



Arkansas HIGHWAYS

JULY 2013

A PUBLICATION OF THE
ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY & TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT | **MAGAZINE**

Spring Bank Ferry Returns Home

RESTORED FERRY GETS PLACE OF HONOR
IN DODDRIDGE CITY PARK

Equipment
Operators
ROADEO

ON THE JOB
WITH
AHTD Radio
Dispatch

District Two:
SAFETY
STAND DOWN DAY



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The summer season is here, and with it comes an opportunity for construction crews to take advantage of good weather. Many projects on Arkansas' highways are moving forward this summer. The Interstate Rehabilitation Program is well underway now and our Connecting Arkansas Program (CAP) isn't far behind. The goal of the CAP program is to make significant progress toward connecting all parts of the State with four-lane highways to provide safer and more efficient travel. The Department will soon announce a schedule for the sale of bonds and the start of construction for the new program. Improvements will get underway soon after.

Summer months also mean it is Rodeo time and we just wrapped up another good one! I want to say thank you to everyone that participated in the event. Each year our staff and the families that come to watch are impressed with the degree of skill each of you displays. The skills and the professionalism you show in your jobs year round are on view each year at this event and we couldn't be more proud of you. And, to those of you who helped coordinate the Rodeo and who volunteered throughout the day, thank you for a job well done. It couldn't take place without your efforts. Congratulations to our District Champions from District Four. And we wish our first and second place winners the best as they travel to Kentucky this fall to compete in the regional event. Read more about Rodeo in this issue of *Arkansas Highways*.

Exciting things are happening in our Public Information Office. We will soon be debuting a series of videos on our webpage at ArkansasHighways.com that will give you an inside look at many of the things going on within our Districts across the State. Topics will vary and may range from moving day at District Four Headquarters to Safety Stand Down Day in District Two. There will be many things in between such as bridges made of pasta being built by students at Cabot Southside Elementary School and the annual golf tournament presented by our Arkansas Highway Police.

As we enjoy these summer months, let's keep safety at the forefront of all we do. For all of our crews working outdoors, take extra precautions during the hot weather. Play it safe by drinking plenty of liquids, pacing yourself for the warm conditions, dressing appropriately for the heat and taking breaks when necessary. For those of you working in construction zones, be aware of all of the activity around you and the increased traffic as families travel on vacation. All of these safety tips will prevent accidents and improve performance on the job.

In this issue of *Arkansas Highways*, you will find the first in a series of articles called "On the Job". Each issue we will highlight a Department office or individual and take a closer look at the day to day activities associated with their jobs. We are proud to share your success stories with all of our readers!



Scott E. Bennett
Director of Highways and Transportation

FRONT COVER:
U.S. Highway 71
Crawford County

BACK COVER:
Interstate 540
Crawford County

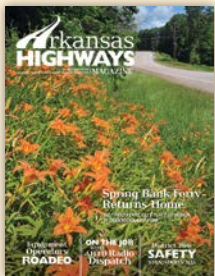
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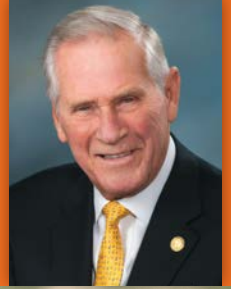
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CONTENTS

FEATURES

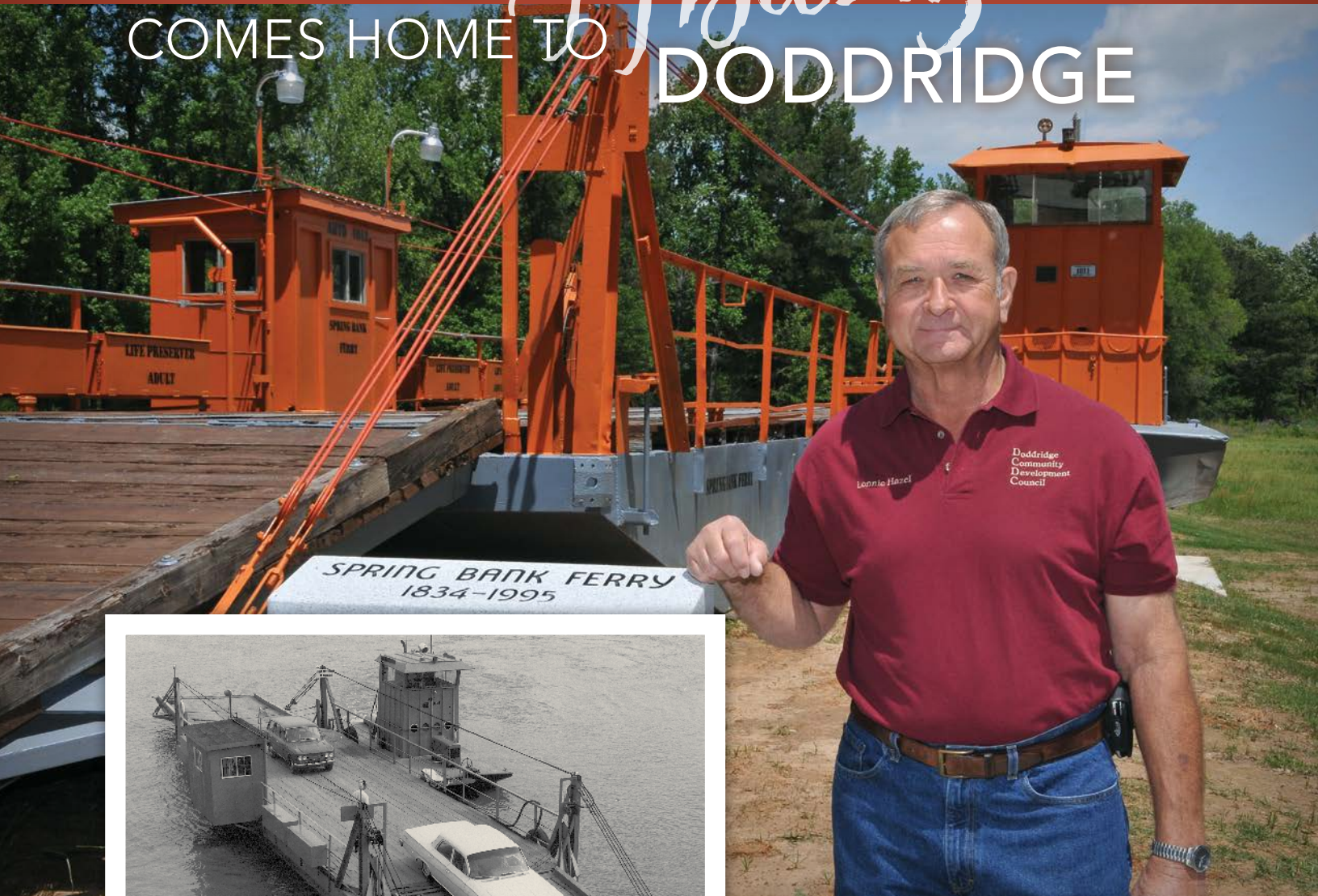
- 5 Spring Bank Ferry Restoration
- 8 Safety Stand Down Day in District Two
- 10 Safety Matters: Pavement Surface Treatments
- 12 AHTD Retiree Bob Walters Volunteers in Haiti
- 15 Commission History: More Than Just Highways
- 22 On the Job with AHTD Radio Dispatch
- 26 Cops on Bulls: Riding for a Good Cause
- 28 Weekend Road Trip: Arkansas' Scenic Loop
- 34 Perpetual Pavement Award
- 36 23rd Annual Equipment Operators Rodeo



DEPARTMENTS

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Director's Message.....2 | On The Map.....39 |
| Construction Corner.....35 | AHTD Events.....40 |
| Public Meetings.....38 | Dear AHTD: Letters.....42 |
| | AHTD People43 |

A PIECE OF HISTORY COMES HOME TO DODDRIDGE

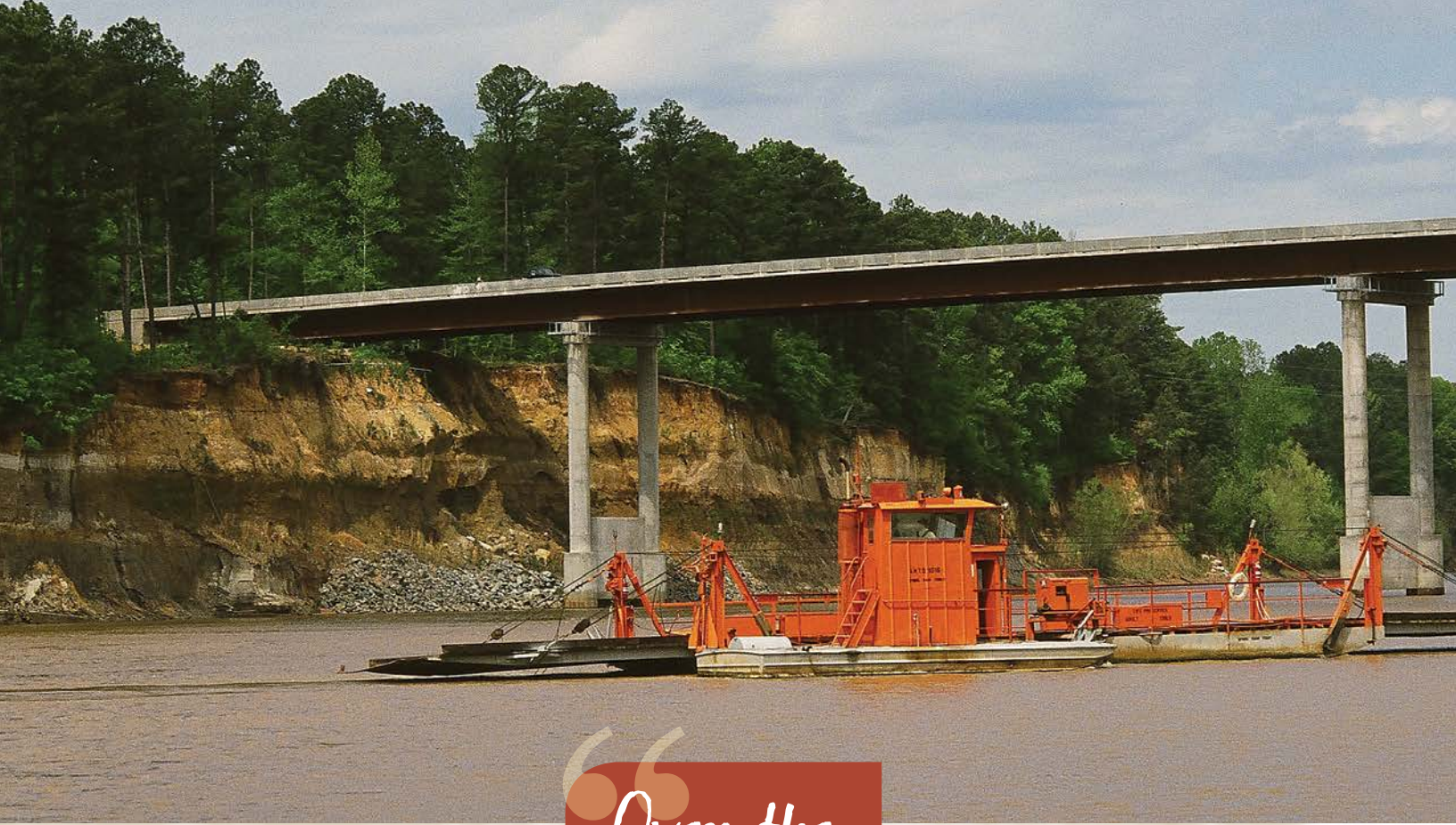


LONNIE HAZEL
FORMER SPRING BANK FERRY PILOT

BY DAVID NILLES

On May 3rd, the people of Doddridge came together in the local city park for a homecoming. It was the dedication of a long lost friend, the Spring Bank ferry. The ferry used to run just a few miles down the highway from Doddridge on the nearby Red River. Now after several years of restoration, it is on display in the park behind the Doddridge Community Center. The Highway and Transportation Department operated the ferry from 1967 until 1995. But the history of the ferry in this southwest Arkansas town goes back more than 170 years prior to that.

(continued on page 6)



HISTORICAL RECORDS INDICATE THE FERRY WAS IN OPERATION BACK IN 1834, just after the removal of the U.S. Indian Agency. A man and his horse could cross on the ferry for twenty-five cents. It was owned by John Caffery. In 1839, Richard Blanton purchased the ferry from Caffery. The ferry would remain within the Blanton family for the next 125 years. The “Blanton Ferry” became State-owned in 1964. Three years later, the AHTD took over operation. The Department ran the ferry until 1995 when the Highway 160 Bridge replaced the ferry.

“The ferry stayed pretty busy most of the time,” says Lonnie Hazel, now retired from the Department after 28 years of service. “You could fit six Cadillac El Dorados on board.”

Hazel would know. He began work on the ferry as a deckhand in 1984. Over the years, he was promoted to deckhand-pilot, then pilot and finally supervisor until the ferry went out of service.

“I called the U.S. Coast Guard and decommissioned the ferry the same day the Highway 160 Bridge opened,” he added. “The County got the barge and it remained on the river bank for years. The original tug went to Bull Shoals Lake at Peel, Arkansas, in 1982. The St. Charles tug replaced it here in Doddridge until 1995.”

It is the original tug that went to Peel that has returned to Doddridge.

“Over the years in service, the ferry survived a flood and a winter storm that froze the Red River completely,” Hazel recalls.

“The ferry broke loose in a flood in 1993. It was found downriver

“Over the years in service,

THE FERRY SURVIVED
A FLOOD AND A
WINTER STORM THAT
FROZE THE RED RIVER
COMPLETELY!

six miles south of Shreveport, Louisiana. It took three days to make the return trip back to Doddridge because we were traveling upstream.”

“Below freezing temperatures froze the Red River from bank to bank in 1989,” Hazel continues. “The ferry couldn’t get through the ice and had to close down for a week until the river thawed.”

Hazel and the Doddridge Community Development Council are primarily responsible for the ferry’s return to Doddridge. The Council owns the barge and Hazel spearheaded its restoration. The community joined in with Hazel on the mammoth project.

When asked what needed restoring when the barge and the tug were reunited in Doddridge Hazel said “pretty much everything.”

“We spent about \$12,600 restoring it,” Hazel states. “If we had hired help to restore it, it would have cost between \$125,000 and \$150,000.”

Everything on the barge and tug look brand new on this the day of the dedication. Even the engine runs.

It took a great deal of work to get it to this point. Over the years, brush and trees had grown out of the deck of the barge while it sat on the bank of the river. Then vandals cut some of the metal off the barge in hopes of reselling it. Fortunately all of the metal pieces were located and reclaimed.

“It was like putting a puzzle together to get the metal all back into place,” Hazel recalls.

Getting the barge from the river bank to the city park was quite an effort.



(Left) The Spring Bank Ferry takes its last voyage across the Red River in 1995.

(Above) Members of the Doddridge Community Development Council cut the ribbon on the newly restored Spring Bank Ferry.

(Right) State Representative Prissy Hickerson speaks to the crowd gathered for the ceremony.



“Two D-9 dozers dragged the barge out of the woods and then two 100-ton cranes lifted it onto a flatbed truck for a ride to the park where it now stands,” Hazel recalls.

