure to weather extremes, the bridge's concrete had become cracked and fragmented. The bridge needed major repairs to continue to handle vehicles and pedestrians coming in and out of Cotter. This left the AHTD with three options: demolish the bridge, rehabilitate the bridge for pedestrian use or rehabilitate the bridge for continued vehicular use.

Rehabilitating the bridge for pedestrian use could be done only if another party were found to take ownership of the bridge. Rehabilitation of the bridge for pedestrian use with a new owner was not possible due to the large amount of funds necessary to conduct routine maintenance on the bridge. After consultation with the Arkansas State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the City of Cotter, it was determined that demolition was not an option due to the historic significance of the bridge. As a result, the decision was made to rehabilitate the bridge for continued vehicular traffic.

In order to preserve the integrity of the design when rehabilitation began, the SHPO requested that the AHTD (1) allow new concrete to age naturally, (2) take extreme care in the removal of the historic light standards, (3) reuse the light standards except those damaged beyond repair during removal, (4) replicate all new light standards to the design of the originals, (5) construct exact replicas of the existing balustrades and (6) not use abrasive cleaning of any type on the bridge.

Additionally, AHTD was required to place netting below all bridge spans to inhibit migratory birds from nesting during the spring and was required to construct special catch boxes around or under any areas where concrete was to be removed.

The contract to rehabilitate the bridge was awarded to the Hardy Construction Company for \$6,278,211 in the spring of 2002. The Department used Transportation Enhancement funds for the project.

"The bridge is a great example of using federal enhancement funds for historic

See "Cotter", page 17

Annual Roadcheck Makes Highways A Safer Place



Corporal Doug Jones looks over the instrument panel.



PFC Greg Massey performs one of many vehicle safety checks.



Sergeant Doug Honey directs trucks to inspection stations.

Beginning June 6th, approximately 10,000 specially-trained and certified officers blanketed North America's roadways for three days in order to prevent truck and bus crashes and to save lives. And again this year, the Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Department's Arkansas Highway Police participated in the effort.

For the past 20 years, the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance's (CVSA) annual Roadcheck event has dispatched federal, state, provincial and local inspectors to roadsides to conduct inspections of commercial vehicles around the clock for 72 hours. This year's event was held from June 6th to June 8th with 1,449 inspection locations across North America.

"These inspections involve a thorough 37-step procedure that includes items related to the vehicle, the driver and cargo safety," stated Arkansas Highway Police Chief Ron Burks.

"Placing emphasis on drivers is a key component to enhancing safety on our highways, and concentrated enforcement programs like Roadcheck give us the data we need to target our efforts. Enforcement sends a message that we will put you out of service if you are violating the law or driving an unsafe commercial vehicle," said Stephen Campbell, executive director of CVSA.

For 2007, a total of 62,370 trucks and buses were inspected. This is the highest number of inspections ever conducted in the 20 years of the International Roadcheck event. In Arkansas, 376 vehicles went through the inspection process. Nationally, 78.5 percent of vehicles passed the inspection. In Arkansas, 70 percent of vehicles passed.

One of the initial steps in the inspection is a check for safety belt use. Although the latest statistics indicate an increase in use of safety belts from 48 to 59 percent, the number is still too low. In comparison, the use rate among automobile drivers is 82 percent.

New this year, CVSA launched a podcast focusing on educating the commercial vehicle driver on safety and security measures. The podcast aired the week of Roadcheck and could be downloaded from the CVSA website at www.cvsa.org.

"Everyone can help save lives and make the roads safer by checking their vehicles, learning and obeying the laws and wearing their safety belts," stated Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's John Hill.

Boys State Students Visit AHTD

A group of students from the American Legion's Boys State paid a visit to the Highway and Transportation Department on June 8th.

Approximately 15 delegates, all who will be high school seniors this year, were interested in gaining insight into the operation of the state's highway system.

Their tour began at the Central Office with an overview of the Department by Public Affairs Specialist David Nilles. The group then took a trip to the Materials Lab.

During their tour of the lab, students were shown a test of soil strength, a test on concrete compression limits and the effects of traffic on asphalt.

In addition to their tour of the AHTD, tours of other state agencies were also on the agenda for the program participants. Other destinations included the Arkansas Forestry Commission and Camp Robinson, among others.

Boys State is a six-day program of 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. Only juniors in high school are eligible to be citizens of Boys State. The experience gained in the program can be invaluable in their senior year in school and, in fact, through life. Each boy is sponsored by a Legion Post or by some other patriotic, civic, fraternal or religious organization for the week-long program.

"It is a pleasure to welcome these young people to the Department each year and participate in a program that helps students gain an insight into how our state agencies operate," stated AHTD Director Dan Flowers.



Delegates tour the Materials Lab in Little Rock.



Jon Annable, Staff Geotechnical Engineer, explains bolt strength to visiting delegates in the Materials Lab.

Native American Past Still Present on County Maps Today

When referring to a state or county road map of Arkansas, most travelers are looking for a route through unknown territory or for the fastest way from one town to another. A map kept in the car makes for quick and easy reference.

