

Arkansas Highways

SPRING/SUMMER 2011



Director's Message

With this issue of Arkansas Highways magazine, I present to you my final Director's Message. At the June 1st meeting of the Arkansas Highway Commission, I announced plans for my upcoming retirement. Those plans were shared on the 46th anniversary of the day I started work at the Department.

I am thankful to have had the opportunity to serve the state of Arkansas and this agency over the past four-plus decades. But more importantly, I am thankful to have had the privilege of working with the many dedicated employees of this Department, both past and present.

There are many things the Department has accomplished during my seventeen years as Director that I am proud of. I can't mention them all, but, here are a few.

The professional development of our staff through the years brings me great satisfaction. Not only does the Department have a staff made up of hard working, dedicated men and women, those that work here are held to high standards today. As an example, many of our engineers at the AHTD have their Professional Engineer licenses. Those higher standards apply not just to engineers, but to all professions found in our Department. The result is a more efficient, more effective work staff, and one that we as a Department can be very proud of.

The 1991 Highway Improvement Program comes to mind as I reflect on what we have accomplished. The program laid out a plan for highway improvements in all 75 counties and we have been able to accomplish the lion's share of that work.

The opening of Interstate 540 also must be mentioned. Featuring the state's first and only highway tunnel, and scenic loop through the Boston Mountains, the roadway provides a vital link to northwest Arkansas and connects the growing communities in that area of the state.

We have built six new Arkansas Welcome Centers across the state during my time as Director. The new Centers at Lake Village, El Dorado, Texarkana, Blytheville, Fort Smith and Corning are all state-of-the-art facilities featuring native stone and timber in their design. A seventh one is under construction at West Memphis and plans are under way for a new one at Helena-West Helena. All of these Centers make a great first impression on motorists entering our state.

The 1999 Interstate Rehabilitation Program allowed us to make major improvements to our Interstate system. The five-year program utilized 54 projects to overhaul more than 350 miles of Interstate in Arkansas. To complete that using innovative financing and a bond issue for the first time in 50 years brings a sense of accomplishment. Another bond issue will be coming up soon for Arkansas voters to consider.

The biggest challenge we have faced during my years as Director has been in the area of funding. There simply is no way to accomplish everything we have needed to do because of the lack of funding to get it all done. The biggest challenge for our staff and for our Commissioners has been to spend our money as wisely and as effectively as possible to see that our most immediate needs have been met. I think we have been successful in doing that.

Speaking of our Commissioners, I want to thank all of the Commission members that I have had the pleasure of working with over the years. I believe that each has added value and a fresh perspective to meeting the challenges we face. I have found that each of our Commissioners has had a strong interest in the employees of the Department and the work that they do. Working together, the staff and our Commissioners have shared the same goal of building upon what we have accomplished.

I can't mention our successes without mentioning each of the Governors, members of the Legislature and professionals in our industry that I have had the pleasure to work with. We've worked together to get many wonderful things accomplished for our highway system and have always done so in a professional manner.

I want to thank all of you for your hard work and your support over the years. You have all done a wonderful job, and I know that you will continue to do a wonderful job for this Department and for the people of Arkansas.

As we look back on our accomplishments, we also look to the future. In this issue of Arkansas Highways are interviews with our two newest Highway Commissioners, John Burkhalter and Tom Schueck of Little Rock. We welcome both of them to the Commission and look forward to working with them on transportation issues in Arkansas. Best wishes to all of you for continued success.



Paul Flowers
Director of Highways and Transportation

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Member



Arkansas Highways

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department - Spring/Summer 2011

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Back Cover: Highway 278, crossing the Cossatot River in Howard County

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Director Flowers to Retire In September

AHTD Director Dan Flowers has announced his pending retirement from the Department effective September 21st of this year.

Flowers, a 43-year veteran of the Department, made the formal announcement to the Arkansas Highway Commission during the June 1st business meeting at the AHTD Central Office.

Flowers has served as Director of the AHTD since 1994, longer than anyone in the Department's history. He is presently the longest serving CEO of any state transportation agency in the country.

"The Commission greatly appreciates Dan's extraordinary contributions over the past 43 years," Commission Chairman Madison Murphy said, "not only to this Department, but to the State of Arkansas, our region, and the national transportation industry. This type of long-term leadership is one of the main reasons the AHTD consistently ranks among the top five most efficient state transportation agencies in the country – our administrative costs per mile are currently second-lowest nationally."

"I have enjoyed a very rewarding career," Flowers stated. "The opportunities afforded me have been wonderful."

"Forty-six years ago today (June 1st), I spent my first day on the job with the AHTD. I was working on a survey crew as a seasonal

employee in Batesville," Flowers added. "I certainly didn't realize back then that I would accrue over 43 years of service time with the Department before retiring."

"I would like to thank all of our employees, past and present, for their contribution to any success that I may have had over my years here."

The Highway Commission has officially named AHTD Assistant Chief Engineer for Planning Scott Bennett to succeed Flowers as Director.

"It is no accident that the Commission was able to move this swiftly in naming a new Director," Murphy continued. "This Department does an excellent job at recruiting, training, and maintaining quality personnel. Consequently, we have a very strong management team in place. Not only will we have Scott as our new Director, but we will continue to have Frank Vozel and his 40+ years of experience as our Deputy Director & Chief Engineer, and other senior staff with significant experience. We have a very professional staff, and the Commission expects this to be a seamless transition."



(l. to r.) Scott Bennett, Assistant Chief Engineer for Planning, and AHTD Director Dan Flowers.

An Interview With Tom Schueck



Tom Schueck was appointed to a ten-year term on the Arkansas State Highway Commission by Governor Mike Beebe on January 14th, 2011. A native of St. Louis, Missouri, Schueck has a degree in Civil Engineering and also has 41 years experience in forming and managing companies that are involved in heavy construction. He is Chairman and CEO of Lexicon, Inc., a holding company for five construction-oriented businesses. In a recent interview with Public Information Specialist David Nilles, Schueck discussed his appointment and his first months as a Highway Commissioner.

Nilles: What were your feelings when Governor Beebe approached you about a position on the Highway Commission?



Schueck: For those who like to do public service, a chance to serve on the Highway Commission is a great opportunity. It is a sought-after position. The Governor and I talked about it earlier in his administration and he knew of my interest. It was just a matter of waiting for the appropriate time. When it came available it was quite a thrill. It was nice and I appreciated it. Wanting it,



seeing it and getting named allowed me to accomplish one of my goals so it was a nice thing to have happen.

Nilles: What is it about being on the Commission that appeals to you or you find interesting?

Schueck: Well, I can tell you I was surprised at the amount of work at the Capitol that was required. I was appointed at about the time that the legislative session began and, for whatever reason, I just didn't realize that the Highway Commission had to protect what it already has in the budget plus try to gain more funding at the same time. That turned out to be a very interesting period for me as I was never involved in the political process to that extent. I spent quite a few days at the Capitol working on the half-cent sales tax (HJR1001) and the five-cent diesel tax (Act 773). It involved working with legislators and the Department staff and it was a very good learning period.

So far, we have only had a couple of Commission meetings and I am finding out that most of the funding that I thought we had is pre-committed. It takes a great deal of study to determine which highways to select for renovations or which new highways need building. So I am gradually learning my way around and working to really understand the position. It takes a while to comprehend where our authority lies and what we really have in the way of funding to be spent. Actually, during the few months I've been on the Commission it's been a learning process as to what I can't do. To be quite honest, that was a surprise.

Nilles: How do you think your past experience will help you on the Commission?

Schueck: I think my experience is probably my strongest suit. I started in the highway business back in 1958. That is a long time ago. I worked for a road contractor in St. Louis, Missouri, as a time keeper. It was right when the Interstate program was really in full bloom. There were jobs in the St Louis area where you had a variety of bridges and lots of retaining walls and excavation work through the heart of town. As a time keeper, of course, I got to watch everything and I kind of liked it.

