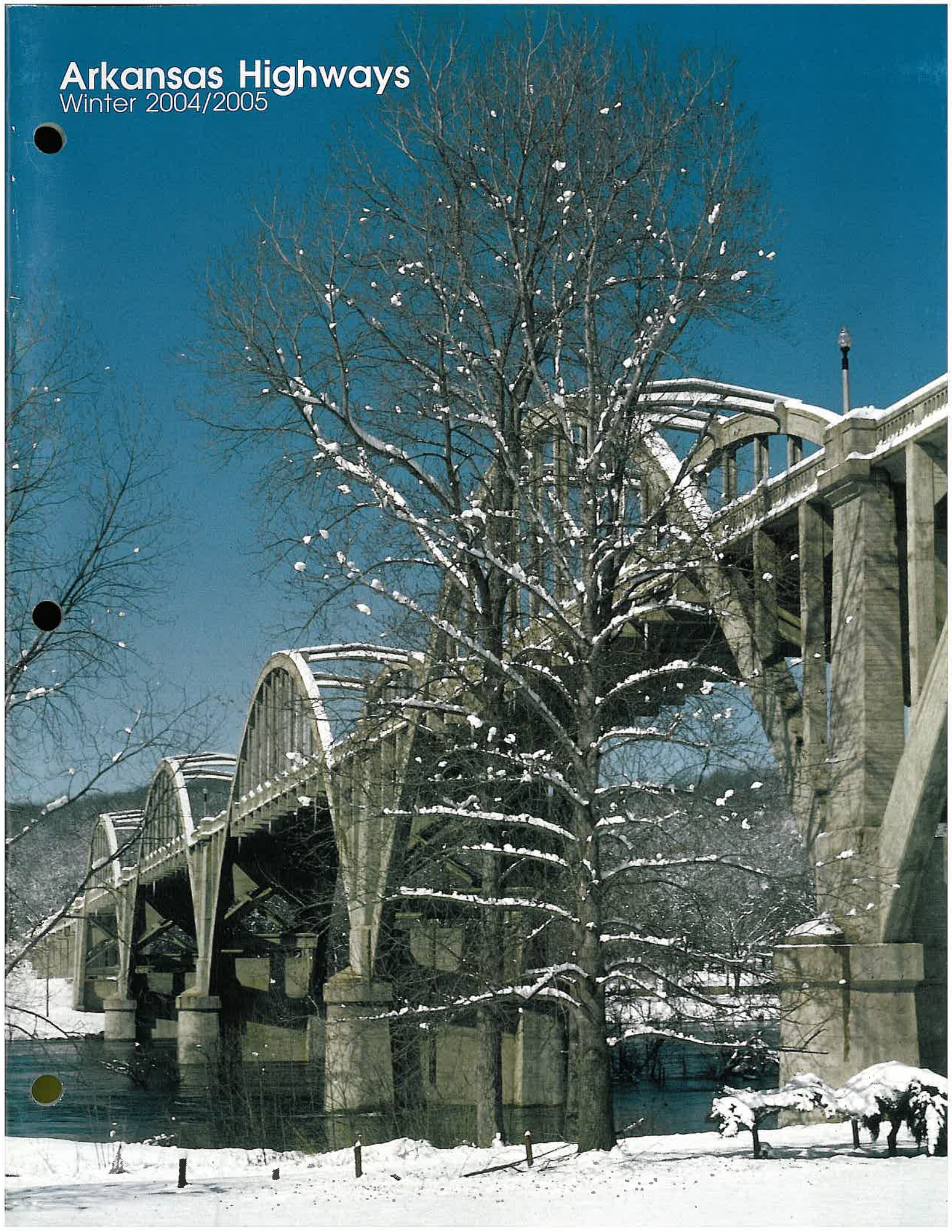


Arkansas Highways

Winter 2004/2005



Director's Message



The end of the calendar year allows us to look at our accomplishments and anticipate the future of our highways in Arkansas.

The accomplishments of this year are a reflection of the hard work and dedication of both our Highway Commission members and the employees of the Department.

2004 found our Commission and staff holding ten regional meetings around the state to share the results of the Arkansas State Highway Needs Study and learn what projects are important to our citizens.