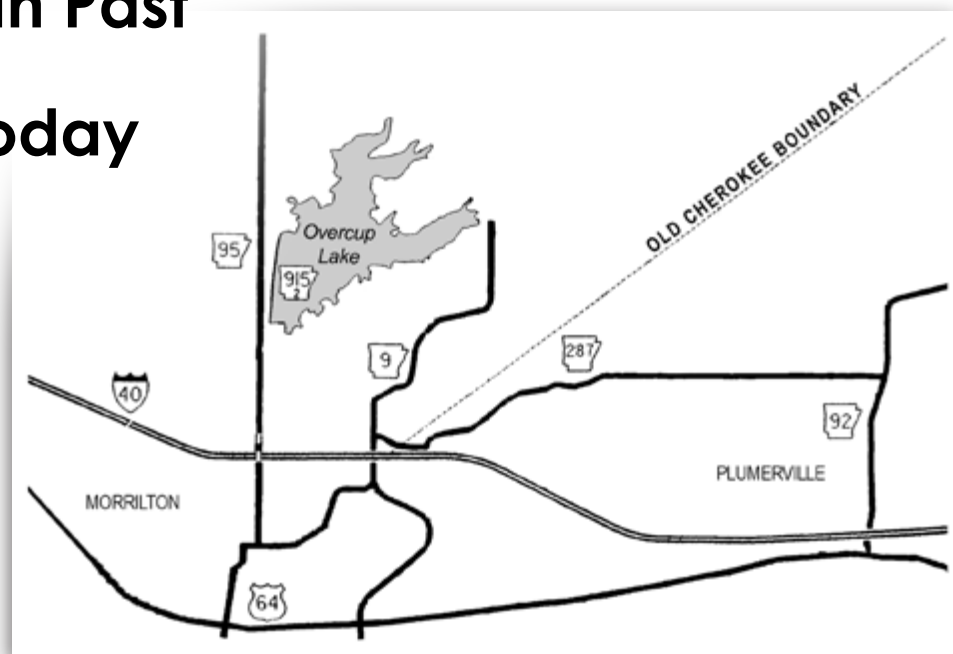
What may come as a surprise when one takes a more lengthy, closer look at a map from one of Arkansas' 75 counties is the history that unfolds on that folded up piece of paper.

Some two and a half centuries since they made Arkansas their home, the history of the Cherokee nation can still be seen on many of Arkansas' county maps today.

A close look at a map of Conway County or any number of other counties in the north, central part of Arkansas, clearly will reveal the "Old Cherokee Boundary" once home to Native Americans. A dotted line marks the territory.

The history of the Cherokee people in Arkansas dates back almost 300 years. The original homeland of the Cherokee Indians was western North and South Carolina, northern Georgia and northeastern Tennessee. However, the Cherokee tribes were familiar with lands west of the Mississippi River, including Arkansas, as the area provided for successful hunting expeditions. The 1700s found many Europeans moving into the areas that many Native Americans called home, as a result, many Cherokee people began moving west. The first emigration westward towards what is now Arkansas may have occurred in about 1721. By 1800, hundreds of Cherokee had made an area along the St. Francis River in Arkansas their home. Only a few years later, that number had grown to over 1,000 living in that area and along the Arkansas River.

To the north, in Missouri, lived the Osage Indians. The Osage used most of



northern Arkansas for hunting. This led to competition for hunting grounds with the Cherokee in Arkansas and resulted in numerous attacks between the two tribes. The Cherokee turned to the government and complained they were not protected. As a result, in 1817, the government established an official reservation for the Cherokee in Arkansas where they could live without threat from the Osage. By this time, as many as 3,000 Cherokee were calling Arkansas home along the Arkansas River. The boundaries of the government reservation were roughly the land between the Arkansas and White Rivers bordered on the east by a line between Batesville and Morrilton and on the west by the Boston Mountains. It is the boundaries of that reservation that are still indicated on Arkansas county maps today.

By the late 1820s, European settlers were moving west into the area. The Territory of Arkansas had been established and more people desired the land where the Cherokees were living. As a result, and with pressure from the United States government, many of the Cherokee left Arkansas for Indian Territory in Oklahoma as settlers poured into the area.

"The Cherokee receded the land to the government in 1828," stated Larry

Newman, AHTD Cartographer Supervisor. "However, those boundaries are still landmarks and are noted on USGS (United States Geological Survey) maps to this day."

"USGS quadrangle maps indicate the area as the 'Old Indian Treaty-Cherokee Boundary'," Newman added.

The reservation in Arkansas was eventually dissolved. As European settlers continued to move west, their desire for the land in the area grew. It was just a few years later, in the 1830s, that thousands of Cherokee from the east gave up their lands and rode steamboats up the Arkansas River to Oklahoma bypassing the original Cherokee treaty boundaries which still appear on the county maps of Arkansas. In 1838, approximately 15,000 Cherokee remaining in the East were forced to move to Indian Territory in Oklahoma by the U.S. Army. They traveled on foot without adequate shelter or food following a route crossing through northwest Arkansas that became known as the "Trail of Tears" because so many lost their lives on the long walk.