After about three years, I left for school and became a Civil Engineer. After I graduated in 1965, I came down to Little Rock and worked as a project engineer for a contractor on Lock and Dam Number 7, which is the Murray Lock and Dam. I think once you are involved in heavy construction you maintain an interest in it. So I always had my eye on road construction and enjoyed comparing the way they build here with the way they built in St. Louis. So I appreciate my direct experience in highway construction.

I started my own businesses in 1967 and 1968 and the rest is history. Over time those businesses have grown. We do a lot of heavy construction. We have performed some fabrication of bridge girders for the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department in the past. I told the Governor that I would not bid on those after I was on the Commission much to the chagrin of a lot of people that work for me! We are making the sacrifice! Most of the bridges we do are out of state and we are still doing those. We have just recently completed some 120-ton girder bridges.

That is a heavy bridge girder. We do a lot of heavy construction, things like steel mills, power plants and refineries. We have an Engineering Division with about 50 engineers and support staff. We also do a lot of engineering procurement construction (EPC-type construction), mainly in the Houston and Louisiana refinery business. So, my experience in construction and my experience in highways kind of go together and will be a big help.

Nilles: Now that you are on the Commission, what are you hearing from people out in the community regarding where they think some of the major needs are:

Schueck: The needs that you hear about are really renovation needs. Many are here in central Arkansas, including the renovation of the Interstate 430/630 interchange. Most of the people I come in contact with are in the metropolitan area and they feel like the highways need to be renovated to the point where they can handle the traffic load on them.

Of course, I am a "user pay" type guy. I think if you use it you ought to pay to use it and if you do pay, you should get your money's worth. In other words, the money follows the cars. There are a couple of schools of thought there. It is a complicated issue as to how you divide up what funds you do have, where the funding is going to be used and for what. That is part of the learning process that I am going through.

As far as my personal ideas, I think we could spend our money wisely by doing the right things to the right highways in the right places. I think we could get more bang for our buck by moving more cars more quickly. You look at interchanges where two

Interstates come together, motorists need to move through quickly. For example, we have the traffic bottleneck on the Interstate 30 Bridge downtown with vehicles going from Little Rock to any place up north. I think that is a major problem and you hear a lot about that especially from the city fathers. People sit in lines in their cars daily and they don't like that. They like to be moving! Traffic flow is always important and will always be a top consideration.

Nilles: What are some priorities you would like to see addressed during your 10-year term on the Commission?

Schueck: First of all, we go to the very basis of our problem, and that is funding. I am going to use a term Commission Chairman Madison Murphy uses... we have a "systemically flawed" basis for financing our highways. I would like to see the financial base be sound



and be modernized to the point that we can get more monies than we are receiving now so we can modernize our Interstate system. The funding situation is our most important priority.



Once we get through that, we have to determine what we are going to do with the money. Road projects are planned at least five years ahead of time. However, the needs today and the needs five years ago are different. I know that we are going to have to shorten that timeframe somehow and get the funding closer in line with the needs. I realize a great deal of planning goes into these projects. A number of things have to be done as you progress from the idea for a highway, through the design stage, the construction phase and then to the end result. You observe traffic patterns where people live and where they work and those patterns change. We have to manage roadways where the most traffic is occurring. Northwest Arkansas has problems on Interstate 540 and in central Arkansas we have problems on the Interstate 30 Bridge in Little Rock. Growth is occurring on Highway 10 and Interstate 430. It indicates that people's living habits change. The point I am trying to make is that growth patterns can change in a matter of two or three years and we must have the highways there to handle that growth.

Nilles: What is your impression of the Department itself and the AHTD staff?

Schueck: That was one of my biggest surprises. I believe the professionalism that is shown in this building is unbelievable. If I ask a question they have the answer. If I want something to do with figures, they have it. Or, if you want something to do with future planning on our roads they have it. This is the most well organized operation that I have seen in a long time. I knew it was pretty well organized but I didn't realize to what extent. That was a real bright spot.

This Department is something all Arkansans ought to be proud of. People do not realize all the steps that you have to go through to build or renovate a highway. You have to have the money,

the people and organization to do all of that. The staff should be proud of what they have here, it is a very good Department.

Nilles: Considering the two proposals presented during the legislative session, do you think we are headed in the right direction when it comes to our future highway needs?

Schueck: It's a patchwork or a Band-Aid approach. The basis of our funding has to be changed somehow and someday. You look at our funding which is based on fuel gallons purchased and you look at the rising construction costs and you can see the flawed basis. There is a significant discrepancy going on there. And that discrepancy can do nothing but get larger. We followed the Blue Ribbon Committee's suggestions and entered the legislative session with five proposals. First we went to Governor Beebe to see what he could support and came away with the two bills. So we have the proposed constitutional amendment authorizing a temporary .5% increase in the statewide general sales tax and Act 773 authorizing a 5-cent per gallon increase in the diesel tax. Each proposal, over ten years, would put over one billion dollars into meeting our needs and that would help us tremendously.

We need something that is going to stay with us as our needs grow and our population grows. Our statewide population is three million people now and in ten years who knows where we are going to be. I am sure Arkansas will continue to grow and therefore our highway needs are going to grow. Will this money help us? Yes, but are we going to get it? I don't know. That is the biggest problem, we really don't know if we are going to get it. There are a lot of question marks when people have to vote on an issue.



Nilles: Is there anything you would like to touch on that I haven't brought up?

Schueck: I'd like to mention my family. I've been married since 1965. I have a son and a daughter, and five grandchildren. I have lived in Little Rock since 1965, a transplant from St Louis where I grew up and went to school.

I am Chairman and CEO of a company called Lexicon. It is a holding company for five construction-oriented businesses. The first one is Schueck Steel, a steel erector and a millwright operation that deals in heavy equipment, some that weigh as much as 500 tons and buildings that consist of 40,000-50,000 tons of steel. The second company is Prospect Steel, a steel fabrication firm. We have done numerous big projects like the Toyota plant in Jackson, Mississippi, and the Convention Center in Chicago. We have done some rocket testing towers for NASA and are presently working on a solar project in California. We do a lot of high rise buildings, heavy industrial buildings, steel mills and refinery type work. Then we have Custom Metals which does a great deal of environmental work via plate work in large industrial plants. The fourth company is L-Con Construction and Engineers in Houston, Texas, which is a rather large operation, it does a lot of EPC con-



tracting mainly in the refining and power business. We also have Heritage Golf. We build golf courses all over the U.S. plus Hawaii, Puerto Rico and other resort areas. One of our flagship courses which we are proud of is the Liberty Course in New Jersey that overlooks the Statue of Liberty. People also get excited about Chambers Bay which we built in the state of Washington where the U.S. Amateur Tournament was played last year. We have been in that business for 15 years.

In addition to being a Highway Commissioner, I serve as an Airport Commissioner for the Little Rock National Airport. I was a Commissioner for the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission and for the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. I've served on the board of the Little Rock Boys and Girls Club, on the UAMS Foundation Board, the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce Board and the Arkansas Industrial Development Foundation Board. I'm also involved with The Nature Conservancy, the Arkansas Manufacturers Association and the Association of General Contractors.

All in all, I think the next ten years on the Arkansas Highway Commission will be challenging. But, I've tackled challenges before and being on the Arkansas Highway Commission is one I'm looking forward to.