Dedication ceremonies were held to cut ribbons on several major projects around the state, which included the Forrest City Bypass, the Ashdown Bypass, Loop 245 in Texarkana, Highway 549 south of Texarkana, the new White River Bridge at DeValls Bluff and new Arkansas Welcome Centers at El Dorado and Texarkana, to name a few.

This summer, Federal Highway Administrator Mary Peters came to Arkansas to see new technologies being used in highway construction in our state.

Department employees and programs saw achievements recognized. District Engineer Harold Beaver was named Engineer of the Year by the Arkansas Society of Professional Engineers. AHTD employees took first place in the Regional Equipment Operators Rodeo for the second consecutive year. And, the Department's public involvement process was honored by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association.

The Department has a deep appreciation for those employees who have taken time away from work and family to serve the U.S. through military service. Those employees are featured in this issue of *Arkansas Highways*.

As 2005 begins, Commissioner J.W. "Buddy" Benafield's term on the Commission ends. Commissioner Benafield has been a vital part of the Commission since 1993 and we are proud of the progress the Highway and Transportation Department has made in every area during his tenure. I personally want to thank Commissioner Benafield for his hard work, direction and support of Department employees.

The Department is nearing completion of the Interstate Rehabilitation Program (IRP). Close to 300 miles of interstate have now been completed under the IRP. The Arkansas Legislature convenes at the state capitol in January, and in Washington D.C., we hope to see the federal highway-spending bill approved soon. We look forward to the task of providing motorists in Arkansas with the best highway system possible.


Director of Highways and Transportation

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION



Prissy Hickerson
Chairman



Jonathan Barnett
Vice Chairman



Carl S. Rosenbaum
Member



R. Madison Murphy
Member



J.W. "Buddy" Benafield
Member

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Arkansas Highways

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department - Winter 2004/2005

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Commissioner's Term Comes to an End:



Final Comments from Commissioner J. W. "Buddy" Benafield



J. W. "Buddy" Benafield's term on the Highway Commission comes to an end in January 2005. Benafield was first appointed to the Commission in June 1993 to fill the unexpired term of Rodney Slater. At the conclusion of that term in January 1995, Benafield became only the second person in the history of the Commission to be reappointed to back-to-back terms when then-Governor Jim Guy Tucker appointed him to a full 10 years on the Commission.

A native of Coy in Lonoke County, Benafield had a distinguished career in public service even before his time on the Highway Commission. Aside from his numerous board and commission appointments, he served as a member of the Little Rock Board of Directors, and as Mayor of both England and Little Rock.

Benafield recently took time to answer questions from AHTD Public Affairs Officer Randy Ort about the progress and accomplishments of the Highway and Transportation Department during his years on the Commission.

ORT: Congratulations on a successful term on the Highway Commission. You have served almost 12 years on the Commission - the second longest tenure in history and only the second person to be reappointed to successive terms. That's quite an honor.

BENAFIELD: It is an honor, a very rewarding honor. During the 18 months or so when I was finishing up the original 10-year term, I traveled my advocacy area learning as much as possible about the conditions and needs. So when Governor Tucker reappointed me to a full 10-year term, I felt like I kind of had a head start - I had a good idea of some things I wanted to see done. Consequently, I'm very proud of the accomplishments that have been made in the last 11½ years.

ORT: Is a 10-year term too long, is it not long enough, or is it about right?

BENAFIELD: Well, I think it's about right. The general public doesn't have a good understanding about the amount of time it takes to plan, design and construct a highway project. Anything shorter than 10 years and it becomes difficult for a Commissioner to see some planned projects come to fruition. Because it takes so long for projects to become realities, I believe a Commissioner has to have a long-range vision. A shorter term in office would make it difficult to establish and implement consistent long-range priorities. So, to answer your question, I think 10 years is about right. I certainly wouldn't be in favor of anything shorter.

ORT: What do you consider some major accomplishments that occurred during your tenure?

BENAFIELD: I guess if we hadn't accomplished much, this would be an easy question. But I'm happy to say it's a hard question to answer because we have made so much progress. I hope I don't leave anything out, but I'm sure I will.

Two projects that I got to work on that were already underway when I came on the Commission were the completion of Highway 63 from I-55 up to Jonesboro and the widening of Highway 1 between Wynne and Marianna. The Highway 1 work included the Forrest City Bypass which we just dedicated a short time ago. I was pleased to see that project completed.