The barge weighs approximately 100,000 pounds including the aprons.

Once on location, the job of restoring the ferry to its original condition began.

Twenty yards of concrete now form the base where the barge proudly stands in the park. One thousand yards of sand were hauled in over five days to form a foundation around the entire display area.

“The entire barge and tug were hand scraped, brushed and water blasted twice before a primer was applied,” Hazel adds. “Two 10-man crews from the Department of Community Corrections helped with the entire process.”

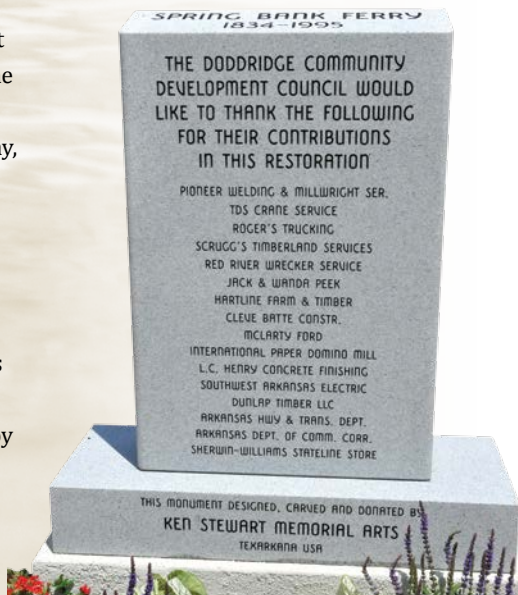
“It took over four years to get to this day, from the initial idea to completion,” says Walt Burnett, a member of the Doddridge Community Development Council. He too spent many hours of hard work on the restoration process.

“No other town in the United States has a barge on display in a city park,” Burnett adds. Indeed many people have stopped by to take a look over the past several years.

On the day of the dedication, members of the Doddridge Community Development Council, the county judge, former Highway Commissioner and current State Representative Prissy Hickerson, members of the AHTD staff and local members of the community came together to celebrate.

“How many in the crowd remember riding the ferry?” County Judge Larry Burgess asked. “I still hear that engine come to life and roar when I think of the ferry. That’s my favorite memory.”

“My husband and I used to come down from Texarkana to ride the ferry,” stated Representative Prissy Hickerson.



“This is a great day for Doddridge.”

District Three Engineer Don Donaldson added, “This represents an interesting part of history for this region. I know we all appreciate everyone’s efforts on getting this restoration accomplished.”

In the crowd for the dedication were six or seven former AHTD employees that worked on the barge during its days on the river, including Joe Barham.

“I was a welder on the boat from 1967 to 1985. I still remember working on the propeller shaft and bushings. That sand was rough on those parts!”

Sure enough, during the dedication ceremony, Joe took time to go under the hull and take a look at the restoration of the propeller shaft. Just like old times.

At the closing of the ceremony, a monument was unveiled that displays the names of every person involved in the restoration of the ferry. Each had a part in bringing a piece of the history of Miller County back home to Doddridge for future visitors to enjoy. ■

SAFETY STAND DOWN DAY HONORS THE MEMORY OF DALE WILLIAMS

BY DAVID NILLES

June 3rd was "Safety Stand Down Day" at the District Two Headquarters in Pine Bluff. The day was set aside for employees to attend safety presentations and to perform safety checks on all of the heavy equipment in use in the District.

It was also a day for District Two employees to remember the passing of Dale "Rookie" Williams, a Hydraulic Excavator Operator Finish who passed away on the job on June 3rd of 2011 in a tragic accident. Williams spent 15 years on the District's Maintenance Crew.

"Safety Stand Down Day is a good way to focus on keeping safety at the forefront of what we do on a daily basis," says David Henning, District Two District Engineer.

"This is a very dangerous business we work in and we need to make safety a priority every day."

And two years after the passing of Dale Williams, District employees did just that. The morning was spent attending safety presentations where different topics had been assigned to various AHTD staff members and crew leaders. It was an opportunity for staffers to do research on various safety precautions and make presentations to their peers. Among the topics were proper heat precautions and reacting to heat related injuries, safe lifting of equipment, and how to use personal protective equipment such as face shields and protective chaps. The protective equipment was inspected for

condition and checked to assure it was located in the proper place.

Following the safety presentations, crews hit the maintenance garages to do step-by-step safety checks on Department trucks and road equipment to verify all systems were operational.

"We are checking everything from the back-up alarms to hoses to steering boxes," said Stanley Tripp, District Two Distributor Operator, who was busy with other crew members checking a Department dump truck.

"We have a check list we use to examine every single part of every piece of equipment," added Thomas Young, Senior Mechanic for the District.

Mechanics were available to assist for any deficiencies found.

District wide, the special day involved over 15 crews and approximately 250 men and women.

Also on hand for Stand Down Day at the headquarters was Twyla Williams, widow of Dale.

"Dale began work at the Department in 1996," she stated. "He enjoyed his work so much he always said he wished he had started with the AHTD years before."



Twyla Williams, widow of Dale Williams, and David Henning, District Two Engineer.

"People called him Rookie because he had never done highway work before" she added. "He really enjoyed his work here."

"Dale drove in from McGehee every day," Henning recalled. "I remember on snowy days, he would sleep in the District Two conference room overnight so he wouldn't have to drive into work in the snow the next day."

The loss of Williams keeps safety in the forefront of everyone's mind. Henning believes the District will have a Safety Stand Down Day every year.

"We use this time to stress the importance of safety in what we do and do everything we can to prevent unfortunate accidents from happening again," he adds.

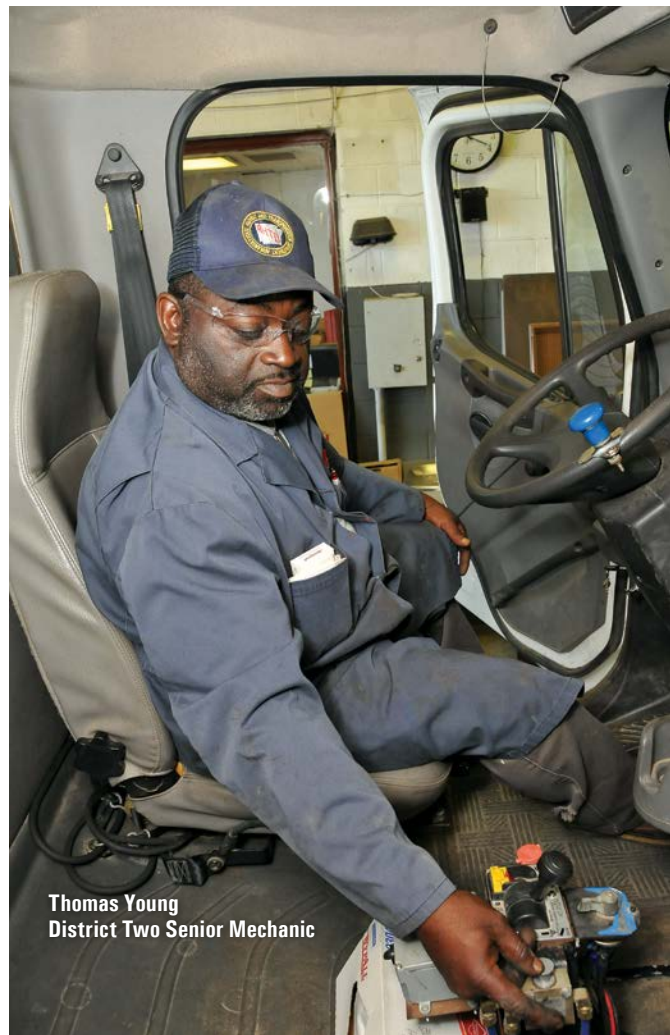
"We have safety meetings once a month. But Safety Stand Down Day has been a day to take a little more time than usual and learn ways to better protect ourselves," Henning added. "It's a great way to make this a safer environment for all of us to work in." ■



Arthur Gatewood
Street Sweeper Operator



Donald Earnest
Asphalt Tank Truck Driver



Thomas Young
District Two Senior Mechanic

SAFETY MATTERS



IMPROVING INTERSTATE SAFETY WITH PAVEMENT SURFACE TREATMENTS

BY ANDY BREWER AND DAVID NILLES

A ccording to crash data from the last three years (2009 through 2011), **APPROXIMATELY 17 PERCENT OF ALL CRASHES THAT HAVE OCCURRED ON ARKANSAS' HIGHWAYS HAVE HAPPENED ON WET PAVEMENT**, resulting in 160 fatalities, or about 53 fatalities per year.

Some of these crashes occurred due to driving too fast for conditions. Other crashes occurred due to distracted driving, impaired driving, or other choices that can result in driver error. All can be worsened by wet weather conditions. A vehicle's condition, particularly tires, can also affect the risk of a crash on wet pavement.

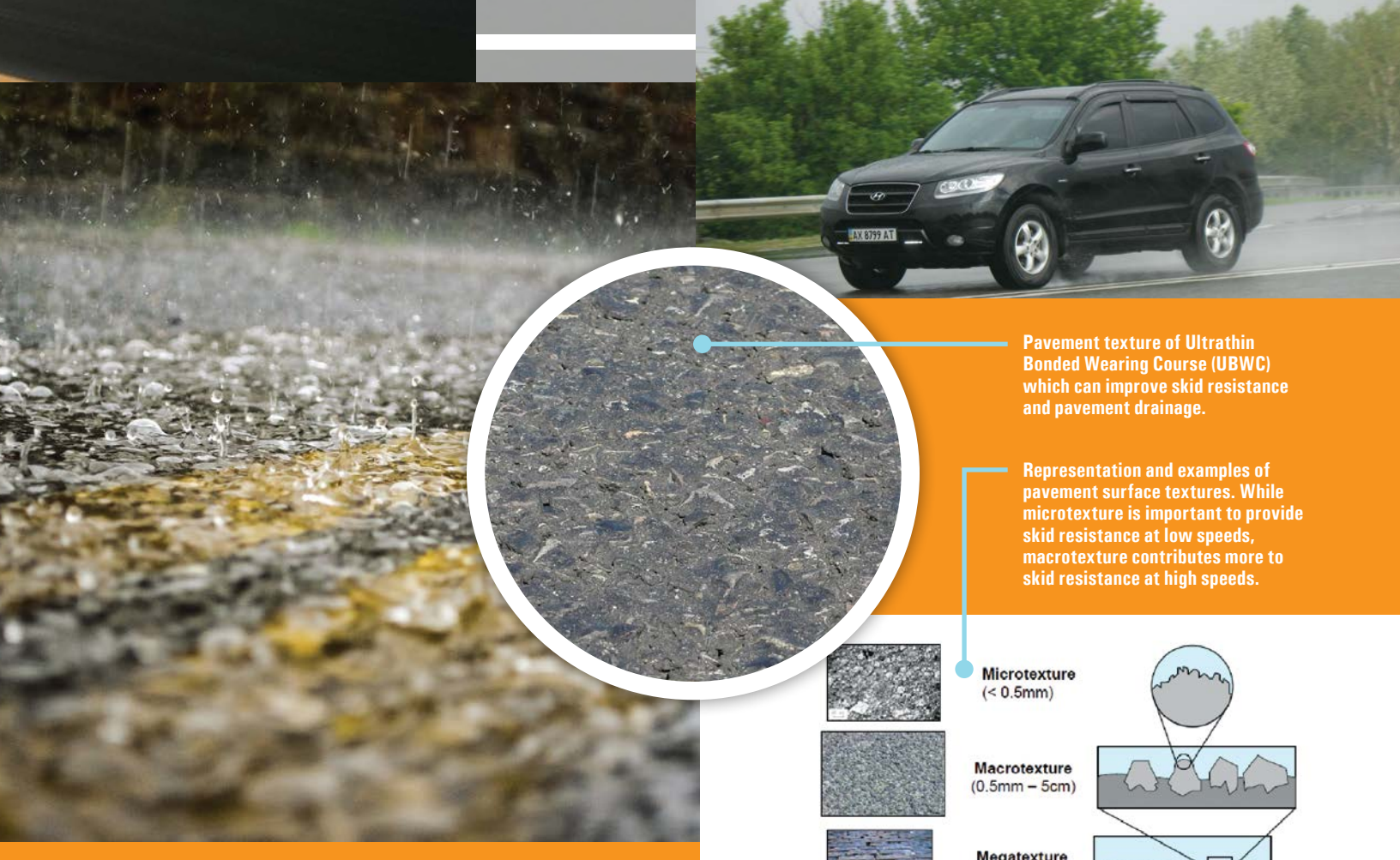
However, another factor in the picture is the pavement, or more appropriately, the pavement texture. It can also have an impact on the ability of a vehicle, even with poor condition tires, to maintain contact with the surface, and the ability of the driver to maintain control of his or her vehicle.

Pavement texture is defined as the irregularities on a pavement surface from an ideal, perfectly flat surface. Pavement texture is critical in providing skid resistance between the contact of a vehicle's tire and the pavement surface. Texture is also important because it provides a way for pavements to drain water.

There are two general types of measures of pavement surface texture that affect safety—they are microtexture and macrotexture. Pavement microtexture is typically defined as wavelengths under 0.5 millimeters (mm), while macrotexture is typically defined as wavelengths between 0.5 mm to 50 mm. Microtexture is provided by the relative roughness of the aggregate particles—the more angles the aggregate has (i.e., the less “polished” it is), the more microtexture the pavement will have. Macrotexture, however, is provided by the gaps or space between aggregate. On concrete pavements, macrotexture can be provided after the driving surface is placed by supplemental treatments such as tining, shot-blasting, diamond grooving or grinding.

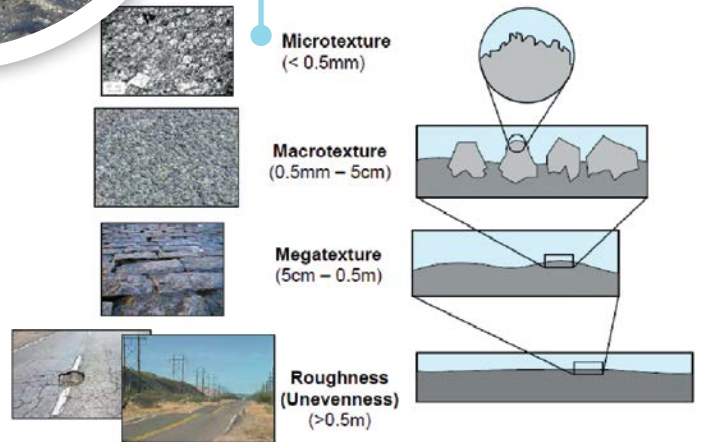
While microtexture is important to provide skid resistance at low speeds (generally less than 50 mph), macrotexture contributes more to skid resistance at high speeds. The safety benefits of pavement surface macrotexture is even greater when it rains—the gaps between the aggregate provide channels for water to drain and thus reduces the chance for hydroplaning (loss of direct contact between the tire and the pavement) and splash-and-spray (which can reduce visibility to vehicles driving behind another vehicle).

Of the 160 wet-weather fatalities that occurred from 2009 through 2011, approximately 70 percent can be considered the



Pavement texture of Ultrathin Bonded Wearing Course (UBWC) which can improve skid resistance and pavement drainage.