An Interview With John Burkhalter



John Burkhalter was appointed to the Arkansas State Highway Commission by Governor Mike Beebe on January 14, 2011. He will serve the remaining six years of the term of Commissioner Cliff Hoofman who resigned from the Commission to serve on the Arkansas Court of Appeals. Burkhalter has a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and is a Registered Professional Engineer. He is President of Burkhalter Technologies, Inc. and Managing Member of Burkhalter Leasing, LLC; Burkhalter Property Group, LLC; and Burkhalter Commercial Group, LLC. He sat down recently with Public Information Specialist David Nilles to discuss his first months as a Highway Commissioner.

Nilles: What were your feelings when Governor Beebe approached you about a position on the Highway Commission?

Burkhalter: I want to thank Governor Beebe for appointing me. It was a Commission that I had visited with him about on multiple occasions. I feel very blessed that he has given me this opportunity. I think he evaluated me as to what I know and what I could bring to the Highway Commission. I was schooled as an engineer so a position here is the ultimate Commission an engineer could have the opportunity to serve on. I had always been told that being a Highway Commissioner was a very coveted position. That is not what I was really thinking about though. I think as a young man, you really don't know what a Highway Commissioner is. I remember the first Commissioner I ever met was Patsy Thomasson. I was a young engineer working in Little Rock. I was right out of college working on the Highway 82 Bridge in southern Arkansas. Patsy Thomason came by and that was my first time to see a Commissioner. You could tell she was articulate and she knew what she was talking about. I am very honored and grateful to serve. For an engineer, on a scale from one to ten, it's probably a ten. I am spending more time than I thought I would and there



are things I have learned that I did not know. As the Governor told me, we are Commissioners for the state at large. I haven't been everywhere in the state yet but I plan to spend as much time as I can learning about the needs on our highways throughout the state. I look forward to being a good Commissioner.

Nilles: What is it about being on the Commission for the next six years that appeals to you?

Burkhalter: It's a chance to give back to the state. When I was going through engineering school, I had the opportunity to work in the engineer training program for the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department for two summers. I worked on the development of Interstate 440 for the highway system. They gave me a chance to make some fair money during the summer and it helped with my education. I now have the opportunity to give back to that program. As far as developing our state and moving it forward, I believe that infrastructure is probably one of the most important things we have. The only way we are really going to grow the state is to bring more businesses and people to the state. I was the chairman for the Economic Development Commission for the state last year and was on that Commission for four years. You learn a lot about site selection. One of the

first questions businesses consider is what is the infrastructure like? Highways, broadband, ports, railroads, heavy utilities, gas, electricity and roads have to be considered. Roads are so important to the development of our state in order to bring new businesses in. I think it is very critical and I think that is what I am most excited about. When we look at the state's future, we don't need to look several years ahead, we need to look decades ahead. Look at northwest Arkansas, fifty or sixty years ago it was not what it is today. It is now a powerhouse in the state. Where is the next powerhouse going to be?

Nilles: How do you think your past experience will help you on the Commission?

Burkhalter: I'm an engineer, and the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department is made up of a lot of engineers. My dad is a professional engineer. He worked for the Little Rock District Corps of Engineers as the head of the Structure Division. Engineers are pretty black and white individuals in that we use a lot of data. When I first got out of college I worked on designing the Highway 82 Bridge. That's an example of having to build things to exact specifications because if you don't build them correctly, you have the potential for losing lives. I think starting as an engineer and then becoming a business man has been advantageous. I own multiple businesses today. I have worked both nationally and internationally in my businesses. As you build businesses throughout the country you learn that communication is very important. It is not cut and dried, or black and white. I believe what I have learned in that area will be beneficial. On any project, you have to be the lowest bidder. You have to earn



that job. Then you have to build the project and communication is very important there. You have to be able to effectively converse and visit with people throughout government. I think I have a strong feel for what needs to be done. I think that will help the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department be successful.

Nilles: Now that you are on the Commission, what are you hearing from people in the community regarding what they think our highway needs are?

Burkhalter: That is probably the most asked question I have had. Once people find out that you are a Highway Commissioner, the first thing they ask about is a road. Some of it is in a joking manner. But most of them are very serious about it. They know roads are vital to our safety, to moving our citizens, to moving our goods and to advancing business. That by far is the most

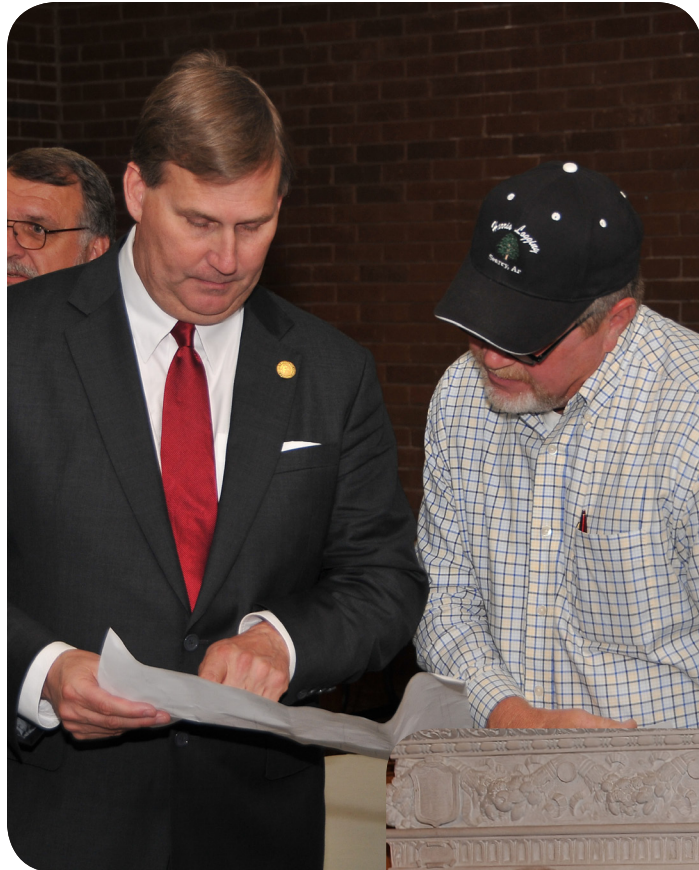


asked question. People know we have to keep our Interstates repaired. But we have numerous regions in the state and they know that we have to get from one region to another. They are very interested in connectivity. Not just to and from Little Rock but also connectivity in northwest Arkansas, for example. Since northwest Arkansas is a powerhouse of its own, there have to be highways to allow easy access through the area. People are very concerned about their highways and what we can do to help them. It's like that in all of our cities throughout the state. They are very interested in what we can do for them to help them improve the roads.

most people realize how important roads are. I think most people know that if you build a new highway there will be economic development whether someone builds a subdivision for homes or someone puts in a business. Roads are one of the things that can help move us out of this recession. We have the potential for a lot of growth in this state. An improved road system would give us the opportunity to connect people. As we look ahead, it is critical that we find additional funding. It will be very important to explain to the people how the monies received will be spent and where. So during my six years on the Commission, being successful in these efforts will be an important step.

Nilles: What is your impression of the AHTD staff now that you have had an opportunity to get fully involved?

Burkhalter: They are very professional. Being an engineer I knew what was here. I have many friends I went to college with in engineering school that work here. Engineers, by nature, are very conservative, that is just the way we are. Typically when you ask an engineer something he doesn't have to sit there and figure out what the answer is, he knows...it's pretty black and white. The Department has a very professional staff and the communication has been easier than I thought it would be. They are very open to me as a new Commissioner and very receptive to the fact that I am a Registered Professional Engineer, which is real important to me and other engineers. Being a new Commissioner, I thought it would be slow as far as gaining the staff's trust and vice versa. They have been very open, I have been able to be extremely open with them. They address my thoughts and comments effectively. It has been very seamless for me.



Nilles: What are some priorities you would like to see addressed during your time on the Commission?