On the Highway 63 work, not only did we finish what was already started, but we have carried that to the next level by getting it designated as 'Future I-555' from Jonesboro to I-55. Work is now underway to make the needed improvements to fully implement that designation. And, we have almost com-

pleted the widening of Highway 63 from Jonesboro up to the Walnut Ridge/Hoxie bypass. I say "almost" because we are finishing up the last project on that segment now.

And speaking of the Walnut Ridge/Hoxie bypass, that was another major accomplishment. That bypass, of course, is part of the Highway 67 corridor that will eventually proceed to the Missouri state line. I'm proud to say that work is progressing on the Highway 67 project from Newport northeastward on a fully controlled access, Interstate-type facility that will eventually tie into the Walnut Ridge/Hoxie bypass.

I know I'm going to leave something out, but another that comes immediately to mind is the widening of Highway 49 from Marvell to Walnut Corner just west of Helena, and the construction of passing lanes on Highway 49 from Marvell to Brinkley. Then, there are the new bridges at Augusta and on Highway 412 at the Missouri state line. We've been able to build passing lanes in several locations, like Highway 64 in Woodruff and Cross Counties, and Highway 62 in Clay County.

One area of improvement that I'm particularly proud of is what we've been able to do regarding bridges. I'm a farmer, so I know that narrow bridges, especially in rural farming areas, can be a problem. In recent years, we've been able to upgrade dozens of bridges on highways like 34 and 90, and many, many others. Those might not be the larger, higher profile projects like some others, but they are extremely important to the citizens who use those facilities everyday.

I'm proud of all these accomplishments, but I'm also proud of the groundwork this Commission has laid for the future. Earlier this year, the Commission designated what's known as the Arkansas Primary Highway Network. This is a system of major highways in the state that makes up only about 50% of our total mileage, but it carries over 90% of the

traffic volume. This network, when you look at it on a map, forms a grid that literally serves every part of the state. If future Commissions use this grid as a primary focus for planning and implementing improvements, we can achieve the goal of establishing a connected network of multi-lane highways that will be attractive to business and industry, as well as tourists and other motorists.

I also want to mention two pieces of legislation that the Commission helped pass last session that, in my opinion, could be very important in the years to come. One is the Design/Build legislation that will let Arkansas undertake, for the first time, major projects with a single contractor handling both the design and construction. I think this can lead to huge cost savings on some of our larger

projects. Also, the recently enacted toll road legislation clearly defines the Commission's role in being able to utilize toll roads, again, for the first time in Arkansas, on certain projects. I think both these laws, while not utilized yet, will prove to be very beneficial in the years to come to help stretch our highway dollars even further.

ORT: Are there any projects you would like to have seen get started (or finished) during your tenure that did not get done?

BENAFIELD: Unfortunately, there are. From a statewide perspective, I-49 and I-69 are two major projects that come to mind. Progress has been made in terms of planning and design on both



projects in recent years, but I wish we were farther along on construction.

The one project I've probably worked hardest on without the desired results is the White River Bridge on Highway 79 at Clarendon. The Department staff and I have put in countless hours trying to get that project under construction. We're close, but not there yet. There's been a tremendous amount of coordination between the Department and other state and federal agencies. Like I said, we're close, but that's one project I really wanted to see get started while I was on the Commission.

ORT: In your original interview for the magazine in 1993, you mentioned the people's impatience in wanting road improvements. What has the Commission been able to do to address that?

BENAFIELD: Back in 1993 when I came on the Commission, the HIP (Highway Improvement Program) was only two years old. The people saw a list of projects and a map with work planned in all 75 counties and they loved it. What they didn't want to understand was that it would take 15 years to perform all that work. In other words, everyone wanted their project to be one of the first. Now here we are, some 13 years later, we've done more work overall in the HIP than we originally planned, but we still haven't gotten to all the projects like the people expected. I think the people learned from that experience that the pay-as-you-go method of funding projects wasn't getting the job done fast enough.

In my opinion, that lack of patience is what has contributed to the public's overall satisfaction with the IRP (Interstate Rehabilitation Program). The IRP

was designed to provide a great amount of results in a shortened period of time. The citizens authorized the issuance of bonds for highway work for the first time in about 50 years for the IRP. The Commission was able to issue \$575 million in bonds, and we then leveraged that money to produce nearly \$1 billion in construction contracts. That's very efficient use of the taxpayer's dollars.