Representation and examples of pavement surface textures. While microtexture is important to provide skid resistance at low speeds, macrotexture contributes more to skid resistance at high speeds.



result of a roadway departure crash. A roadway departure crash is defined as a non-intersection collision where the vehicle leaves the traveled highway. Overall, roadway departure crashes make up over 60 percent of all roadway fatalities in Arkansas, and are identified as a primary area of emphasis in the Department's 2013 Arkansas Strategic Highway Safety Plan. (See the May issue of *Arkansas Highways* for an article on the Safety Plan). Improving pavement surface friction is an identified strategy to address roadway departure crashes in the Plan.

In an effort to address roadway departure wet-weather crashes, the AHTD applied an ultrathin bonded wearing course (UBWC) on various highway locations throughout Arkansas from 2004 through 2008. A UBWC includes a thin open-graded course over a liquid membrane that can improve skid resistance and pavement drainage.

It was found that the greatest safety benefit occurred on a segment of Interstate 30 in Clark County between Prescott and Gurdon. It was installed in 2008. A 24-month before-and-after analysis showed that the number of wet pavement crashes decreased from 39 to only five, or a reduction of 87 percent. At Interstate speeds, UBWC provides significant benefits by improving macrotexture, which reduces the risk of hydroplaning and splash-and-spray.

Of the 160 wet-weather fatalities that occurred from 2009 through 2011, 28 occurred on Arkansas' Interstates, or about 9 fatalities per year. To address this issue, which is part of the larger roadway departure safety concern in Arkansas, the Arkansas Highway Commission passed Minute Order 2013-043 in April of this year. This Minute Order authorized the

Department to proceed with pavement texture improvement projects to address this issue on Arkansas Interstates. Six Interstate locations have been identified for possible UBWC installation where a reconstruction project is not scheduled for construction within the next four years. Other treatment methods to improve pavement texture may be employed as well. Each of these locations has a high percentage of wet-weather crashes over the last three years.

Addressing these locations with UBWC will likely help reduce wet-weather roadway departure crashes, helping the AHTD fulfill its mission statement and strategic goals, and help Arkansas get one step closer Toward Zero Deaths as outlined in the 2013 Arkansas Strategic Highway Safety Plan. ■



VOLUNTEER WORK takes AHTD RETIREE **BOB WALTERS** to **HAITI**



Bob Walters

Bob Walters spent 35 years at the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. The last eight of those years he served as Chief Engineer. He retired in 2006, but he stills finds plenty to do in his spare time, including a volunteer opportunity that allows him to continue to use some of his engineering skills.

Each year in the spring, Walters spends a week in rural Haiti as a volunteer for the Haiti Christian Development Project (HCDP).

The Haiti Christian Development Project is a non-profit organization founded in 1990 that seeks to develop the physical well-being of Haitians through self-sustaining projects as it teaches and mentors Christian principles. The project bolsters spiritual strength by reducing physical burdens. The organization and its volunteers work alongside local Haitians to provide agricultural training, to teach literacy skills and basic life skills and to provide preventative health care training. The group also helps with development of pure drinking water and provides medical, dental and vision care.

Arkansas Highways editor David Nilles sat down with Walters to learn more about his work in Haiti.

NILLES: You went to Haiti in the spring of this year?

WALTERS: Yes, I went down in early March with a group of about 31 people from Arkansas. The trips are usually planned to coincide with spring break for college students that are going with us. We had students from Harding University and UAMS that went with us this last time to help carry out our work there. The Haiti Christian Development Project has been active down there for 22 years. It's a medical mission where we take doctors, dentists, nurses and optometrists and provide help for the people there. We have also been helping them with some construction the last two years. A typical stay is for one week.

NILLES: How long have you been volunteering with this group?

WALTERS: I've been doing it for seven years and this was my seventh trip down there. I go to church with the gentleman that developed this program, cardiologist Dr. David Smith. He had been talking to me about possibly going down. I told him that I didn't think that I could while I was working at the AHTD but I would be interested when I retired. Since retirement, I've made the trip every year.

NILLES: Where in Haiti does this work take place?

WALTERS: The group usually goes to the town of Gonaïves, a town in northern Haiti with a population of about 300,000 people. We fly into Port-au-Prince. Then a bus and SUVs are rented to travel the 75 miles out to Gonaïves. Most of our work is done in Gonaïves and that is also where we stay. But the medical teams go to communities outside of that area as well.

NILLES: How does the organization determine where volunteers' work will be done?

WALTERS: In Gonaives, the operation is coordinated by the Poteau Church, a local Church of Christ congregation. The organization has a headquarters down there that is run by Director Geston Pacius. Their leaders are very active in the communities in the area. Members of the church go out and preach in different areas so they see where the needs are when they travel. That gives us an idea where our service is needed the most.

NILLES: What type of work have you done on your visits to Haiti?

WALTERS: The first four years I went, I worked with the optometrist in fitting eye glasses. The local people would be seen by the eye doctors and then I would get the lenses and the frames and put the glasses together. The last three years, I've been more involved in the construction of some permanent buildings or what they call "earth bag" houses. These houses are built to withstand earthquake tremors. I've been helping them lay out some of those and helped them get construction started. We build the foundations and get the houses' walls up about four feet high, and then they have local teams that have been trained to finish the walls and get the roof on.

NILLES: Do the local people rely on the medical services offered when your group goes down?

WALTERS: Yes, for many of the people coming to the clinics, it may be the only medical care that they receive in a year's time. Most of them can't afford doctor visits unless it is an emergency of some kind. In a week's time, we saw around 1,600 people on our last trip, all there to see the doctors, dentists and vision teams.

NILLES: What does a typical day's schedule include?

WALTERS: The medical clinics are open all day until around 5:00 in the afternoon. The headquarters has a farm where they teach farming techniques to the people, things like raising animals and growing crops. After a day's work, we go out there for dinner. The ladies from the Poteau Church cook dinner for everyone. By the time we get through with our meal, it's around 7:00, at which time we go back to the hotel and have a group devotional. And before you know it, it's time to go to bed. The farm where we eat provides meals to 400 children. For many, it is the most nourishing meal they will receive that day.

NILLES: You mentioned that the group has recently been doing some construction work down there. Have you been able to

utilize some of your engineering experience from the AHTD in that area?

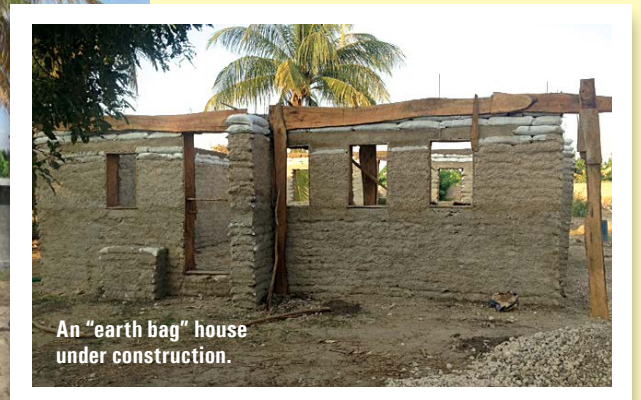
WALTERS: Yes, it takes a little bit of engineering knowledge to get those buildings up. There is work to be done in planning the layout for each one. These buildings are what they call "earth bag" buildings. First we level the area for a foundation. Then we dig footings and fill those with gravel. Then we begin stacking these earth bags filled with dirt that are used as walls. The bags are pinned together with rebar (reinforcing steel). We build to about four feet high. Then the local crews come in and finish the walls and put the roof on. A plaster is used to cover the earth bags once the building is up. The flooring is initially just earth. They usually will come in later and put in a concrete floor. There is no electricity or running water in the houses but the temperature inside is about 15 degrees cooler than outdoors. Out in these remote areas electricity is not available. Even in the cities, the electricity may go off at 10 o'clock at night. Then it comes back on in the morning. Many of the major places in town have generators that come on at night to provide electricity.

In locations where we have built several houses in the same area, we have been able to come in and have a well drilled so that they can have a source of water in the immediate area without having to walk too far. You should have seen the faces on the women when water first began coming out of the faucets where they do their cooking. We are even beginning to teach the people about drip irrigation.

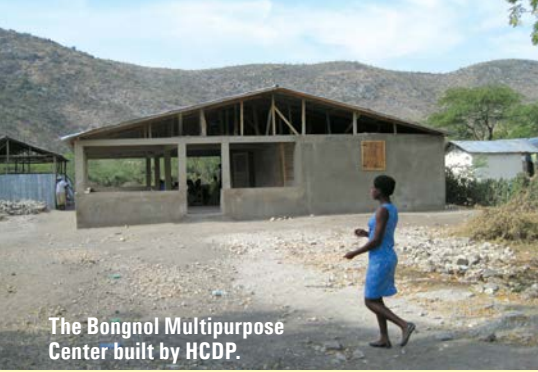
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Members of the Gonaives community work with HCDP to construct permanent buildings.



An "earth bag" house under construction.



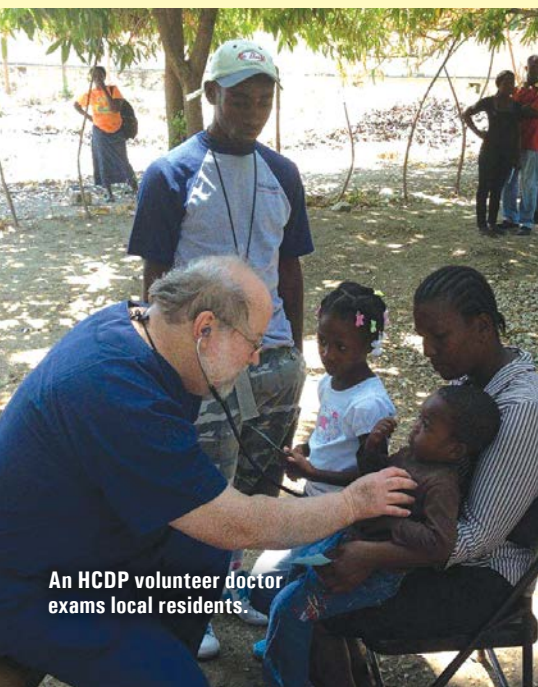
The Bongnoi Multipurpose Center built by HCDP.



Bob Walters pictured with other volunteers of the Haiti Christian Development Project.



The Moringa Tree Nursery



An HCDP volunteer doctor exams local residents.

NILLES: How many buildings has your group completed?

WALTERS: Initially, we finished the first three houses. There are now seven or eight more in the area. Last year we began work on a larger building, a multipurpose building. They now use it as the school and as a church. There are also three buildings underway that will be used as dormitories. When finished, they will be able to house 70 to 100 people. They will be used for preacher training seminars and that type activity.

NILLES: Your group had an opportunity to work on a tree nursery as well?

WALTERS: Yes, a nursery that is badly needed. Deforestation is evident everywhere in Haiti. When Haiti won its independence from France in the early 1800s, in order for Haiti to be recognized as an independent state, and to allow Haiti to trade, France demanded a payment to repay for its lost property. Haiti's trees were felled and exported to France as part of that payment. As a result, erosion of the barren land is a serious problem in the country. Now there is a reforestation effort underway and our teams have built a nursery area where we are caring for 70 to 80 moringa trees.*

*(*Experts believe the long-term solution to malnutrition is the use of foods rich in the essential nutrients often lacking in people's diets. Modern scientific research is proving that Moringa leaves are one of the richest sources of such nutrients. Even small amounts of the leaves could protect thousands of people from suffering and death.)*

NILLES: Who handles expenses when the organization sends groups down to Haiti?

WALTERS: Each volunteer is responsible for raising his or her own funds for the trip. The doctors and dentists take medical supplies with them when we head down. In addition, many supplies are donated or are bought at reduced rates. Once our week is up, what supplies we don't use we leave with the hospital down there for them to use. Or, it can be stored down there for the next year's trip. As for construction materials for the houses, the bags are shipped down from Arkansas. The rest of the materials are obtained down there.

NILLES: What is the highway system like in Haiti?

WALTERS: The 75-mile trip from Port-au-Prince to Gonaives used to take about five hours, if that is any indication. It was a rough road. It has since been paved and is now only about a two hour drive. They are making progress on their system of roads, but they are nothing compared to what we are used to here.

NILLES: How would you describe the quality of life in Haiti as compared to how we live in the United States?

WALTERS: What we think of as "poor" in this country would pass as middle class or better down there. The country is very, very poor. The people live a very simple lifestyle that is different than the one we live. The kids are all around and they are just as happy as they can be. They have schools that they are in and they just love to play. It's just amazing. It's a lot slower way of life, but they are making it.

NILLES: How did you find the local food to be in Haiti, much different than in the U.S.?

WALTERS: A typical meal may feature chicken, rice or goat. And it's good. The one thing we had to be aware of was the water. It is not purified like it is here. If you eat anything that is washed in water, like a salad, you are very apt to get sick because your system is not accustomed to it. But the rest of the food is just fine.

NILLES: What is the weather like in Haiti in the spring?

WALTERS: The high temperatures will be in the mid 70s or 80s. There always seems to be a breeze blowing. In the seven years I've been there, it has only rained once.

NILLES: Is this work rewarding for those who get involved?

WALTERS: It's a good experience to go down there, to meet the people and work with them. Some of them we remember from previous trips. Everyone there is very appreciative. They are happy people and it is good to be able to help them thrive and make a difference in their lives. ■

100 YEARS | SERVING ARKANSAS

SINCE 1913



ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION



CELEBRATING A

CENTURY *of the*

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION

BY DANNY STRAESSLE

{ **MORE THAN JUST HIGHWAYS**
(1963 – 1988) }

April 2013 marked the 100th anniversary of the Arkansas State Highway Commission. In this issue of *Arkansas Highways* we continue with part three of a four-part series on the history of the Commission – its struggles and its triumphs – as we look back over the last century of road building in Arkansas.

Fifty years after the Highway Commission was established, Arkansas was a leader among other Departments of Transportation in the nation when it came to rolling out its road program. Funding remained key, but nothing ever drove progress quite like a stabilized Commission finally did.

Mack-Blackwell was here to stay. And it was working. While Arkansas would be the first state in the Union to complete its original Interstate program, the Commission was all too aware of older state highways that needed attention as well as the number of roads without any pavement on them at all.

It was a time to look forward without forgetting where we had been. Road maintenance primarily focused on wear and tear issues, but now age was becoming a factor. Economic development was seen as the future lifeblood of the economy in Arkansas. Over the next 25 years, the Commission would seek new and creative ways to keep the vascular system of roadways in healthy shape.

(continued on page 16)



REVENUE DISTRIBUTION

The legislative session of 1965 was among the most eventful for the Highway Department since the 1951 legislation that produced the Mack-Blackwell Amendment. Act 23 of 1965 authorized and empowered the Highway Commission to issue State Highway Construction Bonds not to exceed \$150 million to finance construction and reconstruction projects. The Act, however, was subject to a vote of the people and it failed at the polls.

A special legislative session was called a short time later to address other highway funding proposals. Act 39 established the Arkansas Highway Revenue Distribution Law, which determined the way road-user revenues would be distributed. This Act set-up the 70/15/15 distribution formula still in use today whereby the Highway Department receives 70 percent of revenue, 15 percent is distributed to counties and 15 percent is distributed to cities.