Burkhalter: I think the most important thing I would like to accomplish with my fellow Commissioners is improving our budget. The numbers tell the truth. We are grossly under funded with the money we have for highways. The data tells a story, basically our revenue has been flat for many, many years. I think





Nilles: Two funding proposals came out of the legislative session. Do you think we are headed in the right direction as we think about our future needs?

Burkhalter: Yes I think it has been a long time coming. You know the Governor has a very tough job. He has to balance the budget. Are there other ways? Could there be other funding mechanisms in the future our Governor could look at to help with highways? I am sure there are. But at the end of the day he has to balance the budget and make sure our state moves forward. This session, I was involved in the legislative process. I talked to many people in the legislature and I believe these proposals represent our two best opportunities for funding for the state right now. We are also dependent on funding that the Federal government passes back down to us. That funding is critical and I know that big budget changes are taking place in Washington. I think the sentiment is to continue to reduce budgets, which will mean less money to the state. These changes will impact us tremendously. So, these two proposals before the voters are probably critical for the Department regardless of what happens in Washington D.C. Our job as Commissioners is to use the funding we have coming in as effectively as possible and to make our highway system the very best it can be in the coming years.



Safety Checks Conducted for Roadcheck 2011

Truck and bus safety inspectors were on the job night and day in Arkansas and across the nation during the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance's (CVSA) 72-hour International Roadcheck held June 7th – 9th. The inspectors checked vehicles and their drivers at inspection sites set up along major highways across North America. In addition, roving patrols inspected vehicles and drivers traveling other roadways.

"Commercial motor vehicle inspectors work diligently every day to ensure that the commercial vehicles using our highways do so as safely as possible," said Stephen A. Keppler, CVSA's executive director. "While a significant majority of vehicle operators are highly responsible, conscientious and safe, a few are less so."

That's where Roadcheck comes in. It provides a vital service to check driver and vehicle safety fitness to help keep our roads safe and clear from preventable crashes, backups and a needless loss of lives.

In Arkansas, inspection sites were set up on Interstate 30 near Benton and on Highway 270 near Sheridan. A total of 269 inspections were carried out. Of those, 139 vehicles passed inspection with no violations and received a CVSA decal.

Although actual percentage estimates vary, it is widely acknowledged that driver fatigue is a factor in many commercial truck and bus crashes. For this reason, Federal regulations limit the number of hours a commercial driver may operate his or her vehicle without an off-duty rest period. Enforcement of these limits is essential to ensuring compliance and combating driver fatigue. This year's Roadcheck emphasized checking driver logbooks and underscored to drivers the importance of maintaining their logbooks, taking breaks, preventing fatigue and driving without distractions.

In light of recent, highly-publicized fatal bus crashes, CVSA inspectors also emphasized inspection of passenger carrying vehicles.

Since its inception in 1988, the roadside inspections conducted during the annual Roadcheck have numbered over one million nationally. It has also provided for the distribution of countless pieces of educational literature and safety events to educate industry and the general public about the importance of safe commercial vehicle operations and the roadside inspection program.

"As a long standing member of CVSA, the Arkansas Highway Police look forward to participating in this 72-hour safety inspection blitz with our enforcement partners from across the United States, Canada and Mexico," stated Ron Burks, Arkansas Highway Police Chief. "These inspections go a long way in making our highways safer for all motorists."



(Above, l. to r.) PFC Ron Burnett inspects connections with a commercial vehicle driver.



(Above) PFC Kreston Taylor works from below to complete an inspection on this commercial vehicle.

Spring Flooding Closes Highways Across

The month of April, with its relentless tornados and heavy rainstorms, was a rough one on the state of Arkansas. The rainfall totals the storms left in their wake created even more problems on Arkansas' highways well into the month of May.

At the time this article was written, 57 counties in the state had been declared disaster areas and 13 counties were already under a federal disaster declaration issued by President Barack Obama.

Many highways, including Interstate 40 at the White River, looked more like lakes than roadways. As a result, AHTD officials were forced to close many roadways.

"We had approximately 80 sections of highways in Arkansas that had to be closed due to water over the roadway," stated Emanuel Banks, Assistant Chief Engineer for Operations. "Roadways in seventeen counties were affected."

At the Central Office in Little Rock, telephone inquiries about road closures reached such a high volume, a telephone bank with 12 stations was set up in the auditorium to handle inquiries from motorists.

"We had staff from many different AHTD divisions volunteer their time on Mother's Day weekend and the following week to answer the phones," stated Ralph Hall, Assistant to the Director. "We appreciate the hard work they put in."

Over a 62-hour period, the phone bank received just under 15,000 inquiries regarding flooded highways.

The most significant closure on the highways occurred when the White River in Prairie County overflowed its banks spilling water onto Interstate 40. As a result, a 22-mile section of the Interstate was closed in both directions between the cities of Hazen and Brinkley. The closure lasted for eight days in one direction or another.

"The floodwater in the White River encountered the backwater in the Mississippi River," Banks added. "As a result, the water standing on Interstate 40 couldn't recede very quickly."

Westbound traffic was routed to Highway 49 at Brinkley, directed west on Highway 64 to Bald Knob and back down Highway 167 to Interstate 40 at North Little Rock. Eastbound traffic exited the Interstate at Hazen, traveled southward to Stuttgart where car and truck traffic were diverted to separate detours.

At their highest level on Interstate 40, floodwaters rose to near the top of the concrete median dividing the eastbound and westbound lanes.



Highway 38 at Des Arc

ways ss Eastern Arkansas



Highway 14 in Jackson County



Interstate 40 eastbound at the White River



Highway 62 near Eureka Springs



AHTD staff working the phone bank at the Central Office.