The Commission looked at the IRP as an opportunity to build some public trust in alternative methods of financing, and I believe we've been very successful in accomplishing that. The key to building that trust and to a successful program was getting the jobs done as promised. That's where the Department staff and contractors deserve a pat on the back. We awarded nearly \$1 billion in Interstate construction contracts over a three-year period of time, with completion scheduled over a five-year period. That's a tremendous amount of work, and it showed the public what we could do when we have the necessary resources.

Another way we've been able to address some needs faster is by partnering with local communities. This is a concept that's really catching on around the state now, but the idea was kind of "pioneered" in Jonesboro. I worked very closely with the City of Jonesboro to work out a plan to let them participate to a greater degree in the funding of certain projects. This creates a win-win situation because the city gets their priorities met quicker, and it allows the Commission to spread our funds a little farther. I'm glad this is catching on in other parts of the state now.

ORT: The appointment to the Highway Commission was one you stated you wanted. Looking back now, do you have any regrets?

BENAFIELD: No, I have no regrets about serving. My only regret would be not getting as much accomplished as I





would have liked. But given the funding limitations that we face and the tremendous amount of needs that we have, I think it's been a successful 11½ years. Like I said earlier, there's more I personally would like to have seen done - I-49, I-69, U. S. 67, and the Clarendon Bridge to name a few - but overall, no, no regrets.

ORT: You knew serving on the Commission would be time consuming - was it more than you thought?

BENAFIELD: Not really, I expected to spend a lot of time being a Commissioner. It's a very demanding, yet rewarding job.

The job of Commissioner is tough, but I can't imagine what it would be like if we didn't have the staff that we have at the Department. I can only speak for myself right now, but I know the other Commissioners feel this way. I have never been around a harder working,

more dedicated group of employees than we have right here at the Department.

I believe that work ethic begins at the top, and the leadership at the Department is the best I've ever seen. We have a Director that's been recognized at both the state and national levels as a true leader in the transportation industry. Our engineering staff is top-notch - just look at the experience they bring to the table on each and every project.

Though being a Commissioner is demanding, in some ways it's easy compared to being on staff. The Commission sets the policy and the direction. Then it's up to the staff to carry that out. I think the IRP is a great example of that. The Commission, along with the Governor and the legislature, fought for the opportunity, but it's the Department staff that made the program successful.

ORT: Given the opportunity, would you serve on the Commission again?

BENAFIELD: No, even though I enjoyed it and it was very rewarding, 11½ years is long enough. It was definitely one of the greatest honors I've had in my life, and I've met so many wonderful people, but it's time for me to move on.

ORT: Any closing comments?

BENAFIELD: Just to say "thank you" to everyone on the Department staff. I don't see it, but I've been told that I can be a very demanding person. (laughing) Seriously, I know that I sometimes ask a lot of people. But I can honestly say I don't think I've been let down once. I've met many employees, but I know there's even more I never had the opportunity to meet. I wish I could shake everyone's hand and thank them personally, but I won't have that chance. So, a heartfelt "thank you" to all those who have helped me in the last 11½ years.



Director Dan Flowers Receives Recognition

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) Director Dan Flowers has been the recipient of two awards recently.

Flowers has received the Thomas H. MacDonald Award from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) for his service in the transportation industry.

AASHTO's MacDonald Award is the most prestigious award given by the association. Since 1957, it has recognized outstanding achievement in the fields of highway administration, engineering and research. It is given to a state transportation professional who has rendered continuous outstanding service over an extended period, or who has made some exceptional contribution to the art and science of highway engineering. Nominees are judged by a panel of their peers in the state highway and transportation community.

"Dan's professionalism and dedication to his state and to transportation in general have made him a respected advocate and leader for transportation issues," the Award's Committee writes of Flowers.

"It is great that a national transportation group has recognized Dan for his work," stated Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman J. W. "Buddy" Benafield.

Flowers received the award in September at an AASHTO annual conference in Philadelphia.

In October, the University of Arkansas took the time to honor Flowers, who is a 1969 graduate of the U. of A. Flowers became the namesake of the Engineering Research Center's newest addition, the Dan Flowers Education and Training Facility.