The land that the Indians had inhabited years before became part of Arkansas' history and part of the history of a proud people who lived in the area long ago.

Signs Being Replaced Along Arkansas Interstates

If you were to ask a typical motorist what the life expectancy was of an Interstate highway sign, chances are they wouldn't be able to tell you. For Tony Sullivan, an AHTD Staff Traffic Engineer, that is an easy question.

"Highway signs usually last about ten years," states Sullivan. After that length of time, they age and lose their effectiveness so we have to replace them.

And that time has come for some signs currently installed along Interstate 30 in southwest Arkansas. In May, the Arkansas Highway Commission voted to replace the mainlane guide signs and interchange signs on a section of Interstate 30.

"This project extends from Exit 7 near Mandeville up to Exit 111 near Benton," states Sullivan. "That is 311 signs that we will be replacing."

The project got underway at the end of July and will take approximately six months to complete.

The mainlane signs are being purchased through a contractor. They arrive at the Central Shops in Little Rock already completed and are then trucked to location and erected by AHTD staff. As for the interchange signs, they are being manufactured by the Department's sign fabrication shop.

"We are looking at just over 31,000 square feet of materials at a cost of around \$323,755," adds Sullivan.

Although 311 signs sounds like a large order, the AHTD sign shop will have no trouble handling it. There are 14 employees working in the shop and they produce between 80,000 and 100,000 signs each year.

As to what happens to the old signs, many of them are recycled.

See "Signs", page 17



AHTD Sign Layout Specialist Marilyn Embry hand paints an arrow onto a road sign.



Gene Morrison applies a stencil onto a sign and prepares it for delivery.



Ron Johnson works on a sign design for the digital cutting machine in the foreground.



Lee Greene uses a silk screen to apply an arrow onto reflective sheeting.

Transportation Institute Is a Learning Experience

Each year, the AHTD hosts a group of students from the Summer Transportation Institute for several days in hopes that they will consider careers in transportation when they complete their education. Judging from the number of questions the students asked as they toured the Department facilities this summer, many of the participants have a desire to learn more about a career in this field.

The National Summer Transportation Institute (NSTI) is a four-week introduction to all modes of transportation. It began in 1997 and is one of several educational initiatives of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. Students in the ninth through twelfth grades can apply for the program through their local schools. Arkansas Baptist College served as the students' home for the duration of the program.

Approximately twenty young people from the Central Arkansas area spent three days in mid-July taking part in tours and hands-on projects at the Central Office and the Materials Lab in Little Rock. They were welcomed to the Department by Robert Wilson, Chief Legal Counsel, and Al Collins, Section Head of Beautification in the Environmental Division. The two shared ideas about possible careers at the AHTD. A trip to the Materials Lab provided an opportunity to learn about soil stability, vehicle fuels, asphalt durability and much more.

Students also learned about the key aspects to building a bridge, the use of video models for traffic analysis, Intelligent Transportation Systems and the use of Global Positioning Systems/Geographic Information Systems (GPS/GIS) in highway development.

Since its inception, the NSTI has reached more than two million youth across the country.

"This program succeeds in gaining the interest of students early on so that they can focus their education towards a career in transportation," stated AHTD Director Dan Flowers.

"We are pleased to be able to partner with the Federal Highway Administration and host these students each year."



Students conduct a soil test at the Materials Lab with Reggie Cobb, Laboratory Coordinator (left).



Bart Davenport, Chemist I (left), conducts an experiment for students in the Chemistry Lab.



Mike Limbird, Staff Materials Engineer (right), explains how the strength of concrete is determined.

Department Hosts Engineering Interns

The AHTD took a few days to welcome its engineering interns to the Central Office in Little Rock for an Engineering Intern Orientation. This year's event was held on July 12th and 13th.

"The Department provides internships to enhance general knowledge of the transportation industry and to encourage interns to continue their interest in an engineering career," stated Dan Flowers, AHTD Director. "This is a chance for our interns to learn the responsibilities of each Division."

Five universities were represented by the thirty students at the orientation including the University of Arkansas, Arkansas State University, Louisiana Tech, Christian Brothers College and the University of Missouri at Rolla.

Interns were welcomed to the event by Frank Vozel, Deputy Director and Chief Engineer. Following introductions, the students received a Department overview including presentations by Ralph Hall on the Administrative Branch, Scott Bennett on the Planning Branch, Phil McConnell on the Design Branch and Allan Holmes on the Operations Branch.

The group also heard presentations on the opportunities at the AHTD and benefits of employment. Staff members of each Division took students on tours of the Materials Lab as well as the Planning & Research, Roadway Design, Maintenance, Programs & Contracts, Construction and Bridge Divisions.