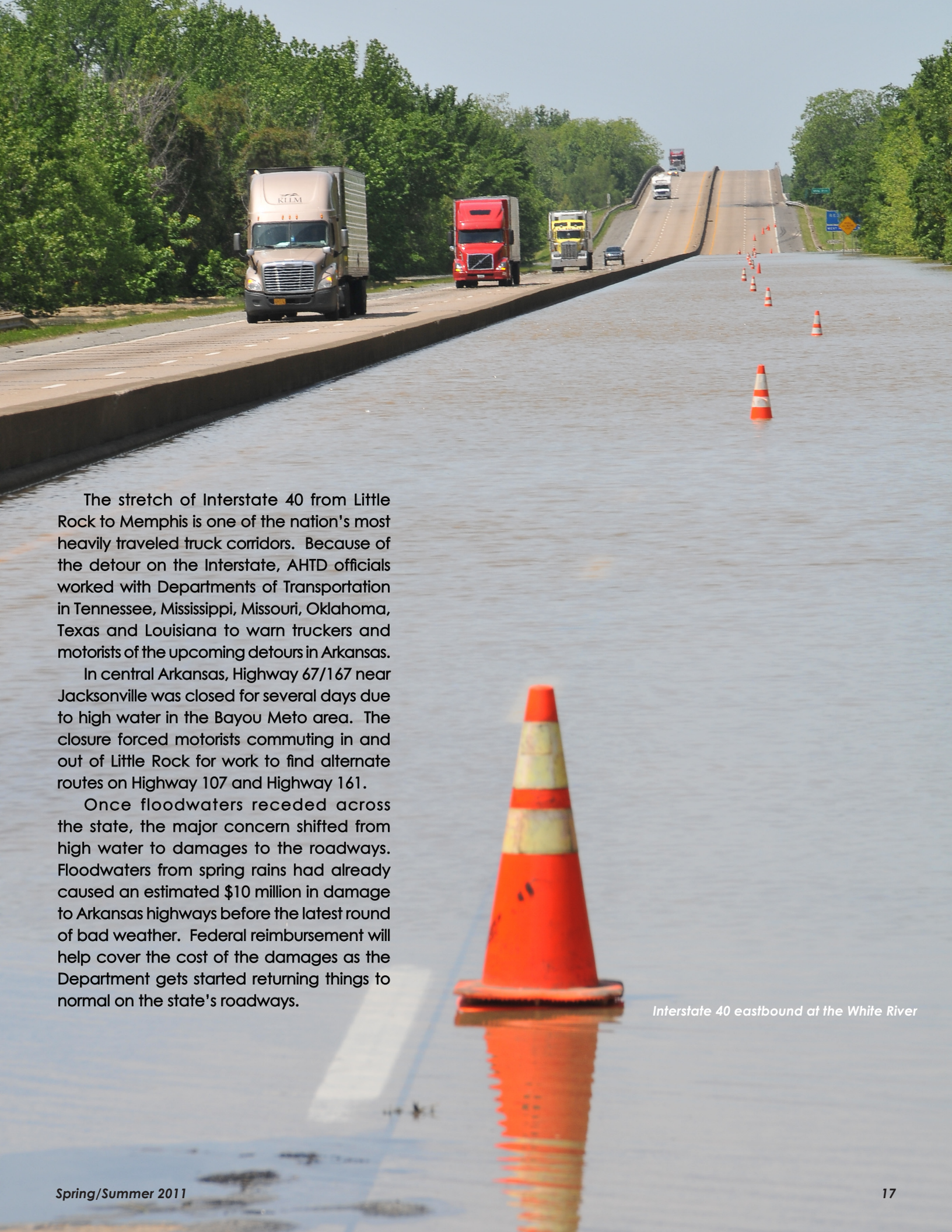
Highway 43 in Boone County



Highway 1 in Monroe County



Highway 412 in Lawrence County



The stretch of Interstate 40 from Little Rock to Memphis is one of the nation's most heavily traveled truck corridors. Because of the detour on the Interstate, AHTD officials worked with Departments of Transportation in Tennessee, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana to warn truckers and motorists of the upcoming detours in Arkansas.

In central Arkansas, Highway 67/167 near Jacksonville was closed for several days due to high water in the Bayou Meto area. The closure forced motorists commuting in and out of Little Rock for work to find alternate routes on Highway 107 and Highway 161.

Once floodwaters receded across the state, the major concern shifted from high water to damages to the roadways. Floodwaters from spring rains had already caused an estimated \$10 million in damage to Arkansas highways before the latest round of bad weather. Federal reimbursement will help cover the cost of the damages as the Department gets started returning things to normal on the state's roadways.

Interstate 40 eastbound at the White River

Balloon in the Sky Monitors Traffic Down Below

When AHTD engineers are monitoring traffic flow for future highway improvements, it can be a bit difficult to assess the traffic in a particular location when they're observing from the ground. A bird's eye view would be much more helpful.

Now the Department has a video system that will provide that aerial view. It features a helium balloon with a video camera attached to the bottom. When launched into the air, the system sends video of the highway location back to the ground and can provide more accurate data on the traffic flow and traffic counts in the area.

The balloons, in use around the world, are marketed by a company called Lighter Than Air Systems of Deland, Florida. Traffic study is just one way in which the balloons are used. The company has sold its gear to the U.S. Border Patrol and the U.S. Navy, among others.

In January, representatives from the company spent a few days with AHTD engineers to

practice launching and retrieving the Department's balloon and learning what the video system can do

The balloon, which is 13 feet in diameter, uses helium to gain altitude and can be inflated and deflated in approximately ten minutes. It rises to a height of 500 feet. A skirt wrapped on one side of the balloon assists in stabilization in windy conditions. A minimum of two people are needed to launch the balloon. The balloon and camera system are tethered to a winch on the back of a Department pickup truck. Once it is launched and in the air over a project location, the camera onboard can be operated by a joystick on the ground. The joystick rotates the camera and can also zoom in and out for better views.



Mike Schiffl, Cartographer IV, prepares the video camera before launch of the balloon.

The video feed is sent to a laptop computer stationed on the ground.

AHTD staff has done test flights with the balloon in an open field next to the Central Office.

"We began with a smaller balloon in training but company representatives with Lighter Than Air felt that balloon had a little too much movement so we now have a 13-foot balloon," says Mike Schiffel of the Planning and Research Division.

"Training has gone well but we'll always have to stay aware of obstacles such as power lines and poles."

AHTD staff plan to use the information gathered for better computer models for future highway improvements. Modeling is used to project how traffic will react under

certain conditions. Specific examples would include how traffic is flowing, where it becomes congested or how and when drivers switch lanes at a particular location. Aerial observation of such traffic behavior is effectively obtained by the new equipment.

Another version of the system the Department now has uses a telescoping pole and can raise a camera to a height of 58 feet. It can be utilized when wind conditions make it impossible to use the balloon effectively.

In March, staff took the balloon on its first location shoot to a site on Interstate 430 to monitor traffic in the Interstate 430/ Highway 10 area.

The data gathered from the video system is recorded and is expected to be a great help to AHTD staff who are monitoring a specific highway location.

"There is no limit to the amount of time we can record," Schiffel comments. "It all depends on what source you are recording to."

The number of ways to utilize the new equipment will increase with time.

"We've already had some interest in doing traffic counts with the equipment," Schiffel adds. "As more staff learn that the new equipment is available, they may adopt the idea of a helium balloon for their own applications."



Daniel Siskowski prepares to deflate the balloon. The balloon can be deflated or inflated within approximately ten minutes.



A similar video system mounted on a pole can be utilized on windy days.



Filled with helium, the balloon is raised into the air and tethered to a winch on an AHTD truck.



Live video from the balloon is monitored by the Department crew on the ground.

Peel Ferry Receives New Tugboats

If you travel up Highway 125 in northern Arkansas as far as you can go, you'll come to the end of the road at Bull Shoals Lake. That's where you'll find Arkansas' last operating ferry boat. Drive aboard and the Peel Ferry will take you across the lake where you can pick up Highway 125 again on its way to Missouri.

The Peel Ferry has been in operation since 1968. The tugboats that get the ferry back and forth across the lake, the Springbank tug and the St. Charles tug, are both 1967 models. Because of their age and the amount of work the tugs have put in through the years, the Department recently purchased two new tugboats to replace them using funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The new boats were delivered and put in the water in March.

For readers wondering why the Department uses two tugs, it's so there is never a time when motorists can't get across the lake.

"We use one barge and one tug at a time to haul traffic and the other is a spare to use during repairs and service so we don't have to shut down operation," says Mark Grozis, Peel Ferry Supervisor.

"The Springbank tug has 148,462 hours on its engine and the St. Charles tug has 182,571 hours," stated Grozis.

It is easy to see how all those hours could add up. The ferry operates 365 days a year from sunup to sundown. It makes a round trip approximately every 40 minutes.

The new tugs are about the same size as the old tugs but have more powerful engines.

"The old tugs had 210-horsepower Detroit engines in them and the new ones have 300-horsepower John Deere engines," Grozis stated.

The ferries can put that power to good use. In fact, the Department has ordered two new barges that will hold more cars than the present barges. The ferries carry about 85 vehicles a day.

"Our average riders include people sightseeing, going shopping, going on doctor visits, or people out fishing and camping," says Grozis.