By 1966, the Department moved into a new Central Office Headquarters Complex located on a 36-acre tract in southwest Little Rock at the corner of Interstate 30 and Mabelvale Pike. The construction contract for the new complex was awarded on December 16, 1964 to Bush Construction Company of Hot Springs. A new administration building soared 10 stories above the campus providing 110,000 square feet of floor space, including a cafeteria for employees.

BY 1966, A NEW AHTD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING SOARED 10 STORIES ABOVE A 36-ACRE CAMPUS IN LITTLE ROCK. THE NEW SPACE PROVIDED 110,000 SQUARE FEET OF FLOOR SPACE, INCLUDING A CAFETERIA FOR EMPLOYEES.

The previous headquarters building on the State Capitol Mall had been transferred to the Department of Education by the legislature in 1963. All of the Highway Department's central operations, except the Central Shops (Jacksonville) and the Sign Shop (North Little Rock) were located at the new complex.

Act 121 of 1967 established a 30-member Arkansas Constitution Revision Study Commission to consider replacing the state's 1874 Constitution. On January 3, 1968, the Study Commission recommended the legislature refer the question of a Constitutional Convention to the people of Arkansas. In November 1968, the people voted in favor of conducting a Constitutional Convention that called for 100 delegates to be elected from the same districts as members of the House of Representatives.

Throughout the next year, delegates proposed, added, deleted and altered provisions for the new Constitution. In its final form, presented to the people for a vote in November 1970, the essence of the Mack-Blackwell Amendment remained unchanged.

The proposed Constitution was defeated, leaving the 1874 document intact. But the fact that delegates saw fit to leave the Mack-Blackwell Amendment virtually unaltered in the proposed document, reinforced the premise that Amendment 42 was accomplishing what it set out to do.

As the 1970s began, the Interstate program was progressing nationwide, giving drivers their greatest mobility in years.

Much of the original Interstate System in Arkansas was nearing completion and in March 1970, the Commission requested the Federal Highway Administration make an addition to the system by including a 7.4-mile east-west freeway in Little Rock.

The FHWA denied the request, stating that no additional mileage was available for the Interstate System at the time, but agreed to reconsider the request when more mileage became available. Later that year in November, the freeway became a part of the Interstate System and was designated Interstate 630. Congressman Wilbur D. Mills was instrumental in getting the mileage added and in early 1971, the City of Little Rock named the highway in his honor.

1973 WAS A BUSY YEAR

Act 9 of 1973 enabled county judges and legislators from each of the State's 75 counties to designate up to 12 miles of county roads that would be added to the State Highway System. Some 875 miles were added, 550 of which were unpaved.

Also in 1973, the Division of State Aid Road Construction came into being. Act 445 created this division within the State Highway Department to administer State Aid and Federal Aid Secondary Funds. The motor fuels tax was raised one-cent per gallon to help fund this program. The revenue generated by the one-cent increase was credited to the State Aid Road Fund, up to a maximum of \$9 million annually. This cap was raised to \$13 million in 1985 and eliminated in 2003.

A State Aid Road System of 5,000 miles was established under this Act to include county roads from all 75 counties. The mileage was to be allocated among the counties according to a formula based on area and rural population. The system was to be expanded periodically in 1,000-mile increments up to a maximum of 10,000 miles.

A State Aid Engineer was responsible for overseeing the activities of the State Aid Division. This is one of only three employees (the Director of Highways and the Chief of the Highway Police being the other two) who are selected by and work at the pleasure of the Highway Commission.

Before 1973 was completed, two major events occurred regarding bridges in Arkansas. The I-40 Mississippi River Bridge at Memphis opened to traffic, fully completing Arkansas' portion of Interstate 40. Also, the toll was dropped from the U.S. Highway 49 Bridge at Helena, making Arkansas' highway system completely toll-free.

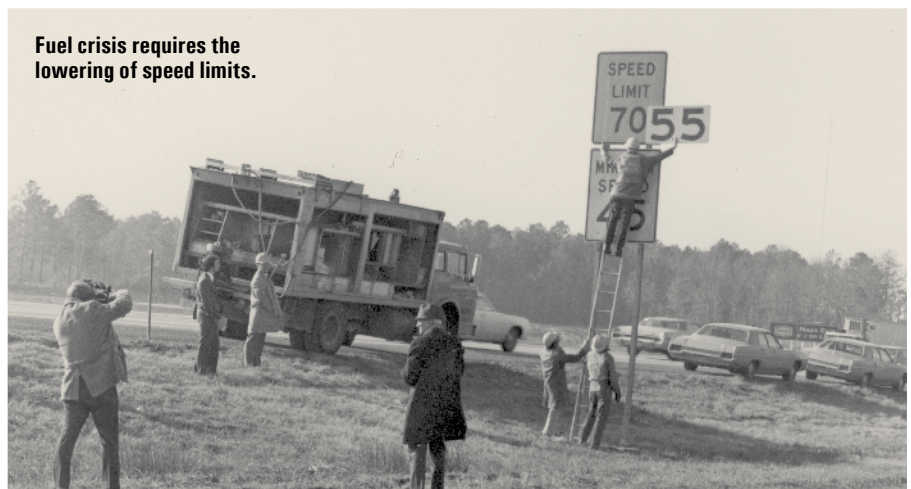
In 1975, a lawsuit was filed stating that there was not a Commissioner from Congressional District No. 2, but that there were two Commissioners from two other districts. The issue centered on the section of Amendment 42 that stated the five members of the Highway Commission must be appointed from the state at-large, but that "no two Commissioners shall be appointed from any single Congressional District."

There were six Congressional Districts in 1952 when the Amendment was ratified. Since 1962, however, the State has only had four Congressional Districts. The five Commissioners in office in 1975 when the lawsuit was filed represented five of the Congressional Districts as they existed in 1952 when the Amendment was written.

Attorney General Jim Guy Tucker ruled on the lawsuit stating, "It is my opinion that the appointments of the five current members of the Arkansas Highway Commission have been made in accordance with the Constitution." In 1979, the legislature passed

(continued on page 18)

The energy crisis was being strongly felt by late 1973. In January 1974, the maximum speed limit on the nation's highways was lowered from 75 m.p.h. to 55 m.p.h. in an effort to conserve fuel. Shown below, a speed limit sign at I-30 and 65th Street in Little Rock is changed to reflect the new lower limit.



Lawrence Blackwell burns paid-off revenue bonds.



DID you Know?

On April 1, 1972 Arkansas became only the eighth state in the nation to be free of any highway bond debt. The last of the 1941 Highway Refunding Bonds were paid off in March, and for the first time in almost 50 years, the State had no outstanding debt from highway construction or maintenance. An official "bond burning" was held in January 1975 when the last of these bonds were returned to the State from out-of-state financial institutions. Shown above, Lawrence Blackwell holds aloft burning revenue bonds.

Act 932 clarifying the Mack-Blackwell Amendment by stating that appointments to the Commission should represent each of the Congressional Districts as they existed in 1979 with one appointee from the state at-large.

The Highway Department took on new responsibilities in February of 1977. Act 192 renamed the Department the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD), giving it the authority and the duty to coordinate planning for all modes of transportation. This law brought about an entire new realm of planning activities for the Department including:

- **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION** – AHTD was to administer Federal and State funds for planning, implementing, improving, and operating public transportation programs in Arkansas.
- **RAIL** – The Department was authorized to plan, coordinate and administer a State Rail Plan to ensure the preservation of local rail services. Under Act 153 of the First Extraordinary Session of 1989, the AHTD became responsible for all matters pertaining to the regulation and operation of all railroads in the State.

- **AIR AND WATER** – State and local airport commissions and the Arkansas Waterways Commission were directed to inform and work with the Arkansas Highway Commission regarding planned improvements to best achieve a comprehensive growth plan for the State.

The addition of these new responsibilities made the name change necessary and appropriate. The Department now dealt with more than just highways.

After Governor Pryor's attempt to hold a Constitutional Convention in 1975 failed, he had the question placed on the ballot in the 1976 general election and the measure passed. In 1979, a Constitutional Convention was convened to create a new State constitution. The Mack-Blackwell Amendment was a major topic of discussion, and once again, the 100 delegates elected to the convention chose not to alter it.

The proposed constitution, with the Mack-Blackwell Amendment intact, was presented to the people in 1980. For the third time, the measure was defeated. Regardless of the vote, the 1970s ended the same way the 1960s had — with the Mack-Blackwell Amendment being judged to be fair and effective and worthy of remaining a part of a proposed State constitution.



THE BIG 80s

As the 1980s rolled around, traffic volumes — especially those of heavy trucks — were becoming a problem. Even though Arkansas was the first state in the nation to finish its original allotment of Interstate System mileage, parts of that system were already operating at or near capacity. Expansion and additional lanes were becoming essential needs.

Another drawback to finishing the Interstates so early was that parts of the system were beginning to show their age. The highways had been designed for a 20-year life expectancy, and most of the system would reach that point during the 1980s. The Federal government had done a good job of supplying funds for the construction of the system, but monies for needed reconstruction were harder to come by and maintenance was totally the State's responsibility.

State revenues were down because of inflation and the energy crisis and now Federal funds were being reduced. During 1980, President Jimmy Carter and Congress cut Federal-aid highway funding to Arkansas by about \$40 million in an attempt to balance the Federal budget.

As if the Department didn't have enough challenges, the summer of 1980 went into the record books as one of the hottest summers of all time. During July alone, high temperatures reached 100 degrees or more on 22 days. Only once was a high temperature recorded below 90 degrees. Heat-related highway damage was over \$12 million. In all, nearly 350 concrete pavement blowups and more than 860 miles of asphalt pavement with severe bleeding problems kept maintenance crews busy.

To make matters even worse, the Department learned in August the Federal Highway Administration had denied a request for \$11.7 million in emergency funds to repair the heat-related damage. The condition of the State's highways and what it cost to maintain them remained a hot topic into the 1981 legislative session, during which the trucking industry proposed legislation to raise the legal maximum vehicle weight from 73,280 pounds to 80,000 pounds on Arkansas' highways.

The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1974 had given states the option of increasing their legal maximum weight allowed on

the Interstate System to 80,000 pounds. Since that time, 44 states had executed that option. Six states, including Arkansas, had retained the existing 73,280-pound limit. The trucking industry had started its efforts to raise the limits in Arkansas back in 1977. They found little support among the members of the general assembly that year, but in 1979 they mounted a stronger effort. By 1981, Governor Frank White was convinced that the limit should be raised for the economic well-being of the State.

Although the effort mounted by Governor White stalled in a committee known as the Truck Weight Study Commission, in late 1982 Congress finally passed a new Federal Aid Highway Bill to take effect in early 1983. This legislation would bring more Federal dollars to Arkansas, but the Act also required states to allow 80,000-pound truck loads.

The 1983 legislative session began just as expected. Act 7 of 1983 raised the maximum legal weight allowed on Arkansas' highways to 80,000 pounds. The debate on how to pay for the inevitable extra damage on the roadways immediately followed.

(continued on page 20)

Rail Transportation



Air and Water Transportation



Senate Bill 220, a so-called weight-distance tax, survived a hard-fought legislative battle and was signed into law by Governor Bill Clinton on March 23, 1983. The weight-distance tax became Act 685 of 1983 and specified that only those trucks registered to carry more than 73,280 pounds would pay additional taxes.

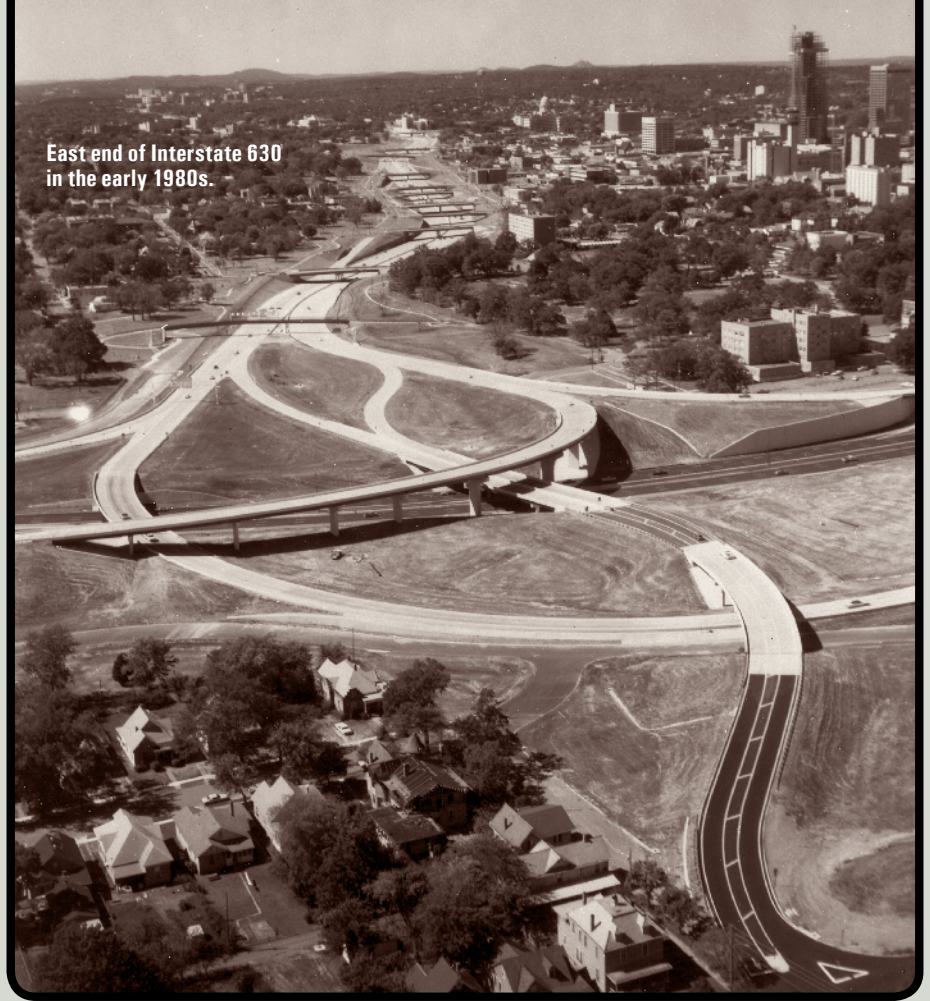
Registration fees were kept at the same levels, so truckers not taking advantage of the higher weight limits would not pay any more than they already were. The heavier trucks had the option of buying a \$175 annual permit or paying a nickel-per-mile trip fee. The law went into effect July 4. It was expected to generate \$21 million annually - \$14 million for AHTD and \$3.5 million each for cities and counties.

In 1984 the Commission was still dealing with the age-old problem of a lack of funds. By the time the 1985 legislative session began, the Commission had prepared the 10-year Rural Highway Construction Program to propose to the general assembly. The program consisted of 4,850 miles of improvements selected from the Department's backlog of priority projects. For the first time in history, the Commission specifically listed which roads would be improved.

The legislators accepted the program as a realistic and necessary approach to the mounting highway problems, and the program became Act 456 of 1985. The Rural Road Program (as it would become known) was to be funded with a four-cent per gallon increase in the gasoline tax and a two-cent per gallon increase in the diesel tax.

Governor Clinton vetoed the bill but its sponsors managed to garner enough support for an override. The measure took effect on April 1, 1985.

As the Department began to close out its first 75 years, technological advances were taking place within. A new Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) system was installed along with an automated plotting system. Together these systems



East end of Interstate 630 in the early 1980s.

produced more efficient engineering drawings and helped designers come up with the most economical designs possible.