The Department's 2007 engineering interns include Jonathan Ball, Chris Ball, Brian Biehler, Ryan Blankenship, John Bledsoe, Nick Braddy, Jarrod Brightwell, Jonathan Britton, George Davison, Ashley Gardner, Daniel George, Matt Green, Tammy Herman, Edmund Howe, Rebekah

Jeans, Blake Marotti, Brad Marotti, Jeff Maze, John Mitchell, Minghua Qiu, Ryan Reynolds, Jason Robinson, Natalie Sigsby, Kyle Slagle, Lisa Stine, Terrence Strahan,

Andy Tackett, Tommy Talley, Brian Tooke and Marcus Ward.

The AHTD is the largest employer of civil engineers in the state.



(l. to r.) Jonathan Britton and Ryan Blankenship look over GPS equipment after a presentation by Robert Reed, Environmental Analyst III.



Interns visit with Jim Tadel, Staff Land Surveyor, of the Surveys Division.

Dedications

Department Signs New Hope Road Over to the City of Rogers

A three mile stretch of New Hope Road in Rogers will soon change hands as the AHTD transfers ownership of the road from the state to the city of Rogers.

A signing ceremony was held August 31st to cap off a \$10 million improvement project that widened the roadway, officially Highway 94, from Interstate 540 eastward to Highway 71B.

The project was one of the first in the Arkansas Highway Commission's Partnering Program. An increased number of cities are partnering with the AHTD to make roadway improvements. Cities are finding that they are able to assist in getting roadways built faster by offering to cover some of the costs.

For the New Hope Road project, the city of Rogers paid nearly \$2 million for right-of-way, relocation of utilities and new traffic lights. Shortly after the first of the year, Rogers will officially take over ownership of the roadway and be responsible for future maintenance and operations without having to consult the state.

"Under the Partnering Program, projects such as New Hope Road are being completed in a more timely fashion," stated Commission Chairman Jonathan Barnett.

Other cities in northwest Arkansas with ongoing partnership projects include Springdale, Fayetteville and Bentonville. State-



(l. to r.) Deputy Director & Chief Engineer Frank Vozel, Director Dan Flowers, Rogers Mayor Steve Womack and Commission Chairman Jonathan Barnett.

wide, the Partnering Program includes 41 projects with a total cost of \$369,260,000. Local contributions account for \$109,370,000 of that amount.

Hickerson Freeway Unveiled In Texarkana

Former Highway Commissioner Prissy Hickerson was honored on July 23rd as a large crowd gathered for a sign unveiling ceremony to name the Highway 245 Loop in Texarkana as the "Hickerson Freeway." Hickerson was instrumental in getting the southern Texarkana loop built, which will ultimately become a part of Interstate 49.

Hickerson was the first Highway Commissioner appointed by former Governor Mike Huckabee. She is one of only three females to have served on the Commission and only the second to serve as Chairman. Before she left her appointment, her fellow Commissioners elected to honor her in this manner.

During her tenure, she saw the opening of the Bobby Hopper Tunnel which completed Interstate 540 between Alma and Fayetteville, the addition of Interstate 530 from Little Rock to Pine Bluff, the opening of four new Welcome Centers across the state and the successful passage of the Interstate Rehabilitation Program



Highway 70 Project Dedicated In Hot Springs

The Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce helped coordinate the dedication of the Highway 70 West widening project on July 17th, as Commissioner Carl Rosenbaum and several AHTD officials gathered for a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Beginning at the intersection with Highway 192 (Marion Anderson), the project widened the old two-lane roadway to a five-lane, curb and gutter facility for just over five miles. The project extends westward to Hempwallace.

Area residents were excited to see the completion of this three-year job constructed by Martin-Marietta Materials. This section of Highway 70 was previously one of the busiest two-lane highway sections in the state. Prior to the 2004 start date, nearly 20,000 vehicles a day traveled through the area.

Commissioner Rosenbaum noted that the \$12 million project included a section on new location around the Lake Hamilton School Complex. Thus, eliminating safety concerns about the old roadway going through the busy school complex.



Commissioner Carl Rosenbaum, third from left, helps dignitaries cut the ribbon on the Highway 70 project.

Cotter *(Continued from page 9)*

preservation," states Dan Flowers, AHTD Director.

During rehabilitation, traffic was routed to a main highway to the north. The project was one of the most complex rehabilitation projects undertaken on a Marsh Arch bridge.

"We had to replicate everything to the exact way it was," said Robert Scoggin, AHTD Environmental Scientist. "Everything on that bridge, except for the arches, has been replicated and replaced. It was a huge undertaking."

Scoggin said historians had a challenge in copying light poles that line the bridge. They had to make hand molds from the originals, he said.

"The company that made them in the 1920s was located in Italy and had broken the molds after they were built," Scoggin stated. "They are unique to this bridge and they had nice glass globes

that we were able to save from the originals."

The Cotter Bridge is the first concrete arch bridge for the Department to rehabilitate. When it was completed in 2004, 60 percent of the concrete on the bridge had been replaced or repaired with no impacts to the historic integrity of the bridge. The project increased safety and made the bridge more adequate in handling traffic. The load limit was also improved to meet current load carrying capabilities.