AHTD Director Dan Flowers (holding the MacDonald Award) with Commissioners (l. to r.) R. Madison Murphy, Chairman Buddy Benafield, Vice-Chairman Prissy Hickerson, Jonathan Barnett and Carl Rosenbaum.



Above: (l. to r.) MBTC Director Dr. Melissa Tooley and AHTD Director Dan Flowers



Right: (l. to r.) Arkansas Highway Commissioners Jonathan Barnett and Vice-Chairman Prissy Hickerson, AHTD Director Dan Flowers' wife Sara, Dan Flowers and Commission Chairman Buddy Benafield.

The dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony was held on October 29, 2004. Those in attendance included current and former Highway Commissioners and AHTD staff, numerous transportation industry representatives, members of the university administration, members of the Professional Advisory Board of the Mack-Blackwell Rural Transportation Center (MBTC), MBTC faculty and staff, and elected officials including U.S. Congressman John Boozman. Flowers' wife, Sara, his mother, Myrtle, daughters Jennifer Remy and Lea Baker, and grandson Will Baker, were also in attendance.

The new facility is part of the Center for Training Transportation Professionals (CTTP) located within the Engineering Research Center. It features complete multimedia capabilities and a video conferencing system. The CTTP is the education and training arm of the MBTC, a national research center located on the U. of A. campus. The CTTP provides technical training and certifications for AHTD personnel and contractors from Arkansas and many other states.

"If I were to name one person who is most responsible for the success of the Mack-Blackwell Transportation Center, it would be Dan Flowers," said Dr. Melissa Tooley, Director of the MBTC. "His strong support for our programs and his vocal advocacy for the MBTC have created opportunities that have greatly enhanced our ability to serve Arkansas and rural America. We are proud to honor him by dedicating this education and training facility in his name."

Nation's Top Highway Official Tours Highway 67/167 Construction Site

Federal Highway Administrator Mary Peters paid a visit to Arkansas on June 15th and 16th to meet with the Arkansas State Highway Commission and to get a firsthand look at the construction work on Highway 67/167 in North Little Rock.

Peters' first order of business during her visit was to sit down with members of the Highway Commission to discuss the status of the Highway Reauthorization Bill and alternative methods of financing highway construction, and to learn about upcoming highway projects in the state of Arkansas.

The following day, Peters traveled to a construction job on Highway 67/167 in the McCain Boulevard area of North Little Rock to get a look at some of the new technologies being used to save taxpayer dollars and provide for a longer lasting road.

The \$59 million corridor project, between McCain Boulevard and Redmond Road in Jacksonville, will widen the highway to three lanes each way, relocate entrance and exit ramps, add connectors between the frontage roads, and convert the frontage roads to one-way. The expansion and improvements will add capacity to Highway 67/167 and improve safety. Highway 67/167 is the main corridor in and out of Little Rock from the north, with approximately 80,000 vehicles traveling the road each day.

"Transportation moves the American economy," Peters said. "When complete, this project will improve the quality of

life for the families who commute to jobs, schools and stores using this route. Improving traffic flow on the road will also help existing and new businesses by cutting delivery costs, improving customer access and easing nearby congestion," Peters added.

The technologies being used in the project include high strength, longer-lasting concrete, maintenance-free steel beams, higher visibility road markings and a new embankment design that reduces the need for extra right of way. Each will contribute to providing a longer lasting roadway with reduced maintenance costs.

"This project is giving the public a better return on their investment," Peters added.

In addition to touring Highway 67/167, Peters took time to appear on a statewide talk radio program and spoke to the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce.



(l. to r.) Sandy Otto of the Federal Highway Administration, Commissioners Carl Rosenbaum, Vice-Chairman Prissy Hickerson and Chairman J.W. "Buddy" Benafield, Mary Peters of the Federal Highway Administration, AHTD Director Dan Flowers and Commissioner Jonathan Barnett.



(r. to l.) Ralph Hall explains the benefits of new coated steel to Mary Peters as AHTD Director Dan Flowers, Commission Chairman J. W. "Buddy" Benafield and Commissioner Carl Rosenbaum look on.

Partnering Agreement Benefits Contractors

The idea was formulated by the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) several years ago... bring together the Arkansas Chapter of Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) and the Arkansas Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Contractors Association (DBE) in a partnering agreement that would benefit both organizations.