The purchase of the Bids Analysis and Management System (BAMS) further aided in the management, analysis, and monitoring of construction project bids. BAMS proved to be very useful in detecting unbalanced bids and contractor collusion.

The 1987 regular session of the general assembly would have been rather uneventful for the Highway Department had it not been for one bill. Act 187 established one-time, early retirement incentives for State employees. As a result of this action, 256 employees retired from the Department. This included Director of Highways and Transportation Henry Gray, Chief Engineer Billy Cooper, and Assistant Director for Administration Gip Robertson.

A massive reorganization took place after the 1987 retirements. Maurice Smith of Birdeye (Cross County) was selected by the Commission in December to be the new

Director of Highways and Transportation. Smith had served as a member of the Highway Commission from 1965 to 1975. He assumed the responsibilities of Director on January 4, 1988, thus becoming only the second person in history to serve as both Commissioner and Director. Orval Faubus was the first.

After three quarters of a century, funding was as much of a problem as it was in the beginning. Although during the last 25 years the Commission made great strides in shrugging off debt and gaining popular support for road improvement programs, the need still outweighed the means. Little did anyone know it would be another quarter century before the largest and most successful road funding program in Arkansas would become a reality. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: The next issue of Arkansas Highways Magazine will continue to look at the history of the Commission and the Department as we celebrate 100 years.

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSIONS

1963 – 1988

TWENTY-SIXTH COMMISSION (1963 AND 1964)

John E. Crain¹ Wilson Chairman
 Wayne Hampton Stuttgart Vice Chair/Chair
 William J. Denton² Denwood Commissioner/Vice Chair
 Armil Taylor Clarksville Commissioner
 Truman Baker Searcy Commissioner
 John W. Harsh Magnolia Commissioner
 C.L. Denton, Jr.³ Tyronza Commissioner

1. Died March 5, 1963 before term expired.
 2. Appointed March 12, 1963 to fill the unexpired term of John E. Crain.
 W.J. Denton died March 22, 1964.
 3. Selected by Highway Commission to fill the unexpired term of W.J. Denton under Minute Order 64-140.

TWENTY-SEVENTH COMMISSION (1965 AND 1966)

Wayne Hampton Stuttgart Chairman
 Armil Taylor Clarksville Vice Chairman
 Truman Baker Searcy Commissioner
 John W. Harsh Magnolia Commissioner
 Maurice Smith Birdeye Commissioner

TWENTY-EIGHTH COMMISSION (1967 AND 1968)

Armil Taylor Clarksville Chairman
 Truman Baker Searcy Vice Chairman
 John W. Harsh Magnolia Commissioner
 Maurice Smith Birdeye Commissioner
 Lawrence Blackwell Pine Bluff Commissioner

TWENTY-NINTH COMMISSION (1969 AND 1970)

Truman Baker Searcy Chairman
 John W. Harsh Magnolia Vice Chairman
 Maurice Smith Birdeye Commissioner
 Lawrence Blackwell Pine Bluff Commissioner
 J.C. Patterson Lavaca Commissioner

THIRTIETH COMMISSION (1971 AND 1972)

John W. Harsh Magnolia Chairman
 Maurice Smith Birdeye Vice Chairman
 Lawrence Blackwell Pine Bluff Commissioner
 J.C. Patterson Lavaca Commissioner
 George Kell Newport Commissioner

THIRTY-FIRST COMMISSION (1973 AND 1974)

Maurice Smith Birdeye Chairman
 Lawrence Blackwell Pine Bluff Vice Chairman
 J.C. Patterson Lavaca Commissioner
 George Kell Newport Commissioner
 James Branyan Camden Commissioner

THIRTY-SECOND COMMISSION (1975 AND 1976)

Lawrence Blackwell Pine Bluff Chairman
 J.C. Patterson Lavaca Vice Chairman
 George Kell Newport Commissioner
 James Branyan Camden Commissioner

THIRTY-THIRD COMMISSION (1977 AND 1978)

J.C. Patterson⁴ Lavaca Chairman
 George Kell⁵ Newport Vice Chair/Chair
 Ross Pendergraft⁶ Fort Smith Commissioner
 James Branyan Camden Commissioner
 David Solomon Helena Commissioner
 Patsy Thomasson Rison Commissioner

4. Resigned September 11, 1978 for personal reasons.
 Served as Chairman for one meeting.
 5. Elected as Chairman by 4 to 1 vote. No Vice Chairman was elected.
 6. Appointed to fill the unexpired term of J.C. Patterson.

THIRTY-FOURTH COMMISSION (1979 AND 1980)

George Kell Newport Chairman
 James Branyan Camden Vice Chairman
 David Solomon Helena Commissioner
 Patsy Thomasson Rison Commissioner
 Festus H. Martin, Jr. Fayetteville Commissioner

THIRTY-FIFTH COMMISSION (1981 AND 1982)

James Branyan Camden Chairman
 David Solomon Helena Vice Chairman
 Patsy Thomasson Rison Commissioner
 Festus Martin, Jr. Fayetteville Commissioner
 Raymond Pritchett Maumelle Commissioner

THIRTY-SIXTH COMMISSION (1983 AND 1984)

David Solomon Helena Chairman
 Patsy Thomasson Rison Vice Chairman
 Festus Martin, Jr.⁷ Fayetteville Commissioner
 Bobby Hopper⁸ Springdale Commissioner
 Raymond Pritchett Maumelle Commissioner
 Ron Harrod Prescott Commissioner

7. Resigned January 15, 1983 for business reasons.
 8. Appointed January 24, 1983 to fill the unexpired term of F.H. Martin, Jr.

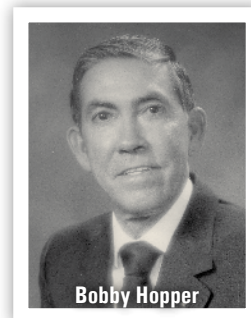
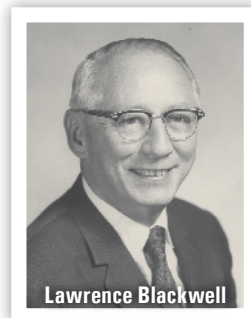
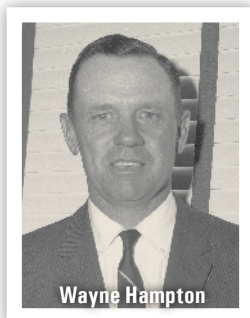
THIRTY-SEVENTH COMMISSION (1985 AND 1986)

Patsy Thomasson Rison Chairman
 Bobby Hopper Springdale Vice Chairman
 Raymond Pritchett Maumelle Commissioner
 Ron Harrod Prescott Commissioner
 Dalton Farmer Jonesboro Commissioner

THIRTY-EIGHTH COMMISSION (1987 AND 1988)

Bobby Hopper Springdale Chairman
 Raymond Pritchett Maumelle Vice Chairman
 Ron Harrod Prescott Commissioner
 Dalton Farmer⁹ Jonesboro Commissioner
 Rodney E. Slater¹⁰ Jonesboro Commissioner
 L.W. "Bill" Clark Hot Springs Commissioner

9. Resigned March 18, 1987 for business reasons.
 10. Appointed March 25, 1987 to fill the unexpired term of Dalton Farmer.



Sharae Wilson
Telecommunications Operator

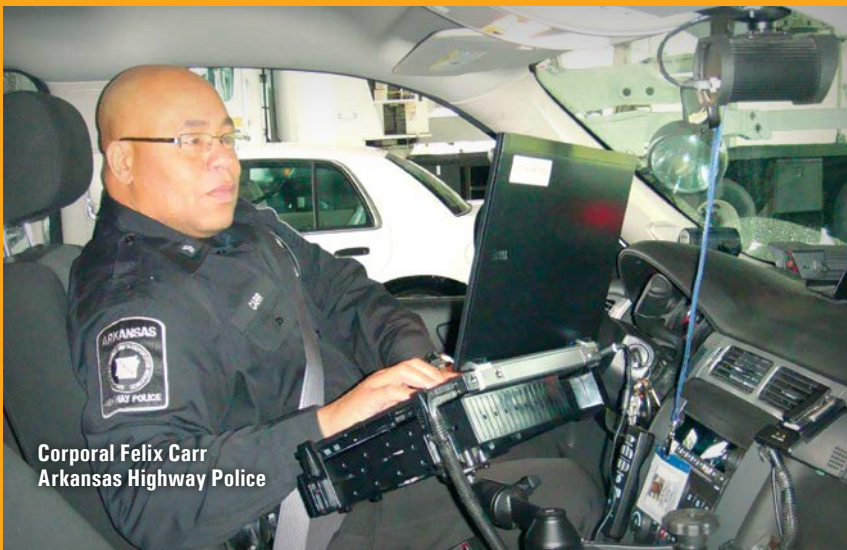


ON THE JOB

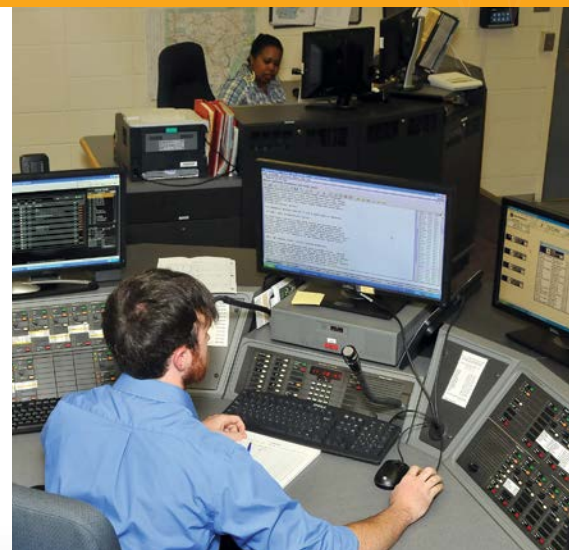
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RADIO DISPATCH

BY DAVID NILLES

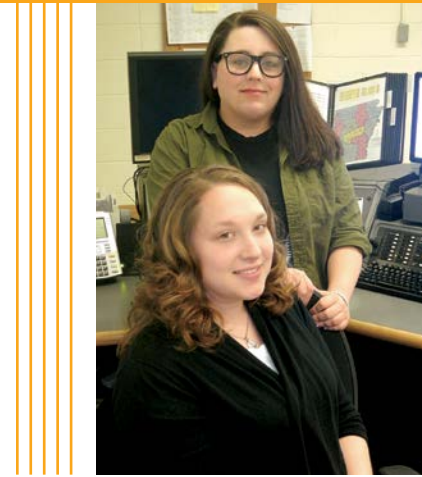


Corporal Felix Carr
Arkansas Highway Police





(Left) Maintenance crews rely on radio dispatch, especially during winter weather. (Right) Radio Dispatch Night Crew: Amy Priddy (standing) and Tamie Albert (seated).



Monica Saffle
Telecommunications
Supervisor II

COORDINATING OUR PERSONNEL OUT ON THE HIGHWAYS

They are rarely seen, but they are in contact with our Arkansas Highway Police, our AHTD crews and our District Headquarters on a daily basis. Not just during the day, but through the nighttime hours as well. They fulfill their job responsibilities 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.

They are the 13 men and women who work in the Communications Section of the Department's Maintenance Division. Their office is the "Radio Room," located behind a secured door in the basement of the Central Office in Little Rock. A majority of staffers don't know they are there or what they do. If you think of a 911 operator or a police department dispatch operator, you will have an idea of what their role is at the Department.

I spent time inside the radio room recently to learn more about what goes on. In eleven years at the AHTD, it was my first time to pass through the secured door where these employees do their job.

"We work in a controlled access area because of the sensitive information we work with every day," says Monica Saffle, Telecommunications Supervisor II. That information comes from the Arkansas Crime Information Center.

WORKING WITH HIGHWAY POLICE

The majority of the time, the AHTD radio operators are maintaining two-way communication with members of the Arkansas Highway Police who are on patrol across the State's highways. When Highway Police officers begin a routine traffic stop, they relay their location and provide license plate information to the radio room operators. That's when the Telecommunications Operators back at the AHTD swing into gear. They radio information back to the officer that will be helpful in assessing the situation. That information includes license plate status, identification information on the driver, background information and a check for warrants. Equipped with that information, the police officer can proceed in the proper manner. In a situation where the driver has to be arrested, the operators also radio Highway Police as to what jail that person should be taken to. If a vehicle has to be towed after the traffic stop, operators also log information on where the vehicle will be stored. It's all a part of providing the

Highway Police the information they need to perform their jobs in the most effective way possible.

"Our operators play a vital role in the Department's public safety operations," said Arkansas Highway Police Chief Ron Burks. "At times, they are the first person someone speaks with when they are in their greatest of need and distress. No matter how bad the situation, our operators remain calm and maintain their wits to ensure the appropriate emergency services are rendered. They are often times a long distance lifeline to both the public and police officers, and the assistance they provide is crucial."

Our Highway Police are just one of the groups the Communications team works with. Radio room operators also coordinate activities with AHTD maintenance crews that are out working on the highways each day.

"We stay in touch with our crews and help them with information such as which roads may need closing due to weather or where road repair may be needed," states Saffle.

(continued on page 24)

“We make sure AHTD crews are informed of where they are needed the most. For example if we need to send a crew out to clean up after an accident we direct them there. In icy weather, we spend our time directing crews to where our spreaders and plows are needed the most. We also stay in touch with crews about potential flooded areas. Probably our busiest times of year are when it snows or we have flooding on the highways,” Saffle adds.

Getting equipment and personnel where they are needed as quickly as possible is the top priority of the radio room team.

“When our maintenance crews are working in inclement weather, the radio dispatchers are quick to help,” says Pam Bruce, District Four Receptionist.

“They are right on top of getting information to our crews. They deserve a pat on the back.”

TWO WAY COMMUNICATION

“This radio room is the hub for the flow of information,” Saffle states.

“We have the Highway Police on one side and AHTD crews on the other side and we have to make sure everyone knows what the other is doing.”

The job also requires operators to stay in touch with agencies outside of the Department such as local police departments, fire departments, sheriff’s offices and Arkansas State Police depending on the situation. For hazardous waste spills, operators communicate with the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality and the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management.

Handling traffic after an incident on the roadways also comes into play. Traffic accidents or road construction may require rerouting of traffic onto detours. It’s the job of the operators to contact local agencies along the detour route and advise them in advance that heavy traffic will be coming through their local area.

Each radio operator is assigned a particular geographic area. There are five Arkansas Highway Police Districts and ten AHTD Districts.

In addition to staying in constant communication with officers and road crews, the operators must keep a log of each call that comes in.

“Operator must write down each call that comes through so that we can log it into our computers,” Saffle states.

“We key it into our system and it becomes our official record of the incident whether it is an arrest, a road closure or anything else. There are times when that information is needed and we can refer to the log to retrieve that information.”

All communication by the operators is also recorded each day for possible future reference.

In addition to providing information to emergency personnel and road crews, there are times when radio operators must get in touch with AHTD engineers in various Department divisions.

“We may have an accident that causes road damage or a bridge might be struck by a vehicle and we need staff engineers to arrive on location as soon as possible to assess the damage. It may be during the day or it could be the middle of the night, you never know. We have a night emergency contact list we use when needed.”

ADDITIONAL DUTIES

The dispatch personnel have other responsibilities that go beyond operating the communication equipment.