To celebrate the successful rehabilitation, a large public rededication of the bridge was held in the fall of 2004 to reopen the bridge to traffic. The ceremony was combined with the town's fall festival. Since that time, the bridge project has appeared in numerous publications and has received national recognition.

Signs *(Continued from page 13)*

"We refurbish the aluminum on circular belt sanding machines and then lay new high intensity reflective sheeting on them that contains a good contrast ratio," Sullivan states.

Lettering is then applied to the signs.

"We use what is called a Clear View font for our lettering," adds Sullivan. It is more legible at longer distances."

The Department is unable to grind the sheeting on larger signs. Those that can't be recycled are sold for scrap.

Plans for new signs along Arkansas interstates extend beyond Interstate 30. The Department's July bid letting included a project to begin replacement of signs on Interstate 40 as well.

Highway 18 Monette & Manila

Public Hearings were held on January 8th at Buffalo Island Central West Elementary School in Monette and January 9th at the Manila Airport Center in Manila to discuss plans for improvements to Highway 18 in Craighead and Mississippi counties.

A total of 350 people attended the meetings to hear about plans for widening approximately 25 miles of Highway 18 to four lanes, extending from the St. Francis River eastward to Highway 181. Plans include potential bypasses around the towns of Black Oak, Monette and Manila.

Consultants from Carter & Burgess Incorporated as well as Highway & Transportation Department staff participated in the meeting.

Highway 247 Russellville Bypass

Approximately 134 people gathered at Pottsville High School in Pottsville on March 15th for a Design Public Hearing to see plans for improvements to Highway 247 and the Russellville Bypass.

The proposed improvements include widening existing Highway 247, between Highway 7 and River Road, from two lanes to four lanes. There will also be a revised new location section from River Road to the Interstate 40/Highway 363 interchange at Pottsville.

AHTD Environmental, Right of Way and Roadway Design staff, along with District Eight personnel, participated in the meeting.

Highway 412 Hindsville-Huntsville Bypass

The Department held a Design Public Hearing on March 29th at the Living Water Baptist Church in Huntsville to share plans for improvements to Highway 412 in Madison County.

The proposed improvements include widening approximately five miles of Highway 412, from Hindsville to Huntsville, to a four-lane, divided highway. Approximately 270 people attended the meeting to express their views regarding the proposed project.

In attendance from the AHTD were staff members from the Environmental, Right of Way and Roadway Design Divisions as well as personnel from District Nine and consultants from Florence & Hutcheson, Inc.

Highway 440 North Belt Freeway

An open forum location public hearing was held at the Brockington Road Church of the Nazarene in Sherwood on March 20th to share plans for the design of the proposed North Belt Freeway.

The proposed highway project, located in northern Pulaski County, consists of a four-lane, divided highway built to Interstate standards and located between Highway 67 and the Interstate 40/430 interchange. The project is approximately 13 miles in length and will be constructed on new location.

A total of 495 people attended including AHTD staff from the Environmental, Right of Way, Roadway Design and Public Affairs Divisions, as well as District Six personnel.

Highway 13

Carlisle

Approximately 60 people gathered at Carlisle Elementary School in Carlisle on April 3rd for an open forum Location Public Hearing on Highway 13.

The proposed highway project includes improvements to 1.4 miles of Highway 13 in Carlisle, between Highway 70 and Interstate 40. Improvements would include two twelve-foot travel lanes with a continuous center turn lane and sidewalks. A portion of the work will be on new location.

AHTD Environmental, Right of Way and Roadway Design staff, along with District Six personnel, participated in the meeting.

Highway 265

Fayetteville

The Department held a Location and Design Public Hearing at Vandergriff Elementary School in Fayetteville on May 9th to share plans for improvements to Highway 265 in Fayetteville.

A total of 77 people attended to hear information on the project as it was evaluated and documented in an Environmental Assessment.

Plans call for widening 4.3 miles of Highway 265 to four lanes, from Highway 45 northward to the Fayetteville city limits.

In attendance for the AHTD were personnel from the Environmental, Right of Way and Roadway Design Divisions as well as consultants from Parsons Brinckerhoff and District Four personnel.

Highway 265

Springdale

A location Public Hearing was held on May 10th at Bayyari Elementary School in Springdale to share plans for improvements to Highway 265 in Springdale.

Fourteen people came to learn more about the project as it was evaluated and documented in an Environmental Assessment. The proposed project calls for widening 1.6 miles of existing Highway 265 to include four travel lanes between Randall Wobbe Lane and Highway 264.

In attendance were AHTD personnel from the Environmental, Right of Way and Roadway Design Divisions as well as staff members from District Four and consultants from Parsons Brinckerhoff.

Highway 371

Prescott

A total of 36 people attended a Location Public Hearing at the Callom & Carney Clinic on May 31st in Prescott to hear about plans for improvements to Highway 371 in Prescott.