At a luncheon on July 6, 2004, an official agreement was presented and signed by Jimmy Alessi, President of the Arkansas Chapter of the Associated General Contractors and Joel Burgos, President of the Arkansas Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Contractors.

"We are honored to sign this agreement, this will enhance our relationship," Alessi stated.

"This is exciting and it will be good for us all," Burgos added.

The agreement states that both organizations are committed to providing the highest quality product and will work together with skill, integrity and responsibility in a safe, timely and cost effective manner.

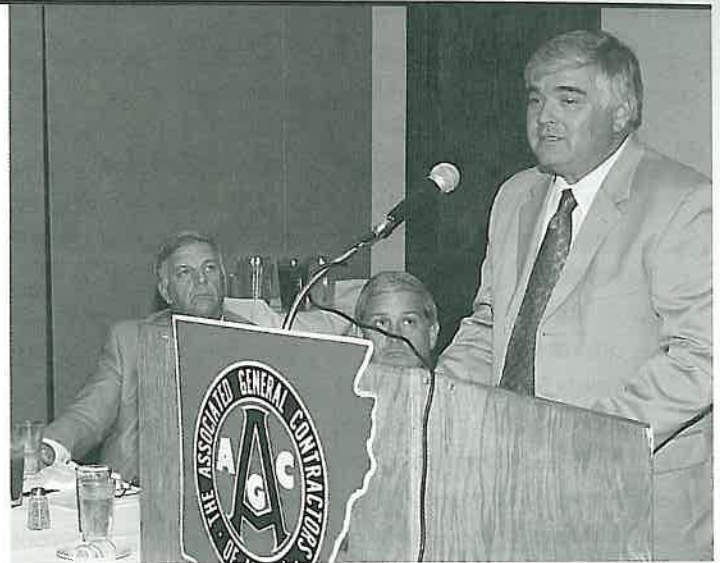
It also states that the groups will partner together to perform quality work, be honest and trustworthy, promote good communication with each other and the AHTD, and enforce a strong safety program, among other things. By following these principles, the groups will build customer satisfaction, enhance the image of the industry and deliver a top quality product each can take pride in.

"The Highway Department has been involved in a number of partnering agreements," stated AHTD Director Dan Flowers. "We've learned that they are important to everyone. The agreement signed here today will go a long way towards improving communications, promoting goodwill and advocating quality highway construction."

The Arkansas Chapter of AGC has been a strong supporter of the DBE Program since its inception. AGC of Arkansas administered the DBE Supportive Services Program in the early 1980s. AHTD is presently contracting with the Arkansas DBE Contractors Association to handle the program.

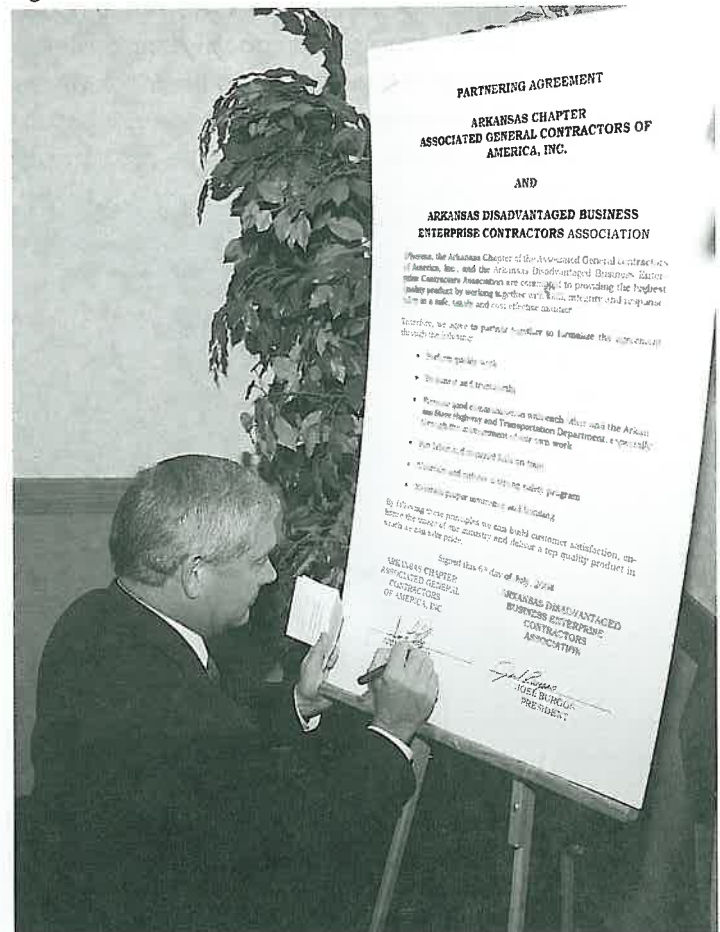
In the last four years, the number of DBE firms listed in the DBE Directory has increased from 136 to 157. There are now 19 DBE firms pre-qualified by the Highway and Transportation Department to bid as prime contractors. Five of these have recently been awarded prime contracts.