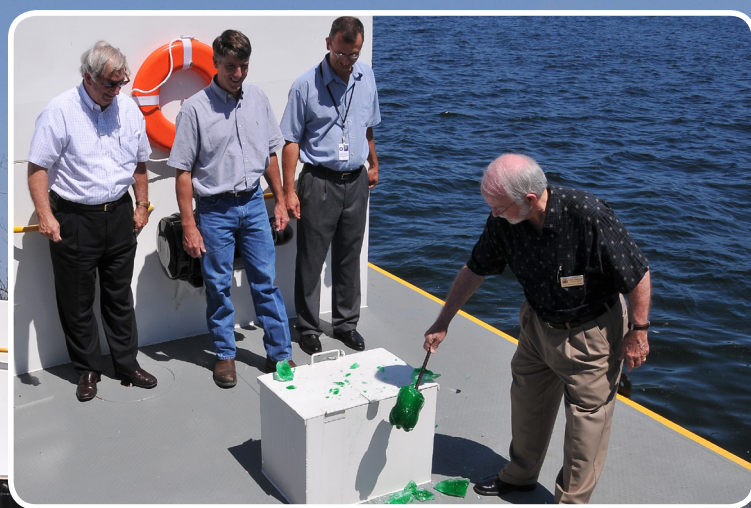
On June 22nd, AHTD staff and local dignitaries gathered on the shore of Bull Shoals Lake to officially christen the new tugs. With two brand new tugboats ready to go, the Peel Ferry should be able to get travelers back and forth across the lake to where they are going for years to come.



Preparations are made to launch into the water.



The tugs arrived at Bull Shoals Lake on a flatbed truck.



Dick Trammel (far right) officially christens one of two new tug boats in a traditional ceremony. Also present (l. to r.) were AHTD Director Flowers, State Representative Kelley Link and District 8 Engineer Steve Lawrence.




One of two new tugboats docked beside the old St. Charles tug.

The cabins were lifted onto the tugboat hulls after they arrived at Peel.

Welcome Center Landscaping Popular With Motorists

The number of "Visitor Comment Cards" arriving in the Public Affairs office, 27 at this particular time, really says it all... motorists are writing the Department to say how much they enjoy the landscaped gardens at the AHTD's Welcome Centers at West Memphis and Helena-West Helena, and rest areas at Palestine and Forrest City.



"Darrell Gaskin,
I just LOVE your
gardens. I wish I
could have
met you!"

*Darrel Gaskin,
Maintenance Aide II,
beside a bed of
Verbena.*

"The landscaping
was beautiful!
The nicest landscaping
and flowers we have
seen in any state."

The gardens at all four locations are the work of AHTD employee Darrell Gaskin, Maintenance Aid II, in District One. In addition to the comment cards, his hard work has even prompted a letter of praise from the Director of the Department of Parks & Tourism.

Gaskin has been working for the Department for quite a while but only in the past few years has he done much landscaping at the rest areas.

"I want to thank Joe Sartini for offering this landscaping job to me back in December of 2007," Gaskin states. "It has been the most enjoyable part of my nearly 35 years with the Department."

The landscaping work keeps Gaskin busy year round but by far the busiest time is in the spring.

"That's when all the weeds arrive!" he says jokingly. "But it is also a very rewarding time getting to watch the flowers emerge," he adds.

When the flowers do pop up for the season, they are a big hit with motorists pulling in off of the road.

"They grab their cameras out of their cars, it is very rewarding to me just to see their faces."

The admirers are full of questions too. They ask about the types of flowers, where different varieties can survive, and what type of soil and fertilizer Gaskin uses.

"I have started using labels to identify the plants in all of the areas," Gaskin adds.

Not only do motorists walk away with answers to their questions, some actually get to take seeds home with them as well.

"I harvest the seeds and occasionally give an envelope of them to passers by."

With gardens in four locations, Gaskin has quite a few areas to tend to. The first garden was at the West Memphis Welcome Center. With the help of several crew members, he had trucks bring in several loads of dirt to build raised beds around the rest area. Then he went to the Forrest City rest area and spent a few days there. Then it was on to West Helena and Palestine.

Gaskin sometimes has summer employees helping out beginning in late May and continuing to early August, but the main help comes from Bill Kinard, a Roller-Operator in District One.

"He is very knowledgeable in all phases of landscape design, including selecting the best flowers for sunny or shady places. He also knows a weed when one emerges, which is very helpful."

Weeds may be hard to find because there are so many different varieties of plants and flowers in the gardens.

"Walking through the Forrest City rest area, I once counted 78 different varieties of plants," states Gaskin.

"The flower gardens here are an attraction in themselves. The members of our motorcoach tour group thoroughly enjoyed walking around reading the signs that identified the plants."

"I choose plants based on bloom time, resulting in something always in bloom from February to late October. Flowering begins with many varieties of daffodils in January and February right on through the season to chrysanthemums in October."

And does Gaskin have a favorite location among the locations he gardens?

"My favorite location is the Forrest City rest area because of its place in Crowley's Ridge. It's all flat farmland in Eastern Arkansas so

"Loved the landscaping – probably the nicest rest stop I have seen in the U.S.A."





“The gardens are fantastic! I thought maybe a master garden club maintained them, but no - congratulations to the man who does.”

the ridge gives a natural landscape” says Gaskin. “All we had to do was plant a few flowers to get started. I also built a covered walkway to assist visitors as they access the stairway and hillside sidewalk.”

In addition to his work for the Department, Gaskin has a large garden at his home in Forrest City.

“I use many of the same flowers in the rest areas that I use at home. My favorites are the Asian lilies, peonies and roses (tea and knockout rose variety).”

Gaskin is familiar with the local nurseries in the area. “I try to use the nurseries that are closest to the area I’m working in for the flowers, fertilizers and plantings.”

“I bought a large number of flowers in the first year but buying has decreased over the years due to the natural spreading of the flowers and ability to propagate (divide). A senior master gardener once told me that the first year your garden sleeps, the second year it creeps and the third year it leaps. She was right on the button! The day lilies are the most used flowers because they multiply so quickly. They are all in full bloom from late May through June and sometimes into July.”

“Now with all the perennials in place, all I have to do is lift and separate and keep spreading them from year to year,” Gaskin states.

Gaskin definitely has a love of gardening and is obviously good at it. As his perennials continue to spread each year, the number of people who appreciate his work will likely be increasing as well.



“The flower gardens are a welcome addition to our stop in West Memphis. Our thank you to those who care for them.”

AHTD Hosts Boys State Delegates

Arkansas Boys State was held in Central Arkansas the first week in June. It is a week-long program in civics education for high school juniors. As part of their annual program, the group paid a visit to the Department to learn more about the operations of state agencies and the AHTD specifically.

Approximately twenty delegates were on hand at the Central Office for a presentation that included information on the Department's role, the operating budget and steps required for constructing a highway. Programs such as the 24-Hour Litter Hotline, the state's Scenic Byways and the Wildflower Program were also discussed.

Following the presentation, the group toured the Materials Building where they learned more about tests on soil strengths, asphalt and concrete compression.

Arkansas Boys State is sponsored by the American Legion and has been in operation for nearly 70 years. Over 40,000 Arkansas youth have participated in the weeklong camp.



Ellie Watson, Laboratory Coordinator, explains testing procedures to Boys State delegates in the AHTD Materials Lab in Little Rock.

AHTD Now Accepting Bids Electronically

On November 16th of 2010, the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department joined a growing number of Departments of Transportation (DOTs) across the country that are now using the Internet to accept electronic bids on construction projects.

The Georgia DOT implemented the nation's first Internet-based bidding system in 1998. The process has been so successful, many other DOTs have followed. In fact, State DOTs have been the leaders in phasing the electronic bidding process into the way companies do business. A total of 41 DOTs across the country now use electronic bidding.

With the AHTD's electronic bidding service, called "Bid Express," contractors can receive all the necessary information they need to prepare their bid over the Internet. They can proceed in preparing their bid and, when finished, submit their completed bid proposal over the Internet. The AHTD is able to electronically process the bid information. The contractor receives a receipt from Bid Express when the bid is received on the server. Security is assured by the use of maximum encryption technology, digital signatures and private and public key codes. Through the system of private keys, the bid files are unreadable by anyone except the DOT. Contractors can withdraw or replace their bids at any time prior to opening on bid letting day.

Prior to the first electronic bids being accepted, AHTD staffers in the Programs and Contracts Division were trained and then tested the system for several months.