The proposed project consists of a two-lane railroad overpass located southwest of the existing Highway 371 railroad crossing in Prescott. The project is approximately one mile in length and will be constructed on new location. Attendees were able to express their views regarding the location of the proposed project.

Attending for the AHTD were personnel from the Environmental, Right of Way and Roadway Design Divisions as well as staff members from District Three.



Letters to the Department



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS SYSTEM
CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE

May 29, 2007

Dear Chief Ron Burks:

On behalf of the Criminal Justice Institute, I would like to thank you and the Arkansas Highway Police for your continued support of the DWI Detection and Standardized Field Sobriety Testing Program. During the week of May 15-17, this program was presented to a group of law enforcement officers at the Southern Arkansas University Police Department in Magnolia. The presentation was well-received by those in attendance. I would especially like to extend our appreciation and thanks to Cpl. Darren Smith and Cpl. Steve Atchley, who contributed greatly to the quality and standard of the program as instructors. Thank you once again for your continued support for this valuable program.

Sincerely,
Pam Mays
DWI/SFST/DRE Program Assistant

To Whom It May Concern:

I was stopped on Interstate 30 by Officer Willis on February 4th for a speed check. I was very impressed by the professional attitude of this officer. He was very nice and polite. I think if all the officers were like him, the world would be a better place. I just want to thank you for hiring a gentleman like him.

Eddie Jennings
Jennings Transportation, Inc.
Limestone, TN

January 16, 2007

Director Dan Flowers:

A big thank you for the new traffic lights, and on and off ramps at Interstate 540 and Arkansas Highway 59 South (Exit 3) at Van Buren, Arkansas. The congestion is no longer there, even during rush hours and peak usage times. It is safer to get onto Interstate 540 from both directions and prevents accidents at this exit. Thank you again.

Betty Schaub
Van Buren, AR



On behalf of the city of Malvern, thanks for working closely with us during the design and construction of recently completed Job 060938, Ouachita River Str. & Apprs. (Malvern)(S). The Department worked with our community to produce a very satisfying finished product. The bridge over the Ouachita River in particular was an example of how the AHTD is willing to accommodate the particular needs of a community.

The new bridge was positioned to allow preservation of two historically significant water intake structures. These two concrete towers are reminders of Malvern's past and are a unique sight along the river. Piers were located to avoid construction on a pair of rock outcrops that are significant to the Caddo Tribe of Native Americans, who formerly used the novaculite for tools and trade. This position also avoids interference with the western portion of the river channel which is used for swift water rescue training by fire departments, law enforcement agencies, and the Arkansas Canoe Club.

Prior to the bridge project, Malvern was developing the river corridor for recreation, with plans for walking trails and whitewater enhancements below what became the bridge site. The AHTD's design incorporated a pier wide enough to protect canoes and kayaks from dangerous pinning or wrapping accidents, and paved access to the water for easy entry.

Another benefit to the city was the transferral to Malvern of the temporary work road used to erect the superstructure. The stone material of the work road will be used in the construction of waves and eddies that will enhance the natural whitewater at the site. We are grateful for your continuing assistance as we develop the area for our community to enjoy. Not a day goes by that fishermen, birdwatchers, sightseers, and of course, travelers, don't enjoy the new bridge. Thanks again for a job well done.

Sincerely,
Mayor Steve Northcutt

Dear Randy Ort,

Several months ago, I unfortunately lost my billfold. A few days after losing it, I was contacted that it had been found by a man that works for the Highway and Transportation Department and I want you to know about it.

His name is Tom Fisher from Redfield. Everything was in the billfold, soaking wet, he had found it in a ditch scattered around.

I just wanted you to know that you have an honest employee. Thanks for listening.

Lucille Harris
Cabot



Director Dan Flowers:

Thank you to AHTD for working closely and cooperatively with the City of Hot Springs on the design features of the 70 East Bridge. We especially appreciate the Department allowing us to choose the patterns and colors on the bridge piers, parapets and steel structures. We were able to customize the bridge to reflect the "feel" of Hot Springs by using our city logo colors. This bridge has become a signature entryway into our city and we hope to replicate this design on future bridges. It was a pleasure working with you on this project.

Sincerely,
Mike Bush
Mayor

Kent Myers
City Manager

Jean Wallace
Parks & Recreation Director

Mitchell Funeral Home, Inc.

HIGHWAY 412 WEST — P.O. BOX 57
PARAGOULD, ARKANSAS 72451

March 22, 2007

Mr. Joe Barnett:

Several weeks ago, we had a forecast including possible flooding for three or four days. Our business is subject to flash flooding so we try to maintain our surface drainage inlets. During this rainy period, we noticed that our property was not being properly drained. We called the AHTD office across the street from us and an employee named Bill Mitchell (no relation) was prompt to come over and investigate. He quickly discovered the problem. The concrete culvert in front of Burger King had silted in and was only draining the top half of the culvert.

Bill was very professional in the manner. He quickly went to work on the problem and eliminated the flooding threat. He was very courteous and cooperative in his efforts to relieve the flooding threat. It was obvious that Bill is a very skilled and valuable member of the AHTD. Please extend our sincere thanks to Bill and the other men that solved our problem.