"The significance of the DBE program, the cooperation and input of the Contractor's Associations and the partnering of all involved in this effort cannot be overstated," Flowers added.



Above: Joel Burgos, President of the Arkansas Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Contractors, speaks to participants.

Below: Jimmy Alessi, President of the Arkansas Chapter of the Associated General Contractors, signs the partnering agreement.



Safety Barrier System Installed on Interstate 430

In an effort to better protect motorists from cross-over accidents, the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) has installed a unique wire cable barrier system on a segment of Interstate 430 in Little Rock. The new barrier system features a design never used before on a state highway in Arkansas.

Unlike the concrete barriers that motorists are accustomed to seeing in the median, the new "Brifen Safety Fence" features four strands of tensioned cable secured along a series of metal posts.

The Brifen Safety Fence was designed in 1989 and is now in use in over 30 countries. The first one was installed in the United States in 2000. The system is manufactured in the United Kingdom by South Yorkshire-based Bridon Ropes, Ltd. and evolved from cable systems used on aircraft carriers to restrain landing planes.

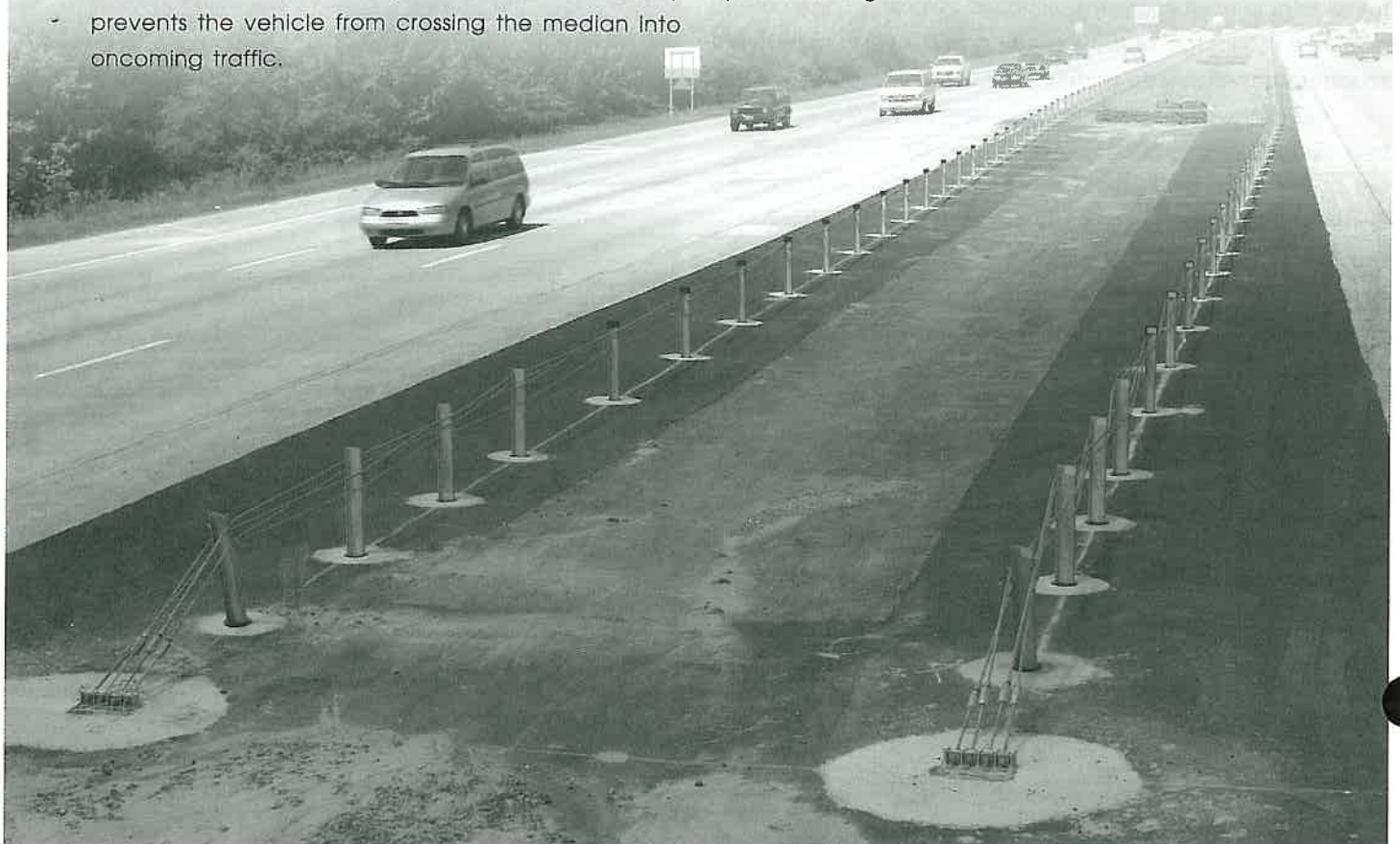
The barrier is designed so that the posts and wire cables absorb the energy of a vehicle striking the barrier. The posts collapse on impact. After a vehicle strikes the barrier, it is guided along the fence by the cables until it slows to a stop. The fence successfully prevents the vehicle from crossing the median into oncoming traffic.