“We provide a list of road closures on our Highway Department website and provide weather-related road condition information for callers,” says Saffle. “In addition to our website, we send that information out on Twitter and through email.”

Weather-related road conditions are pre-recorded by the crew and aired on the weather hotline for motorists who call seeking information. It is updated every two hours.

OUR JOB IS
TO MAKE SURE
OUR OFFICERS
GO HOME IN
ONE PIECE.

— Tamie Albert



Chris Lusk
Telecommunications Operator

Commonly Heard in the Radio Room:

- 10-4 = Message Understood
- 10-5 = Relay Message
- 10-6 = This Unit Busy
- 10-7 = Out of Service
- 10-8 = In Service
- 10-9 = Repeat Your Message
- 10-14 = Escort or Convoy
- 10-15 = Prisoner in Custody
- 10-19 = Proceed to ...
- 10-20 = What is your location?
- 10-28 = Vehicle Registration
- 10-38 = Suspicious Vehicle/Person



Kamara Durham
Telecommunications Operator

“Because we are literally here at all hours every day, we are also in charge of all of the fire alarms in Central Office, the Highway Police Office, Planning & Research and in the Materials Division. And we answer all calls from the general public after the Central Office closes for the night.”

Another area of responsibility has to do with the Department’s effort to keep our highways clean of litter.

“We keep records on all Litter Hotline calls that come in from motorists across the State so that our Highway Police and Arkansas State Police can determine when it is time to send warning letters to violators.”

“In the future we will have video monitors in our radio room so we can monitor traffic flow on major highways. We will eventually begin coordinating some of our electronic message boards motorists see along the side of the highways as well.”

PREPARING FOR THE JOB

Becoming a radio operator requires months of training. Saffle showed this reporter a training manual about four inches thick.

“Most of the operators the Department hires have dispatch experience coming in,” Saffle states. She has been with the Department for eight years but has 18 years dispatching experience, coming to the AHTD from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

“There is a six-week training period before operators take over the radio controls. I tell them it takes about a year to really get comfortable in the job.”

Being hired as an operator requires a background check, a police check and fingerprinting. Each operator must also be certified by the Arkansas Crime Information Center every two years.

Once trained and on the job, each operator must work 12-hour shifts.

“We have three operators on the radios at all times,” Saffle adds. “We have two day shift crews and two night shift crews. Our day shift is a bit busier than night shift due to the fact that there are more motorists on the highways during the day.”

Because the office works 24-hours-a-day, operators work three 12-hour days and then put in a 4-hour day to bring their total number of hours a week to 40. Each staff person gets every other weekend off.

In addition to Saffle, members of the Communications Section include day shift operators Della Baker, Michael Baxter, Kamara Durham, Tara Holloman, Chris Lusk and Sharae Wilson. Night shift operators are Tamie Albert, Brandi Freeman, Sherry McKinney, Amy Priddy and Joel Ruff.

Each member is a part of a team with the huge responsibility of making sure our Highway Police and maintenance crews have the information they need to carry out their jobs in a timely and efficient manner while they are out on the highways. ■



COPS ON BULLS: RIDING FOR A GOOD CAUSE

BY DAVID NILLES

COPS ON BULLS... JUST THE NAME OF THE EVENT SOUNDS DANGEROUS AND A BIT NERVE-RACKING.

How many people do you know that would volunteer to ride a bull, especially one that is bucking as hard as it can to throw you onto the hard ground? Then you have to get out of its way pretty fast or risk getting trampled. The average weight of a rodeo bull is 2,000 pounds. Chances are slim I would want to fly out of the chute on the back of an angry one.

But that's exactly what a number of our brave men and women in the Arkansas Highway Police did on May 4th for the 2nd Annual Cops on Bulls fundraiser. It was to raise money for a good cause. In addition to the Highway Police, members of the Faulkner County Sheriff's Office, Maumelle Police Department and Saline County Sheriff's Office also volunteered to take a turn on a bull.

As I pulled into the Saline County Fairgrounds on a slightly cold day weather-wise, my first impression was that this was a pretty big deal. Cars and horse trailers were parked all around. For in addition to the bull riding,

the event also featured barrel racing which was open to the general public.

Making my way to the open-air arena, I passed by carnival rides for the kids, a mechanical bull (more my style) and pony rides. Entering the arena, several hundred people were already in the stands as the bull riding got underway.

There were several riders that had obviously done this before. They knew the bulls by name and had equipment bags full of ropes, gloves, boots and spurs.

I stood near the gate where the riders come off the arena floor after their turn riding. It didn't take long to notice a few of them coming back grimacing in pain a little bit. A sore hand here, a banged up knee there.

Building up courage and riding bulls for the Arkansas Highway Police were CPL James Canard, PFC Donald Hilliker, PFC Courtney Kocourek, CPL David Smith, CPL Kreston Taylor, CPL Scotty Todd and PFC Charla Woodruff.

I visited with AHP CPL David Smith right after his ride.

I just **HOLD ON**

and hope I don't
get knocked out!



"Was this your first time to ride a bull?," I asked.

"Yes," Smith replied.

"Did you have a chance to get in some practice?"

"None."

"How did it go?"

"I think I'll stay with policing. I don't think I'm ready for the PBR yet."

The PBR is Professional Bull Riders, Inc. More than 1,200 bull riders from the U.S., Australia, Brazil, Canada, and Mexico hold PBR memberships. They compete in more than 300 bull riding events per year for the public. Many of those events are on national television.

In fact, Justin Koon, a member of the PBR for eight years and a 2012 top finalist, was at the Cops on Bulls event and helped in the chute area.

Next up for the AHP was PFC Cortney Kocourek.

"What runs through your head as you're waiting for that chute to open?," I asked.

"Just hold on and hope I don't get knocked out," Kocourek replied.

This event wasn't just for the guys. PFC Charla Woodruff was there to do her part for the fundraiser by riding a bull. This was her second year to ride.

"I have to beat the boys," she commented.

Without a doubt, everyone that rode a bull was a winner on this day.

Once the bull riding was over, the attention turned to barrel racing and an impressive line of horses and riders ready to test their skills.

Funds raised at the event came from entry fees, the carnival rides, t-shirt and hat sales, food and beverage sales, and corporate sponsors. By the end of a cool, sometimes rainy day, a total of \$9,700 had been raised.

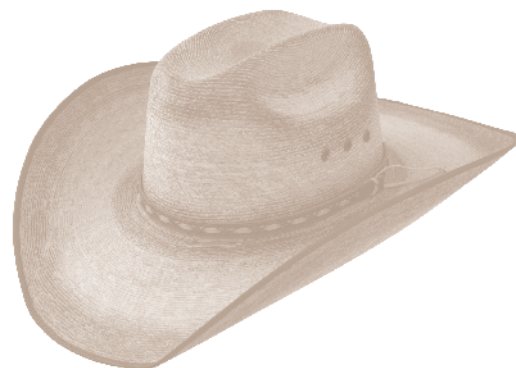
The money raised went to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The mission of the organization is to grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human

experience with hope, strength and joy. Since 1980, they have granted the wishes of 227,006 children between the ages of two-and-a-half and 18.

This year, the Arkansas Highway Police granted the wish of 18-year-old Morgan who is fighting a chronic kidney disease. Morgan thought he was coming to Cops on Bulls to address the crowd. Instead, he was surprised when his wish was granted in front of the audience. His wish was to go to a computer store where he would be able to pick out a computer and all the accessories he needed to go with it. That wish will come true now due to the efforts of those in attendance at the event. Morgan plans to attend Henderson State University and major in video game engineering. Last year, the AHP sent eight-year-old McGuyre Moore of DeQueen to Disney World through the Foundation.

Sponsors for this year's event included ABF, AJ Greenwood, Arkansas Truck Center, Bowdle's Auto Body, Cub Cadet, Eric Moix Construction, Everett Buick GMC, G & H Professional Transportation, GT Transport, Geared Up Equipment & Supply, Greg's Too, Ken's Towing, The Larson Group, Mahindra Tractors, Montana Silversmiths, Phillips Auto Sales and Premium Refreshments.

Cops on Bulls is one of three fundraisers the Arkansas Highway Police hold each year to raise funds for charity groups. The other events are an annual bass tournament held each spring and a golf tournament held each summer. Arkansas Highway Police will be giving the Make-A-Wish Foundation a check for \$10,000 this year as a result of these events. ■



Scenic vistas are abundant along Highway 71 as the trip leads through numerous small mountain towns.

WEEKEND ROAD TRIP:



BY DAVID NILLES

Summer is here and with it, the opportunity to spend time in the great outdoors. Our weekend road trip this issue takes us to northwest Arkansas and the State's only Scenic Loop, the **Boston Mountains Scenic Loop**.

Two very different roads crossing the highest part of the Ozark Mountains combine to make the loop. The journey starts at Alma and travels north up Highway 71 for 42 miles to Fayetteville, forming the eastern part of the loop. The western part of the loop features Interstate 540 as motorists travel 38 miles back southward to Alma. Both roadways are scenic byways and Highway 71 is also designated a part of the Civil War Heritage Trail.

The trip starts at Alma, where travelers leave Interstate 40 and turn north onto Highway 71. The first stop on

the loop is located right in town, **Lake Alma** and the **Lake Alma Trail**. Spend some time fishing, play frisbee golf and have lunch at one of the picnic tables. Then walk the Lake Alma Trail around the lake. The four-mile trail is fairly new having opened in the spring of 2012. It's a pretty good workout and goes through the woods where hikers can enjoy wild flowers, creeks and a waterfall. The entire length of the trail was built by volunteers.

To get to the lake, head east on Collum Lane and then turn left onto N. Mountain Grove Road. The park is on the left side

of the road. The trail begins at the end of the parking lot.

Leaving Alma, Highway 71 follows an old stagecoach route as it winds its way north into the Boston Mountains. Scenic vistas are abundant as the trip leads through numerous small mountain towns.

Seventeen miles up the loop is **Lake Fort Smith State Park**, located on the western side of 1,400-acre Lake Fort Smith. Here you can enjoy outdoor adventures including camping, fishing, kayaking, swimming, mountain biking, hiking and nature study. For backpackers, the park serves as the western terminus of the 165-mile Ozark Highlands National Recreation Trail. Campsites and cabins are available for overnight stays. For those who remember



Lake Alma



Jam, Jelly, and Local Honey at Artist Point



Lake Alma Hiking Trail



the park's original location, Lake Fort Smith State Park was relocated to this scenic site due to the enlarging of Lake Fort Smith and Lake Shepherd Springs into a single reservoir to provide additional water storage for the future needs of the municipal water supply serving Fort Smith. The park opened at this new site in 2008. The park is eight miles north of Mountainburg. Watch for Shepherd Springs Road on the right side of the highway.

Views of the mountains can be seen in every direction as you travel northward from Lake Fort Smith. Farther north of Mountainburg, be sure to stop at **Artist Point** and **Saddle Canyon**. The shop and museum have been welcoming guests for 54 years. Take in the view of the canyon and White Rock Mountain in the distance. Then hike the half-mile trail down to the waterfall and see Native

American petroglyphs on the way.

"It's a half-mile down and ten miles back up," says the staff. In other words, it's steep going.

Inside the store, you'll find a museum of Native American pottery and arrowheads. Check out the wide variety of jams, jellies and honey for sale. There's homemade fudge as well. Depending on the time of year, take a few minutes to watch the hummingbirds at the many feeders near the back windows. Visitors will no doubt meet Corky, a 12-year-old Cockatoo who welcomes everyone who walks in the door.

Be sure to take time to read the historical marker outside the store noting this route as part of the Trail of Sequoyah, the Cherokee Chief who developed the Cherokee alphabet and walked with the Cherokee people on the Trail of Tears.

(continued on page 30)



Corky the Cockatoo

Just up the road south of Winslow, is the **Ozark Folkways**, a non-profit group of artisan guilds. The organization reaches out to the local and regional community as an educational center and leader in the preservation of folk-arts, crafts and music.

Presently the home of several craft guilds, including the Boston Mountain Quilters and the Wool and Wheel Hand spinners, Ozark Folkways seeks high-quality contemporary arts and craft items chosen from the Ozark's region, and offers them to the public for show and sale. Among the items are paintings, jewelry, pottery, baskets and more. All of the items are made in the Ozark region. The non-profit organization also offers classes to the public. A "First Friday Event" is held on the first Friday evening of every month and features live music or a visual arts display. On the night of this visit, a reception for a new exhibition of work by local artists David Holcomb and Erin Chapman was scheduled.

For each item sold, seventy percent of the proceeds go to the artist and thirty percent goes to the Folkways organization. The group is housed in a three-story stone building that was the dream of Clara Muxen. She hoped to teach local people in the area to value their traditional crafts skills and make the most of their talents in what would be called the Craft School of the Ozarks. She was known to even have a hand in the construction of the building.

If it's meal time or any other time, stop in at **Grandma's House Café** in Winslow for some home cooking and the best homemade pie imaginable. A buffet is usually available that includes many different varieties of pies. Look for the restaurant on the right side of the highway not far from the Ozark Folkways building.



The quilt room inside Ozark Folkways Heritage Center.



Pies for every taste at Grandma's House Café.

Continuing northward on this road trip, take a few minutes in West Fork to visit **Riverside Park**. The park is a hidden gem in the middle of town. It sits alongside the White River. Here you'll find a paved walkway where you can stroll by the water. There are plenty of places on the grass lawn for a picnic or to take in the relaxing view. Kayakers find the park to be a good place to put in or take out of the river. If the mood strikes and you feel adventurous, join the local young people who dive off the stone cliffs into the water below! To get to the park, turn onto Highway 170 West and go a few blocks down the hill.

Entering Greenland on the northern most part of the loop, it's hard to miss the next stop, the **Arkansas Air and Military Museums at Drake Field**. Here is Arkansas' first and largest air museum. The museum is home to some of the nation's only surviving varieties of aircraft and some world-famous replicas. Follow the colorful history of aviation in Arkansas through numerous displays of original artifacts and aviation memorabilia! Then see everything from world-famous racing planes of the 1920s and 1930s to an early Lear Jet. The historic aircraft in the Arkansas Air Museum are unusual among museum exhibits, because many

(continued on page 32)

Riverside Park is home to a beautiful swimming hole on the White River.



of them still fly. Other displays range from the golden age of aviation to the jet age, including Vietnam-era Army helicopters and a Navy carrier fighter. Approximately 13 planes are housed in the large, all-wood white hangar. The hangar is a former headquarters for one of the United States' many aviator training posts during World War II and is one of the few remaining 1940s-era aircraft hangars. Not only is the Arkansas Air Museum home to some of the nation's most unique aircraft, it also houses rare engines. From a tiny two cylinder drone to the huge Rockwell H-1 rocket engine, there are power plants on display from almost every age of aviation. It's impossible to miss the museum as it stands right next to Highway 71 at 4290 South School Avenue.

From the air museum our weekend road trip moves west to the other side of the loop. Follow Highway 71 a short distance into Fayetteville

and take Exit 62. Travel out Highway 62 West about eight miles to the next stop, **Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park.**

Recognized nationally as one of America's most intact Civil War battlefields, Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park protects the battle site and interprets the Battle of Prairie Grove, where on December 7, 1862, the Confederate Army of the Trans-Mississippi clashed with the Union Army of the Frontier in a day of fierce fighting resulting in about 2,700 casualties. This marked the last major Civil War engagement in northwest Arkansas. Follow the one-mile Battlefield Trail or travel the park's driving tour. Be sure to tour the historic structures in the Ozark village while you're there. The battlefield is located right on Highway 62 in Prairie Grove.