Sincerely
Dick Mitchell, President



Dear Mr. Bachelor,

I want to commend an AHTD employee at the El Dorado location for her service beyond the call of duty. Very early in the morning, on January 2nd, my wife and I began a trip from my Malvern plant to Louisiana to make delivery of aluminum to one of our customers. Around 10 a.m. we stopped at the rest area south of El Dorado to check the loaded trailer and realized one of the wheel rims had become damaged. Some of the lug bolts had sheared off, causing a dangerous tire situation. I obtained directions from Ms. Robin Richard to the nearest tire repair store.

I proceeded slowly to that location but as I turned off the highway, the tire was no longer on the rim. I stopped and ran back down the highway, hoping to locate it, but did not. I then drove to the tire store and after making arrangements there, returned to the rest area. How thankful we were to see the tire lying beside an AHTD vehicle and Ms. Richard standing beside it, waiting for us to return. She had seen the tire come off the wheel and chased it as it rolled down the highway, eventually catching and bringing it back to the rest area.

Meanwhile, my wife had visited the restroom, and noticed Ms. Richards tending the landscape around the building. She was impressed, given that during the winter months, it is difficult to maintain beauty of such an area. My wife noted the neat interior of the restroom and also mentioned the politeness and courtesy of a young man attending the guest register. She complimented him, proud that Arkansas had such a nice facility for travelers.

I wanted to inform you of the pride your employees take in their positions. Specifically Ms. Richards, in dealing with matters both small and large. Our emergency resulted in a blessing and we appreciated her concern and assistance.

Sincerely,
Dave Harrington
Temple Industries
Malvern, AR



Fort Smith Police Department
100 South 10th Street
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72901
Phone: (479) 285-4221
Fax: (479) 783-2376

April 12, 2007

Dear Chief Ron Burks,

On behalf of all members of the Fort Smith Police Department and Officer Danny Martinez and his family, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and thanks to you and the Arkansas Highway Police for your assistance in traffic control at various intersections along the procession route on the day of Officer Martinez' funeral. Your support and show of respect for a fellow law enforcement officer is appreciated.

Sincerely,
Chief Kevin D. Lindsey



Director Dan Flowers:

Thank you very much for granting our request for a sign on Highway 70B directing motorists to Hot Springs or Downtown Hot Springs. This will be an invaluable directional tool to the many visitors to our city who are not yet familiar with the new Highway 270 extension. I also would like to thank you and the Commission for the help you have given and continue to give the tourism industry in Hot Springs and around the State of Arkansas. The new Welcome Centers and the attraction signs are just two of the many examples of your supporting our industry.

Sincerely,
Steve Arrison, Executive Director
Hot Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau

From a recent Arkansas newspaper:

To the Editor:

On April 8th, while driving home from church, I found that the road had collapsed and the culverts that had allowed me to cross the creek for many years had given in to nature. I expected to be taking the "long way 'round" for months. Never have we been happier to be totally wrong.

The AHTD was on the job with a new culvert on Wednesday, and the gravel and dirt truck parade began. Early morning was the starting time and dark or later was the stopping time. As I write this, the road is being graded, and travel on the culvert will start tonight. We have talked to the workmen and they are proud – as well they should be. They have done an incredible job and we are very grateful.

Sharon Milton
Norphlet, AR

WATTS, DONOVAN & TILLEY, P.A.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
200 SOUTH COMMERCE STREET, SUITE 200
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201-1769

Director Dan Flowers:

On April 9th, I took depositions from Arkansas Highway Police CPL Lowell Stephens and CPL Jeffery Yates. I wanted to commend those gentlemen. They worked with my office in scheduling their depositions, were prompt in returning calls and worked around the schedules of three separate law firms. They appeared in uniform and made outstanding representatives of your Department. Their testimony was concise, they were helpful in explaining questionable points, and were knowledgeable about their jobs. These are fine officers the Department has.

Sincerely,
Richard N. Watts

February 6, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

My elderly mother and I visit Hot Springs regularly and stop at the Lonsdale Rest Area. We wish to commend highly the gentleman who oversees the area. He* has been on duty there for a number of years and keeps clean restrooms and the surrounding grounds are well-maintained throughout all seasons. We have had several short conversations with the gentleman and sense he has a good work ethic and takes his responsibility seriously – rare commodities these days. He represents Arkansas well and you should be proud of him.

We are aware you have closed many of your former rest areas - with good reason, we acknowledge. However, it does make it less convenient for the traveling public. We trust the Lonsdale Rest Area will remain open and as well-maintained in the future as it is currently.

Sincerely,
Marguerite Kinsel

* Eldon Young and Joseph Wharton work in the Garland County Crew.

Mr. Neil Ford,

We at Petit Jean State Park would like to extend our appreciation to you for your donation of trash bags and orange safety vests for the Great Arkansas Cleanup. This helped to make the Cleanup a great success this year, with over 88 volunteers and over 1,000 pounds of trash removed.