"We had our Bid Express training in February of 2010," stated Bill Bradberry, Staff Project Development Engineer in

the Programs and Contracts Division. "There were six to eight contractors that helped us with testing from March through September. We then had over 100 people from the contracting community in for training, in October, before we went live with the November letting."

According to Bradberry, 65% of the bids on November 16th were electronic bids. There was at least one electronic bid on each project. Bids on one particular project were all electronic.

"We received 31 Internet bids and 17 of the traditional paper bids," Bradberry added. "We were pleasantly surprised by how many Internet bids were submitted. That tells me the contractors were ready for an Internet bidding option in Arkansas."

Internet bidding provides benefits to Departments of Transportation and contractors.

"It's quicker, easier and more efficient," says Bradberry. "Contractors no longer have to travel to Little Rock to submit a bid. They can submit a bid up to the last minute from their home, office or anywhere with an Internet connection. A contractor from western Arkansas told me after the letting that it couldn't have been any easier."

Bradberry was asked about the future of electronic bidding.

"I think we will see more and more of it. It's up to the contracting community, but based on the first letting, it looks like everyone is heading that way."

"This is a significant milestone for everyone in improving the bid letting process," stated AHTD Director Dan Flowers. "It's an easier process and less costly for both contractors and the Department. We're excited about its use in the future."



(l. to r.) Lorie Tudor, David Fillipps, Bill Bradberry and Tammy Goshien look over construction bids after receiving them electronically for the first time. Tudor, Bradberry and Goshien are in the AHTD Programs & Contracts Division. Fillipps is with Info Tech of Gainesville, Florida.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Highway 5 - Bryant Culvert Construction

The AHTD held a Public Involvement Meeting in Bryant on November 9th, 2010, to discuss plans for installing a triple barrel box culvert on Highway 5. The new culvert will replace a smaller one in order to improve drainage between Henson Place and Forest Drive. A total of 37 people attended the meeting which was held at Collegeville Elementary School.

Highway 62 - Garfield

A Design Public Hearing was held in Garfield to discuss plans for improvements to Highway 62. A total of 217 people attended the hearing at Garfield First Baptist Church on November 18, 2010, to learn more about plans for widening Highway 62 to five lanes. The improvements would extend from just north of Avoca eastward to the community of Gateway.

Highway 5 - Mountain View

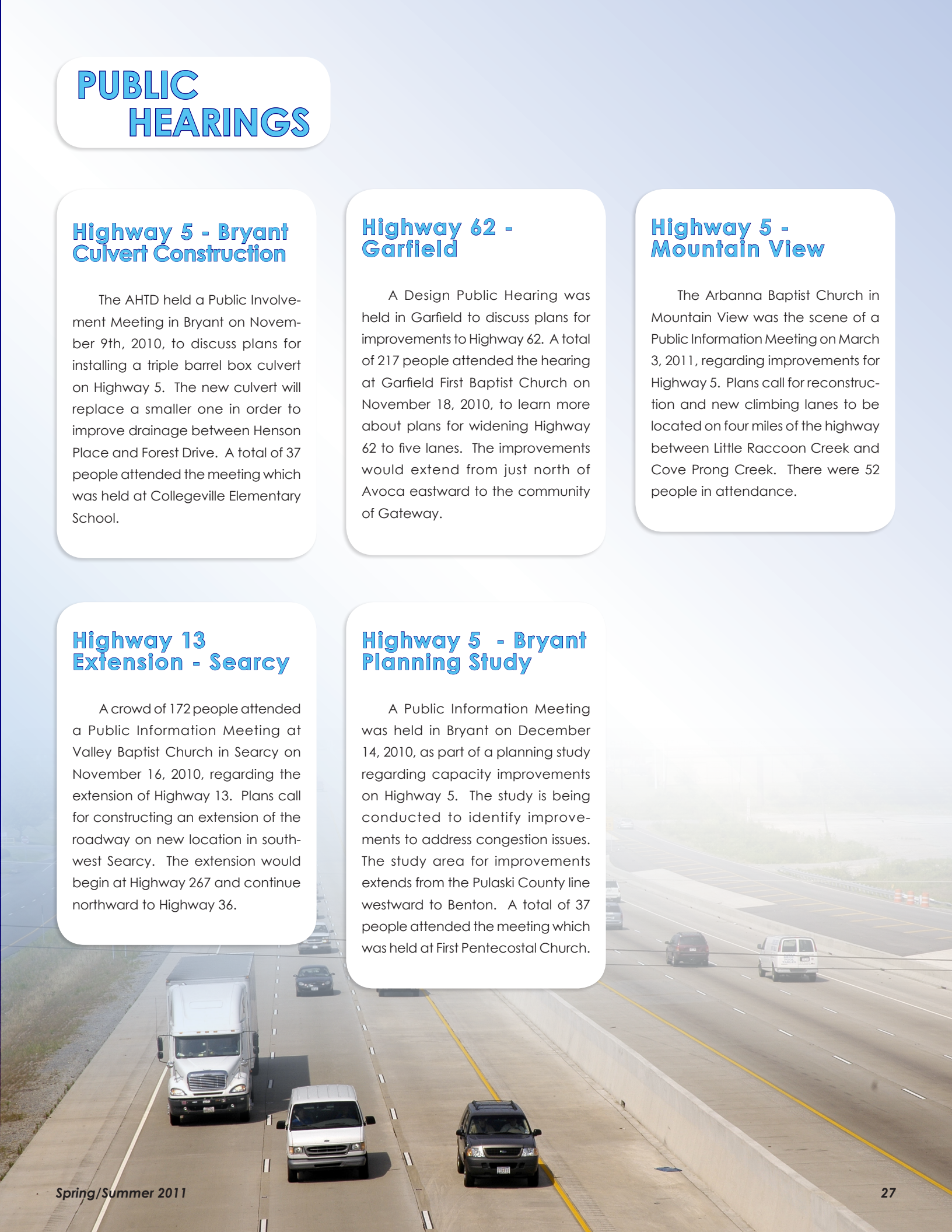
The Arbanna Baptist Church in Mountain View was the scene of a Public Information Meeting on March 3, 2011, regarding improvements for Highway 5. Plans call for reconstruction and new climbing lanes to be located on four miles of the highway between Little Raccoon Creek and Cove Prong Creek. There were 52 people in attendance.

Highway 13 Extension - Searcy

A crowd of 172 people attended a Public Information Meeting at Valley Baptist Church in Searcy on November 16, 2010, regarding the extension of Highway 13. Plans call for constructing an extension of the roadway on new location in southwest Searcy. The extension would begin at Highway 267 and continue northward to Highway 36.

Highway 5 - Bryant Planning Study

A Public Information Meeting was held in Bryant on December 14, 2010, as part of a planning study regarding capacity improvements on Highway 5. The study is being conducted to identify improvements to address congestion issues. The study area for improvements extends from the Pulaski County line westward to Benton. A total of 37 people attended the meeting which was held at First Pentecostal Church.



DEPARTMENT

East Broadway Project Ready in N. Little Rock

A Highway 70 (East Broadway) widening project in North Little Rock was dedicated on October 29, 2010. Commissioners Carl Rosenbaum and Cliff Hoofman joined with North Little Rock Mayor Patrick Hays to celebrate the completion of the final phase of the project.

Two contracts were awarded to widen Highway 70 from Interstate 30 eastward to Highway 165. The first phase started in August of 2007 with a \$3.5 million contract to Weaver-Bailey Contractors to widen the road from Locust Street to Cornish Street



North Little Rock Mayor Patrick Hays (with scissors) cuts the ribbon on East Broadway in North Little Rock.

and also included work to improve the grade at the site of the old railroad overpass near Verizon Arena.