Upon leaving Prairie Grove, travel eastward back into Fayetteville and head south on Interstate 540. Approximately 20 miles south, exit the Interstate at Highway 74 and travel west to **Devil's Den State Park.**





Devil's Den State Park

The park features 17 cabins, 143 camp sites, a swimming pool, a park café and a park store. Spend time on eight-acre Lake Devil where you can rent canoes and pedal boats or enjoy miles of hiking on trails winding through Devil's Den Park or the surrounding Ozark National Forest. Caves, crevices and bluff overlooks can be explored. Check with park officials to see if Devil's Den Cave and Ice Box Cave are open. They have been closed at times due to protection of the bat population.

Returning to Interstate 540, travelers will experience some significant structures that are literally part of the Interstate. First is the **bridge over Hess Creek** (see photo on back cover). Located approximately three miles south of Highway 74, it is the tallest bridge in Arkansas at 210 feet.

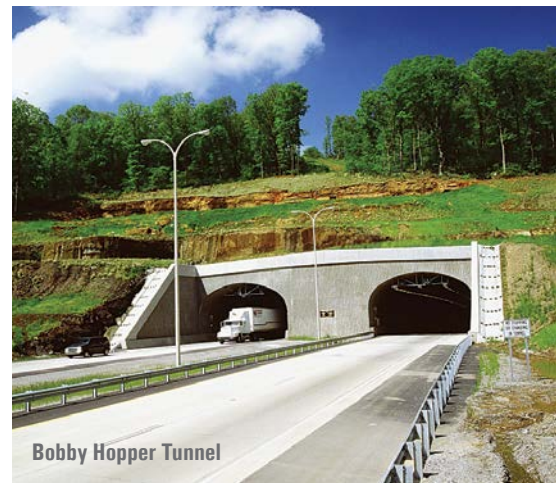
A few miles farther south is the **Bobby Hopper Tunnel**, Arkansas' only tunnel on the highway system. The tunnel has



Rent a canoe or pedal boat at Lake Devil.

twin bores and is 1,600 feet in length. It was completed in 1999 for \$37 million. Approximately 18,000 vehicles per day travel through the tunnel.

Continuing south on Interstate 540 and back to Alma completes the Boston Mountain Scenic Loop. Whether as a one-day trip, or taking a more leisurely pace and staying several nights, the loop is a great way to spend the weekend and see the many things there are to do in this area of northwest Arkansas. ■



Bobby Hopper Tunnel

WHEN PAVEMENT STANDS THE TEST OF TIME

BY DAVID NILLES

There is an organization called the Asphalt Pavement Alliance (APA). Their area of expertise, as the name implies, is asphalt pavement.

“Every day, we all use asphalt roads without giving them a second thought. Most people don’t understand how technologically advanced asphalt pavements have become and the important role they play in sustainable infrastructure,” says Mike Kvach, Executive Director of the APA.

“There are a lot of misconceptions about asphalt pavements, but the truth is they are an important part of environmentally responsible construction,” said Kvach. “A wide range of recyclable materials can be incorporated into asphalt pavements. Even more exciting is that when asphalt is reclaimed, that material is completely renewable and can be used to build new roads. In fact, asphalt pavement is the most recycled material in America.”

And speaking of asphalt, some roadways can be designed as a Perpetual Pavement that need only periodic maintenance to remain in good shape practically forever. A perpetual pavement is constructed so that distress occurs in the top layer only. The only rehabilitation required is the removal of the distressed surface layer and resurfacing with an asphalt overlay. Using current pavement technologies this can be done on an infrequent basis – every 15 to 20 years. And when that happens, the APA wants people to know about it. Thus, the Perpetual Pavement Awards, a yearly program of the APA.

The awards recognize existing long life asphalt pavements demonstrating outstanding design and construction. Any road, highway, airport runway or other facility paved with asphalt is eligible for the award. The pavement must be a minimum of 35 years old and have never had a structural failure. Also, the pavement must have had no rehabilitation over those years that has increased the pavement thickness by more than four inches. Resurfacing intervals must be of no less than 13 years on the average. It must demonstrate: excellence in design, quality in



Director Scott E. Bennett with the 2012 Perpetual Pavement Award.

construction and value to the traveling public. Engineers at the National Center for Asphalt Technology evaluate the nominations and a panel of industry experts validates the winners.

The AHTD was the recipient of a Perpetual Pavement Award from the Alliance in 2012. The award was presented for a two-mile section of Highway 82 in Lafayette County. The award-winning stretch of roadway carries approximately 5,400 vehicles each day.

The two-lane highway was constructed in 1969 by the R.H. Davis Construction Company of Stamps, Arkansas. It has been resurfaced twice since it opened to traffic, in 1991 and 2004. In both cases, the pavement layer was two inches thick. No other repairs have been made to the highway since the resurfacing. Today, the roadway continues to display exceptional performance and has a good ride quality.

“The extraordinary performance of this asphalt pavement speaks for itself after all these years,” says AHTD Director Scott Bennett. “Long-lasting pavement makes our job easier and keeps the traveling public happy as well.”

Less than 100 pavements have received the Perpetual Pavement Award since the program began in 2001. This is the third Perpetual Pavement Award the AHTD has received. ■

DISTRICT 3

CONSTRUCTION



CORNER

Crews are on location on Highway 371 in northern Hempstead County just east of Nashville. The work involves replacing two bridges over Ozan Creek. The \$3.4 million project was awarded to Thomco, Inc. of North Little Rock and began in January of 2012.

Before work could begin on the new bridges, a 2,760-foot detour with two temporary bridges had to be built. Once traffic was moved to the detour, removal of the existing bridges began. Crews have now finished the construction of the new bridges and work is underway on the highway on the ends of the bridges. The approaches must be notched and widened.

The new bridges are two identical 180-foot long continuous composite integral W-Beam units with concrete piles. Each bridge is one continuous unit from the outside ends of the approach slabs with no expansion joint.

The job is approximately 75 percent complete. The new bridges should be open to traffic in August of this year. Jason Efird is the Resident Engineer on the project. ▣





Backhoe Competition

23RD ANNUAL

SKILLS ON DISPLAY

stated AHTD Director Scott Bennett at that afternoon's awards ceremony. "The good job each of you does makes it easier for me to do my job."

This year's winner was District Four, the second year in a row the District has won the competition.

"The Rodeo is a great opportunity for our employees to demonstrate their skills on the equipment and to see the skills of other employees around the State," said Joe Shipman, District Engineer. "To win the overall competition means a lot to everyone on the team, our employees and management of District Four."

"This will make a good going away present for Joe Shipman," Bennett added. Shipman retired a few weeks after the Rodeo.

"We wish the AHTD team the best of luck in the Regional Rodeo," Bennett concluded. The 11th Annual Regional Rodeo will be held in Lexington, Kentucky, in September.

Members of the District Four Team Champions include District Engineer Joe Shipman, Billy Bower, Eric Brigance, Tim Henretty, Jeremiah Jackson, Jimmie Jetton, Larry Miedema, Serrita Pense, Terral Scroggins and Mark Standridge. ■

It takes a great deal of practice and skill to operate some of the heavy equipment our AHTD crews use every day out on our highways. Some employees drive large dump trucks spreading sand in a heavy snow fall. Others operate backhoes with traffic whizzing by at 70 miles per hour.

Some operate mowers around any number of obstacles. All are good at what they do even when challenges arise.

Once a year though, they take the wheel behind that heavy equipment just for the fun of it. Just to see how their skills stack up next to their peers in the other Districts. And that time of year is the annual Equipment Operators Rodeo.

This year's Rodeo was the 23rd one the Department has held. Winners from each District's own competitions met in Little Rock on June 12th to compete with other Districts and Central Office in six categories: Single Axle Dump Truck, Tandem Axle Dump Truck, Tractor/Lowboy, Backhoe, Motor Patrol and Tractor Mower.

"Over the years, this has been a great competition, and this year is no exception,"



A Rodeo participant is ready to compete.



Tractor/Mower Competition

AT EQUIPMENT OPERATORS ROADEO

BY DAVID NILLES



Tractor/Lowboy Competition



Motor Patrol Competition



District Four State Team Champions



(L. to R.) Commission Vice Chairman John Burkhalter; AHTD Director Scott E. Bennett; Commissioner Robert S. Moore, Jr.



CONSTRUCTION PLANS AROUND THE STATE

Throughout the year, public meetings are held around the State in communities where roadwork is being planned. These meetings are an opportunity for citizens to hear about and respond to future highway construction happening in their area.



PUBLIC MEETINGS MARCH 28 - JUNE 18, 2013

- 1** *Construction Topic:*
HIGHWAY 112 - FAYETTEVILLE, AR
Meeting Location:
FAYETTEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
Date:
APRIL 4, 2013

- 2** *Construction Topic:*
HIGHWAY 71B - ROGERS, AR
Meeting Location:
THE CENTER FOR NONPROFITS
Date:
APRIL 11, 2013

- 3** *Construction Topic:*
HIGHWAY 10 - LITTLE ROCK, AR
Meeting Location:
DON R. ROBERTS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Date:
APRIL 18, 2013

- 4** *Construction Topic:*
HIGHWAY 7 - HOT SPRINGS, AR
Meeting Location:
LAKE HAMILTON BAPTIST CHURCH
Date:
APRIL 18, 2013

- 5** *Construction Topic:*
HIGHWAY 70 - LITTLE ROCK, AR
Meeting Location:
GOSPEL TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH
Date:
MAY 7, 2013

- 6** *Construction Topic:*
HIGHWAY 7 - DOVER, AR
Meeting Location:
DOVER MIDDLE SCHOOL
Date:
MAY 9, 2013

- 7** *Construction Topic:*
HIGHWAY 365 - NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR
Meeting Location:
AMBOY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Date:
MAY 16, 2013

- 8** *Construction Topic:*
HIGHWAY 67 - DONALDSON, AR
Meeting Location:
OUACHITA HIGH SCHOOL
Date:
JUNE 4, 2013

ON THE MAP

SPENDING TIME WITH AN ARKANSAS HIGHWAY MAP CAN BE INTERESTING. THE FOLLOWING IS THE NAME OF AN ACTUAL TOWN IN ARKANSAS! HAVE YOU EVER VISITED HERE?



INK

The town of Ink, Arkansas, is located about five miles east of Mena on Highway 88. One version of how the town got its name goes as follows. In the late 1800s, the people of the area petitioned the government for their own post office. A schoolteacher in the area asked for suggestions from the local residents. Fearing that pencil entries may be hard to read, the instructions on the printed ballots indicated that voters should “write in ink.” Apparently enough of them took the instructions literally and wrote in “Ink” so that “Ink” became the town name.

But as with most urban legends, this just isn't true. In reality, many towns were trying to register at the same time, and the U.S. Postal Service wanted to limit the number of duplicate town names. Post Masters in the towns that were trying to register names were required to give several alternatives.

Many towns weren't awarded their first, second, or even third choices. Ink was actually the town's second choice option. The first? “Melon.”

Ink, Arkansas, got its post office in 1887. The post office closed its doors in 1967. ■



Ink was actually the town's second choice for a name.



SPECIAL EVENTS

BY GLENN BOLICK

AROUND THE STATE

Texarkana's 549 Loop DEDICATED

Former Highway Commissioner Prissy Hickerson was the featured speaker on April 30th as a large crowd gathered for the dedication of the Highway 549 Loop in Texarkana. The event took place on top of one of the new flyover ramps.

"Commissioner Hickerson was instrumental in making this Texarkana Loop project a reality," said AHTD Director Scott Bennett. "She worked tirelessly with local officials and business leaders. We were fortunate to have her serve on the Highway Commission and now we are fortunate to have her serving in the House of Representatives."

Four separate construction projects totaling \$130 million were awarded to construct the Texarkana Loop. Additional costs brought the total investment to nearly \$150 million.

Construction on the first contract began in 2006 with a grading and structures project.

The new section of roadway now extends Highway 549 from Arkansas Boulevard, across Interstate 30 and intersects at Highway 71, north of town. Highway 549 will become part of Interstate 549, a new Interstate that will connect the Gulf of Mexico with Canada.

The final base and surfacing job, extending from Highway 549 south to the Louisiana state line, is underway. ■



(Top) Texarkana area residents gather for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

(Bottom, L. to R.) Arkansas Good Roads Director J.W. "Bill" Ramsey; AHTD Director Scott E. Bennett; State Representative Prissy Hickerson; former Texarkana Chamber of Commerce President Swede Lee; and Texarkana Chamber President Jeff Sandford.

Welcome Center Memorial Event RECOGNIZES SLAIN HIGHWAY EMPLOYEE



Sharren Richards Memorial Garden Plaque

Family, friends and co-workers of Sharren "Storm Wolf" Richards came together to pay tribute with a memorial plaque on May 1st. Exactly one year earlier, Sharren was slain in a tragic attack while working her job as an attendant at the Van Buren/Fort Smith Welcome Center.

District 4 Engineer Joe Shipman worked with family members to create the plaque for display in the flower garden.

"Those gardens are the work of Sharren," said Shipman. "Her work is displayed throughout the grounds and the garden is a fitting place to honor her memory."

Sharren was widely known as an animal lover, an author and artist. Several in attendance showed off their custom-made walking canes that Sharren enjoyed hand carving with nature-themed stories. ■

WEST MEMPHIS CELEBRATES New Welcome Center

It was fitting that Senator Keith Ingram served as the emcee for the May 28th dedication ceremony of the new Arkansas Welcome Center at West Memphis considering that his dad, Senator W.K. Ingram was the emcee when the old center was dedicated in May of 1972.

A large contingent of AHTD employees, headed by AHTD Director Scott Bennett and Highway Commission Chairman John Ed Regenold, attended the event. Welcome Center partners Arkansas Parks and Tourism also had a large turnout for the dedication ceremony.

“During my time on the Highway Commission, we have approved over \$30 million to build these new Arkansas Welcome

Centers,” said Regenold. “We never get tired of dedicating these new facilities.”

The two state agencies jointly operate 12 Welcome Centers across the state. While AHTD builds and maintains the facilities, Parks and Tourism staffs them.

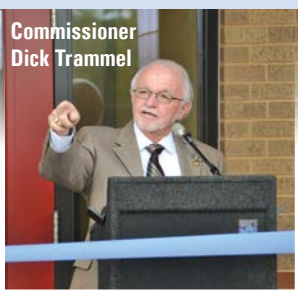
“This is one of the larger centers we have constructed,” said Bennett. “It is 6,400-square feet of state-of-the-art technology and cost about \$3 million. We are excited to get this new center completed and I know that the Parks and Tourism folks are happy with their new home.” ■



(Top) New Arkansas Welcome Center at West Memphis

(Bottom, L. to R.) AHTD Director Scott E. Bennett and Arkansas Parks & Tourism Director Richard Davies

DISTRICT 4 OPENS NEW HEADQUARTERS Officials Gather for Formal Dedication



Commissioner Dick Trammel

Heavy rain in Fort Smith began clearing as people arrived at the new District Four Headquarters for an open house and ribbon cutting event on June 17th. Highway Commissioner Dick Trammel and AHTD Director Scott Bennett joined with local officials, area leaders and employees to formally dedicate the new \$13.2 million District Four Headquarters.