Sincerely,
Michelle Hunt, Park Interpreter
Petit Jean State Park

To Whom It May Concern:

On December 31, my husband and I had a tire blow out on Interstate 40. We were coming home from West Virginia in Hot Springs Village, and our car was packed. We began to unpack our many belongings to find a jack, and were deciding whether we could remove the spare from underneath our van. We are in our 60s and 70s and both of us have troublesome shoulders. Just as we were calling AAA, AHTD employee Brad Hubbard approached us and said he would change the tire for us. He was soon joined by employee Debbie Mealler.

The tire was damaged beyond repair, and we had concerns about how safe we would be while driving to Little Rock on a spare - in addition to finding a new tire on a Sunday afternoon rapidly approaching New Year's Eve. Debbie and Brad worked together with us and AAA to determine a solution to our problem. Debbie found V & H Tire Service in nearby Hazen for a new tire. The owner opened their store to help us. Brad, Debbie, and V & H Tire Service were truly "highway angels" that day, and we thank you for providing this public service.

Yours truly,
Milt and Marilyn Matzek
Hot Springs Village, AR



Dear Chief Ron Burks:

I want to sincerely thank you and the officers who assisted J.B. Hunt on the March 22nd videotaping of our safety training videos. CPL Brian Harwood and SGT Howard Besett were extremely helpful and willing to assist us. SGT Besett was kind enough to arrange the appointment and ensure we had everything we needed to meet our deadline. CPL Harwood appeared in our video and represented the Arkansas Highway Police with poise and professionalism. I also thank Colleen for being so kind and thorough. She coordinated communications with the officers and followed up, calling our producer after hours. What terrific teamwork. Thank you for all you do - keeping our highways safe and serving and protecting the public.

Yours Truly,
R. Greer Woodruff,
Senior Vice-President, Corporate Safety and Security
J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc.



March 12, 2007

Mr. Joe Barnett:

I would like to make you aware of AHTD employees Donnie Pfeifer and Sue Knowlton demonstrating integrity in their daily lives. When Mr. Pfeifer recently discovered a mail bag on the Highway 63 Bypass, he stopped to gather it and turn it into Ms. Knowlton. Ms. Knowlton turned it in at the U.S. Post Office. The bag had a bank deposit which contained cash and was unopened. Their honesty and willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty is greatly appreciated. Please pass on my sincere gratitude to these two outstanding citizens!

Sincerely,
Hillrey Adams
Manager Post Office Operation. 724/725 Area

CPL Steve Atchley:

I am writing this letter to express gratitude after being pulled into your scales on February 15th. I am a rookie driver and that was my first experience in being pulled in. As a former accident investigator, I have had many interactions with law enforcement officials in many jurisdictions; by far you were the most down to earth individual I have encountered thus far. It was almost a pleasure being pulled over - almost. In all seriousness, you are a credit to the Arkansas Highway Police. You were professional and you treated me with respect and goodwill. In the future I will look upon your brethren with a new respect, I understand that you are there for our safety as well as the safety of everyone else. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Robert Green
Canada

February 22, 2007

Ms. Tina Sinclair:

This letter is to commend employees Darren Smith and Terry Emerson. On February 15th, I had a flat tire on Highway 71B at the 540 exit in Fayetteville. The temperature was about 25 degrees, with a light snow. I had no sooner stopped than these men pulled up behind me, turned on the yellow flashing lights, and went to work changing my flat tire. They refused my offer to buy them lunch, only accepting a thank you for helping me out of my trouble.

They went out of their way to help a stranded motorist. I appreciate them, their kindness, and willingness to make my big problem turn into just a slight delay. What a pleasure to meet them. You can be proud of these employees.

Gratefully,
Betty A. Haisten
Fayetteville, AR



March 12, 2007

On behalf of the Saline County Office of Emergency Management, I thank you for your support during the chemical accident with a tanker truck at JJ's Truck Stop on March 8th.

It is our duty to ensure the safety and well-being of the residents of this county. With your support, professionalism and interagency cooperation, this incident was handled without damage to surrounding property or injury to the general public. Through continued cooperation, we will continue to serve the citizens of Saline County in a professional manner.

Respectfully,
Terrell Burks, Director
Saline County OEM



On March 28th, I attended a funeral on Loop 245 in Texarkana. Afterwards, the funeral procession passed an intersection where an AHTD crew was working. As the procession passed, the crew stopped, faced the cars and removed their caps.

I cannot express what this gesture of respect meant to the family and friends attending. After the funeral, I had several people - most from out of state - ask me if I saw the workers as we passed. Their actions did not go unnoticed. These workers should be commended. Their actions reflected individual respect and that of an Arkansas state employee. Please pass on my thanks, and that of the family.

Senior Corporal Tommy Stueart
Arkansas State Police
Mena, Arkansas



Arkansas State Highway and
Transportation Department
Post Office Box 2261
Little Rock, AR 72203-2261

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