

INFORMATION RELEASE



Office of the Director

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AHTD RECEIVES REGIONAL RECOGNITION FOR RAILROAD OVERPASS IN PRESCOTT

LITTLE ROCK (8-29) The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) has been awarded an “America’s Transportation Award” from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) , according to AHTD officials.

Now in its fifth year, the America’s Transportation Awards competition recognizes the very best of America’s transportation projects in three main categories: Ahead of schedule, Under Budget, and Best Use of Innovation. The final regional winners were announced at the SASHTO Officials 2012 meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, this week. The AHTD received a regional award in the “Under Budget” category for its Prescott Railroad Overpass Project.

For many years the City of Prescott had sought a way to provide safe, uninterrupted access across the Union Pacific rail line. The line runs through the middle of town and was creating a problem in emergency situations when law enforcement officers, paramedics and other first responders needed to get across town and were forced to wait on a train.

To remedy the situation, local officials sought help from State and Federal officials and were successful in securing dedicated funding from Congress. As a result, a plan was developed for a railroad overpass to move traffic up and over the tracks. The project was awarded to Earnest Investments, LLC, of Shreveport, Louisiana, in 2008. Work began in 2009 and featured construction of a 340-foot bridge passing over the Union Pacific Railroad main line and Highway 67. It also utilizes a half mile of new alignment of Highway 371. The bridge structure was enhanced with an architectural finish and a texture-coated color scheme.

Two years after beginning, and \$6.2 million later, the project was completed \$229,287 under budget and with 2 working days less than planned. The overpass links Highways 371 and 67 together and motorists no longer have to wait for trains to pass to get to the other side of town.

“We’re excited for our Department staff and for the people of Prescott who worked on this project,” stated AHTD Director Scott Bennett. “Working with local officials, we have eliminated a potentially dangerous traffic situation and improved traffic flow through downtown Prescott.”

“We’re immensely proud of the quality projects entered into this year’s competition,” said Kirk Steudle, president of AAHSTO and director of the Michigan Department of Transportation.

“The America’s Transportation Award competition is a great way to highlight tremendous transportation projects that demonstrate how state Departments of Transportation continue to deliver value with limited transportation dollars. They deserve credit for these outstanding projects that keep our communities safe and contribute to our quality of life.”

The Southeast region was the final group of regional winners named in the competition. The 10 projects with the highest total judge votes nationally will be announced in the upcoming weeks and will compete for the Grand Prize and the People’s Choice Award.

The America’s Transportation Awards competition is sponsored by AASHTO, AAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

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