Bennett noted that the new location is perfectly located near the Future Interstate 49 corridor. Construction has already been completed or is underway for the section from Highway 71 south of Fort Smith to Highway 22 near the new headquarters.

The area is also home to the Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority, which deeded 40 acres to the Department for the relocation project.

The 55,000-square foot facility is located at 808 Frontier Road in Barling, just south of the Highway 22/59 intersection. It includes D4 Administration Offices, RE Office, Material Lab, Area Maintenance, District Maintenance and Bridge Crew Offices, and the Highway Police Commander officer.

Commissioner Trammel praised retiring District Four Engineer Joe Shipman for overseeing the six-year construction project. He also recognized Shipman for his 35 plus years of service to the AHTD. ■



New District Four Headquarters



Dear AHTD,

My wife and I just finished traveling the entire length of Interstate 40 through your beautiful state and wanted to let you know we think your I-40 is not only a beautiful road to travel this time of year but also a very, very smooth road to drive. Once we traveled the same highway from Fort Smith to Oklahoma City, we could see quickly that Arkansas is serious about maintaining their interstate system. Thanks for a job well done.

Patrick Potter
Winfield, Kansas

STOLEN VEHICLE RECOVERY

On April 17 the Pope County Sheriff's Department, the Atkins Police Department, and the Russellville Police Department had a total of five vehicles reported stolen. Arkansas Highway Police Officer Andre Pruitt assisted our agency in recovering one of the vehicles reported missing.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for his help in the search and recovery of the stolen vehicles. He went the extra mile to notify our deputies of the location of a vehicle by traveling to their location because he had no way of communicating by radio with them. I really appreciate the extra effort he put in.

Thank you,
Chief Deputy Charles Martin
Pope County, Arkansas

AMAZING MAP

Thank you for everything you did to help me with my state project. Working on this project was so much fun. Everyday I looked forward to the mail arriving. I received so many nice things and learned a great deal about Arkansas.

Thank you for the cool and amazing map! I couldn't have done this project without your help.

Sincerely,
Hannah J.
Harlan Elementary Intermediate School
Harlan, Iowa

BETTER SIGNAGE

I appreciate the installation of the new STOP signs on Benton Parkway at the crossing of Route 88/Alcoa Road. These signs are more visible to motorists and I believe they will improve the chances of people stopping at this intersection. Hopefully, this new signage will reduce the number of accidents.

Richard P. John
Bauxite, Arkansas

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Recently, we received a request for message boards along Highway 71 in Y City for search and rescue operations. Boards were placed on Saturday morning.

On Sunday afternoon the recovery efforts were concluded. The Area Maintenance Supervisor and I went to Y City to transport the boards back to the headquarters. While at the second location, a Department pickup passed. The truck turned around and came to our location. Kenneth Starr (RE Office 74) was driving from his home to Fort Smith for work on a job. He stopped to see if he could be of assistance. I asked if he had a 2" tow ball on his truck. He stated he did have one. We hooked the trailer to his truck and gave him directions to the Area Maintenance Headquarters at Waldron where he delivered the board.

The Area Maintenance Supervisor and I returned to Highway 28 east where we made plans for the second message board to be picked up. We received word that an unidentified employee had inquired about towing the second message board to the headquarters. We advised personnel at the Area Headquarters that was acceptable. We assumed that Kenneth was returning to Y City for the second board.

I was at the Area Headquarters when the second message board arrived. However, it was not Kenneth towing the message board. Kenneth had contacted Chris Potter from RE Office 34 who was also driving to Fort Smith for work on a job. Chris picked up the second board and towed it to headquarters.

These and other employees from Districts 3, 7, and 2 are going above and beyond to assist with inspection on a current job. But the effort these two employees made to join us on Sunday goes even further beyond what they are already doing for us and is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Joe Shipman
AHTD District Four Engineer

The AHTD employs approximately 3,600 people. We welcome our new employees, congratulate others on promotions and service, and say goodbye to those retiring.

NEW EMPLOYEES

CONSTRUCTION • Christopher McKenney, Estimates Technician; Ryan Watson, Engineer; Lucas Turner, Engineer; Joseph Blackburn, Construction Helper; Seth Parish, Engineer; Nicholas Wray, Construction Helper; Dillard Fletcher Jr., Construction Helper; Lance Wilburn, Construction Helper

ENVIRONMENTAL • Lindsay Plunk, Environmental Analyst I

MAIL & SUPPLY • Darryl Lovelace, Mail Courier

MAINTENANCE • Hussain Alfaraj, Engineer

PLANNING & RESEARCH • Jacob Ryan, Office Administrative Assistant IV

RIGHT OF WAY • Tammy Green, Realty Appraiser I

SURVEYS • Garry Stewart, Engineer

DISTRICT TWO • Joseph Kasiah, General Laborer

DISTRICT THREE • Jose Morales, Storeroom Assistant I; Michael Tamberelli, Mechanic; Jonathan Baldwin, General Laborer

DISTRICT FOUR • Deviante Foster, General Laborer; Michael Frazier, General Laborer; James Henderson, General Laborer

DISTRICT FIVE • James Johnson, Single Axle Truck Driver; Michael Brown, Single Axle Truck Driver; Toby Dallas, General Laborer

DISTRICT SIX • Deborah Neal, Guard; Amir Fleming, General Laborer; Chad Grace, Single Axle Truck Driver; Shawna Precord, Single Axle Truck Driver

DISTRICT EIGHT • Aaron Anderson, Single Axle Truck Driver; Robert Malvaney, General Laborer

PROMOTIONS

ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE • Shelly Troutman, Administrative Aide II

CONSTRUCTION • Katrina Heaggans, Advanced Estimates Technician; Ashley Ward, Advanced Estimates Technician

COMPUTER SERVICES • Kenneth Austin, Hardware Technician III

MATERIALS • David Norris, Materials Area Engineer; Donnie Thornton, Geotechnical Drill Party Chief

PLANNING & RESEARCH • Megan Ferguson, Programming Analyst; Tara Holloman, Transportation Management Analyst I; Lindsay McCarthy, Office Administrative Assistant V; Michael Rowlett, Engineer II; John Spears Jr., Transportation Engineer

RIGHT OF WAY • Dewayne Stucks, Realty Appraiser III

ROADWAY DESIGN • Shane Adams, Engineer I; Jennifer Williams, Office Administrative Assistant V; Michael Wolfe, Design Engineer

SURVEYS • Michael Kelly, Division Head

DISTRICT ONE • Andrew Crofts, Construction Field Engineer I; Michael Mann, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator; Pamela Morelock, Maintenance Aide II; Stanley Wheeler, Area Headquarters Attendant

DISTRICT TWO • Travis Bell, Crew Leader

DISTRICT THREE • Chad Hodges, Bridge Job Superintendent; Wendell La San, Motor Patrol Operator; Aaron Morton, Lowboy/Float Truck Driver; Colin Nine, Construction Aide III; Andrew Tackett, Construction Field Engineer I

DISTRICT FOUR • Keith Dedmon, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator; Russell Henrie, Construction Aide II; Dennis Kruse, Single Axle Truck Driver; José Malagon, Bridge Repairer II; Cheril Ridenhour, Senior Construction Materials Inspector

DISTRICT FIVE • Bryan Anderson, Area Maintenance Supervisor; Teddy Blevins, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator; Marlon Brown, Paver Operator; Jimmy King, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator; Craig Pickering, Hydraulic Excavator Operator-Finish

DISTRICT SIX • Bart Boswell, Construction Project Coordinator; Desmond Forgan, Multi-Axle Truck Driver; Hulet Jacobs, Senior Construction Materials Inspector; Dustin Norwood, Maintenance Aide II; Johnny Williams, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator

DISTRICT SEVEN • Angie Jarvis, Rest Area Attendant; Stephanie King, Field Clerk II; Scott Ross, Rest Area Attendant; Courtney Zachery, Rest Area Attendant

DISTRICT EIGHT • Aaron Anderson, Single Axle Truck Driver; Charlotte Spence, Maintenance Aide I

DISTRICT NINE • Gary Harcrow, Maintenance Aide I; Alvie Spradling, Crew Leader; Cameron Whitney, Bridge Repairer I

DISTRICT TEN • Christopher Clifford, District Permit Officer; Calvin Crenshaw, Single Axle Truck Driver; Christopher Hunt, Single Axle Truck Driver; Mark Lowtharp, Construction Aide III; Christopher Neporadny, Construction Field Engineer I; Sherrye Osban, Field Clerk II; Marshall Pace, Maintenance Aide II; Roger Specking, District Bridge Inspector

SERVICE

COMMUNICATIONS • Kamara Durham, Telecommunications Operator, 5 yrs.

CONSTRUCTION • Billy Riley, Construction Project Coordinator, 35 yrs.; Michael Sebren, Construction Engineer, 35 yrs.; Cheryl Davis, Resident Office Technician, 25 yrs.; William Reddell, Assistant Resident Engineer, 20 yrs.; Ladean Aughenbaugh, Resident Office Technician, 15 yrs.; Brandon Sutton, Inspector, 10 yrs.; Glinda Kidd, Administrative Aide V, 10 yrs.; Donald Rhodes, Construction Aide I, 10 yrs.; Mark Lowtharp, Construction Aide II, 5 yrs.; John Humphry, Construction Aide I, 5 yrs.

ENVIRONMENTAL • Brenda Price, Assistant Division Head, 30 yrs.

HUMAN RESOURCES • Maddison Wendland, Leave Administrator, 5 yrs.

MAINTENANCE • Lee Greene, Sign Maker II, 25 yrs.; Henry Williams, Materials Technician IV, 10 yrs.; Jonathan Brill, District Laboratory Technician, 10 yrs.; Kelly Dull, Traffic Services Aide, 10 yrs.; Franklin Monroe, 5 yrs.

MATERIALS • Celestia Howard, District Materials Supervisor, 25 yrs.

PERMITS • Howard Stewart, Permit Technician, 10 yrs.

PLANNING & RESEARCH • Marion Shepherd II, Electronics Technician, 20 yrs.; William Allen, Surveys Crew Chief, 20 yrs.

STATE AID • Charles Ridge Jr., Senior Designer, 35 yrs.

SURVEYS • Steven Jones, Surveys Aide III, 10 yrs.

DISTRICT ONE • Larry Thomas, Maintenance Aide II, 10 yrs.

DISTRICT TWO • David Lawless, Crew Leader, 20 yrs.; Deborah Cotton, Multi-Axle Truck Driver, 10 yrs.; Charles Gant, Bridge Repairer I, 10 yrs.; Jeraldine Thompson, Guard, 10 yrs.; Kennedy Junior, Motor Patrol Operator, 5 yrs.; Angela Glover, District Receptionist, 5 yrs.

DISTRICT THREE • Debra Pate, Area Headquarters Attendant, 20 yrs.; David Lively II, Multi-Axle Truck Driver, 15 yrs.; James Sandefur, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator, 5 yrs.; Francisco Rodriguez, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs.; Carol Crow, Multi-Axle Truck Driver, 5 yrs.

DISTRICT FOUR • Rita Stone, Area Headquarters Attendant, 30 yrs.; Eric Brigrance, Backhoe/Front End Loader Operator, 10 yrs.

DISTRICT FIVE • Byron Bristow, Senior Mechanic, 10 yrs.; Robert Bradley, Senior Mechanic, 5 yrs.

DISTRICT SIX • Marion McFee, Single Axle Truck Driver, 10 yrs.

DISTRICT SEVEN • Phillip Rowen, Parts Runner, 20 yrs.; Donnie Mahan, Multi-Axle Truck Driver, 10 yrs.; Donald Juniel, Maintenance Aide II, 5 yrs.; Brenetta Childs, Janitor, 5 yrs.; Lindsey Dow, District Receptionist, 5 yrs.

DISTRICT NINE • Sandra Bailey, Maintenance Aide I, 10 yrs.; Clifford Moore, Multi-Axle Truck Driver, 10 yrs.; Rowan Dunn, Maintenance Aide II, 10 yrs.

DISTRICT TEN • Walter Hamm, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 35 yrs.; Corey Weatherford, Lowboy/Float Truck Driver, 10 yrs.; Brittany Nelson, Multi-Axle Truck Driver, 5 yrs.

RETIREMENT

ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE • Don Hastings, Arkansas Highway Police Captain, 42+ yrs.

MAINTENANCE • John Wood, Traffic Services Aide, 9+ yrs.

MATERIALS • Tyler Nicholson, Materials Area Engineer, 37+ yrs.

RADIO • Joe Callahan, Communication Maintenance Specialist, 9+ yrs.

STATE AID • Cindy Kuykendall, Office Administrative Assistant V, 35 yrs.; Charles Ridge Jr., Senior Designer, 35+ yrs.

DISTRICT ONE • Mike McConnell, Senior Mechanic, 28+ yrs.; Roy Ferrell, Maintenance Aide II, 17+ yrs.

DISTRICT TWO • Harlan Colbert, Area Maintenance Supervisor, 28+ yrs.

DISTRICT THREE • John Daniel, Bridge Job Superintendent, 28+ yrs.; Donald Lively, Sign Crew Supervisor, 33+ yrs.

DISTRICT FOUR • Michael Turner, Finish Carpenter, 33+ yrs.

DISTRICT FIVE • Paul Matthews, District Permit Officer, 38+ yrs.

DISTRICT SIX • Bernard Washington, Senior Construction Materials Inspector, 36+ yrs.

DISTRICT SEVEN • Carol Richard, Lowboy/Float Truck Driver, 8+ yrs.; Ray Hughes Jr., Maintenance Aide II, 38+ yrs.

DISTRICT EIGHT • Walter Gray, Lowboy/Float Truck Driver, 41+ yrs.; Donald Morgan, Maintenance Aide I, 10+ yrs.; Loretta Jones, Resident Office Technician, 28+ yrs.

DISTRICT NINE • Lawrence Drewry, Station Attendant II, 34+ yrs.; Brett Banzhaf, Senior Inspector, 28+ yrs.

DISTRICT TEN • John Allison, Shop Supervisor, 34+ yrs.

MEMORIALS

ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE • William D. "Bill" Johnson, 5/28/2013, retired

COMMUNICATIONS • Johnny W. Nalley, 6/15/2013, retired

HUMAN RESOURCES • Donna Marie Martin, 6/4/2013, retired

MATERIALS • Jake E. Clements Jr., 6/23/2013, retired

DISTRICT ONE • L.C. McClinic, 6/14/2013, retired;

John F. Ashby, 6/26/2013, retired

DISTRICT TWO • Robert D. Ray, 6/15/2013, retired

DISTRICT THREE • James W. Burt, 6/2/2013, retired;

Jackie C. May, 6/20/2013, retired

DISTRICT SIX • Carl Douglas Thompson, 6/20/2013, retired

ACTIVE DUTY

As of 6/27/13, the AHTD has three employees serving active duty in the United States military. Deployment date is noted.

ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE • Ruddy Gene Short, Arkansas Highway Police Patrol Officer, 3/22/13

PLANNING & RESEARCH • E. Wright-Kehner, Staff Research Engineer, 5/30/13

DISTRICT SIX • Jeremy Stokes, Construction Helper, 5/28/13



Arkansas State Highway and
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