Phase two was an \$8.9 million contract awarded to Mobely Contractors in January of 2008. This final segment continued the widening to Highway 165. The new five-lane roadway is a welcome improvement for the 20,000 vehicles that drive it daily.

"I've been working to get this project done during my entire tenure on the Highway Commission," said Rosenbaum. Hoofman noted that he and Mayor Hays have talked about the project for over 20 years and "I'm happy that we finally got it done."



Two phases of work included \$12.4 million to widen Highway 70 to five lanes from Interstate 30 eastward to Highway 165. Over 20,000 vehicles travel the heavily commercialized roadway on a daily basis.

Highway 82 Project Completed in Crossett

Commission Chairman Madison Murphy led highway officials to Crossett for a December 15, 2010, dedication of work on Highway 82. AHTD Director Dan Flowers and Federal Highway Administration's Arkansas Division Administrator Sandra Otto were also present.

The project was to widen Highway 82 to five lanes from Highway 133 eastward for 2.4 miles. The \$5.9 million contract, let in November 2007 to Ideal Construction Company, included minor drain structures, curb and gutter, sidewalks and traffic signals.

"A lot of development is happening along Highway 82 and this widening project will help with the added traffic," said Murphy. "In just the past year we also completed widening work on Highway 133 and we have more of that work scheduled."

Executive Director of the Arkansas Good Roads Transportation Council Johnnie Bolin of Crossett commended the Highway Commission for their commitment to Southeast Arkansas.



Commission Chairman Madison Murphy (r.) and Arkansas Good Roads Transportation Council Executive Director Johnnie Bolin, of Crossett, visit at the ribbon cutting event for Highway 82.

DEDICATIONS

Highway 49 Job Dedicated In Paragould

A large crowd gathered in Paragould on a cold morning on November 19, 2010, to officially dedicate completion of a Highway 49 widening project. Commission Vice Chairman John Ed Regenold and AHTD Director Dan Flowers made the trip to join Chamber members and local officials in the ceremony.

The purpose of the project was to widen 1.35 miles of Highway 49 to five-lanes between the intersections at Highway 135 and

Highway 412. The \$6.5 million contract was awarded in January of 2008 to Garry Meadows Construction Company.

A \$122,000 traffic signal project approximately 2.5 miles south, at the intersection of Highway 49 and Highway 358 (McDaniel Road), was completed earlier in the year.

"These projects are just a continuation of our commitment to improve Highway 49 in this area," said Flowers. Chamber officials noted that these improvements greatly help with their economic development plans.



Paragould officials braved a cold morning to officially dedicate the newly widened section of Highway 49 from Highway 135 to Highway 412. AHTD Director Dan Flowers (with scissors) and Commission Vice Chairman John Ed Regenold were on hand for the ceremony. This is just one of several recently completed projects in the Paragould area.



A large crowd of local Crossett area residents gathered for the official cutting of the ribbon for the recently completed project to widen Highway 82. The area has seen a recent influx of economic development and the newly widened roadway will help ease the heightened number of vehicles that have followed.

Letters to the Department

June 3, 2011

Chief Ron Burks
Arkansas Highway Police

On behalf of the employees of MFA Oil Company, I want to thank you for the Department's involvement in a safety meeting we held. Sgt. Darren Smith gave an outstanding presentation and demonstration of a Level 1 roadside inspection, which was well received by our CMV drivers.

Since the inception of the federal government's CSA initiative, we are very much in tune with the challenges that lie ahead in maintaining a safe fleet and drivers. The efforts made by Sgt. Smith certainly helped us raise the bar on fleet safety.

Sincerely,
Jerry Taylor, President
MFA Oil Company

November 16, 2010

Corporal Brian Harwood

On behalf of the ATA Safety Management Council, thank you again for serving as a panelist and offering insights on the topic, "CSA Experiences: Inspector-Investigator-Carrier Perspective" at the 2010 Safety & Human Resources National Conference & Exhibition.

This year's conference was judged a huge success by attendees. We credit those of you who so generously shared your knowledge and experience with these safety professionals from across the country. Attendees were equally generous with their praise and I am grateful for your involvement and contributions.

Warmest Regards,
Susan Chandler,
Executive Director

November 22, 2010

Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department:

Thank you so much for you and your mowing crew that mowed Highway 69 recently. We really appreciate the great job that they have done. Thanks so much.

Donald and Maude Roberts
Newport, Arkansas

January 12, 2011

[email]:

This is a message to tell you what a GREAT job your Department did in keeping Interstate 530 open for commuters during the winter weather. I travel from Little Rock to Pine Bluff every day and have no trouble. I work for the Department of Correction and I had to be at work - and I was.

Steve Edwards

January 12, 2011

Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department:

I just wanted to take a moment from my day and give thanks for the determination and hard work of all involved in clearing the way after the terrible snow event.

I was very grateful for my safe and quick commute to work this morning. As always, another great job was accomplished. I pray that the situation that occurred on Interstate 30 in Saline County will be overcome soon.

Herchell Angeron
Campus Manager
Agape Church

November 29, 2010

Mr. Dan Flowers, Director

Thank you for [the Department's] gift of \$1,000.00 to Arkansas Children's Hospital. Your gift is an important contribution to our mission of providing the best possible care to our young patients.

Every day at Arkansas Children's Hospital, physicians, scientists, support personnel and volunteers work to improve and save the lives of sick and injured children. Your gift is essential to the work we do, and it is so meaningful to the families who will benefit from your generosity.

Thanks to friends like you, we can continue to provide care, love and hope to patients and their families, while growing to meet their every-changing needs. With your donation, we can make the most of the tools available to treat sick children today and support research that will develop new cures and treatments for future generations of children.

Your gift is helping us make a difference in the lives of children. Thank you very much for this generous expression of your care and concern.

With deepest gratitude,
Jennifer B. Carlisle
Vice President

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The AHTD's \$1,000 gift to Arkansas Children's Hospital was originally presented to the Department by TRC as part of the "Top Projects of the Decade Award" received in late 2010. The award recognized AHTD's work on the Interstate 40 Mississippi River Bridge Seismic Retrofit Project. TRC is a national engineering services, consulting and construction management firm.]

May 27, 2011

Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department

Michael Guess went the extra mile to check on our problem on Interstate 40 near Clarksville at about 10:30 a.m. on Friday.

We had a front tire blow. We didn't know how to change the tire and he did it all and would take no money for his service. Thank you for the good employee you hired. He made our day!

James & Grydene McDonald
Ponca City, Oklahoma

January 24, 2011

[email]:

I want to recognize and commend a group of AHTD employees that have gone above and beyond in the last bouts of winter weather affecting our roadways. I live in Bigelow (Perry County). When the first bad weather hit on January 10th, our roadways were great compared to other surrounding areas because of the hard work and preparations taken by the Perry County office of the AHTD.

I work in downtown Little Rock and on Wednesday, the 12th, I had no problems at all driving in Perry County, even on Wye Mountain, which is normally difficult in good weather.

Then with the latest round of weather on the 20th, the proper procedures were taken and the Perry County roads were prepped and cleared with no problems traveling throughout the county.

I know working during those conditions is dangerous and taxing, so I want to recognize the hard work of this specific office that went above and beyond to make sure the roads of Perry County were taken care of.

Tracy Starks, RN
Student Health Resource Officer
Medicaid In The Schools (MITS)

November 21, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

On November 5th, my wife and I visited your offices to obtain maps of Van Buren County, for research of my wife's ancestor's homesteads.

The assistance provided by Ashala Doster in Map Sales and Sharon Hawkins in the Mapping Section was outstanding. We were very impressed by their professionalism and the personal attention we received. Sharon even went out of her way to find old documents pertaining to Van Buren County.

You should be very proud to have these two ladies as representatives of the AHTD.

Sincerely,
Cal Hunnius



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

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