The systems are less expensive than traditional concrete barriers and require less maintenance once they are in place. After minor hits, the safety fence typically returns to its original alignment and retains the capacity to withstand additional strikes before repairs must be made. A damaged section of fence can be repaired by one person in less than 30 minutes. Damaged posts are pulled from their sockets in the ground and are replaced with new ones.

The success of the safety fence worldwide can be seen in statistics. The system has been in use since 1989 and, to date, there have been no fatalities and no cross-median crashes recorded in areas where the fences have been installed.

"The Brifen Safety Fence has proven to be extremely effective," says AHTD Chief Engineer Bob Walters. "The system is new to Arkansas and we expect it to contribute to making our Arkansas highways safer for everyone."

The fence serves as a median barrier from near Shackleford Road northward to the Kanis Road overpass. Construction of the barrier system was completed in August of 2004.



Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance Holds Conference in Arkansas

Over 450 people attended the annual conference of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) hosted in Little Rock on April 3 - 8, 2004.

The CVSA is a national non-profit organization of federal, state and provincial government agencies and private industry in the United States, Canada and Mexico dedicated to improving commercial vehicle safety. The goal of the group is to reduce fatalities, injuries and incidents by improving safety compliance of commercial vehicle operations.

Through conferences such as the one held in Little Rock, CVSA serves as a major focal point for bringing key enforcement officials together with truck and bus industry representatives in a one-of-a-kind problem solving interchange.

On hand for the conference in Little Rock were commercial vehicle enforcement officers from almost every state in the United States, the Canadian Provinces and Mexico. Additionally, motor carrier representatives from across North America, along with officials of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the National Transportation Safety Board and the Transportation Safety Administration were in attendance.

"We were excited about hosting the conference," said Arkansas Highway Police Chief Ron Burks. "With the large

number of people traveling North American roadways today, the safety of commercial vehicles sharing those roadways continues as a high priority."

Among the items on the agenda was a strategic planning workshop to share the CVSA goals for the next three to five years and ways to meet those goals.

Another highlight of the conference was the naming of Arkansas Highway Police First Lieutenant Paul Claunch as the International President of the CVSA for 2004.

"I am extremely honored to serve the next year as the CVSA President," stated Claunch. "While commercial vehicle safety issues are quite challenging, I am confident the efforts of our members and the hard work carried out daily by officers and inspectors throughout North America will help save lives and prevent serious injuries."

Before his recent appointment, Claunch served two terms as president of CVSA's Region 2, which encompasses the south and southeastern parts of the United States. He was elected Secretary-Treasurer in October 2001 and progressed to his current office after having served last year as Vice-President.

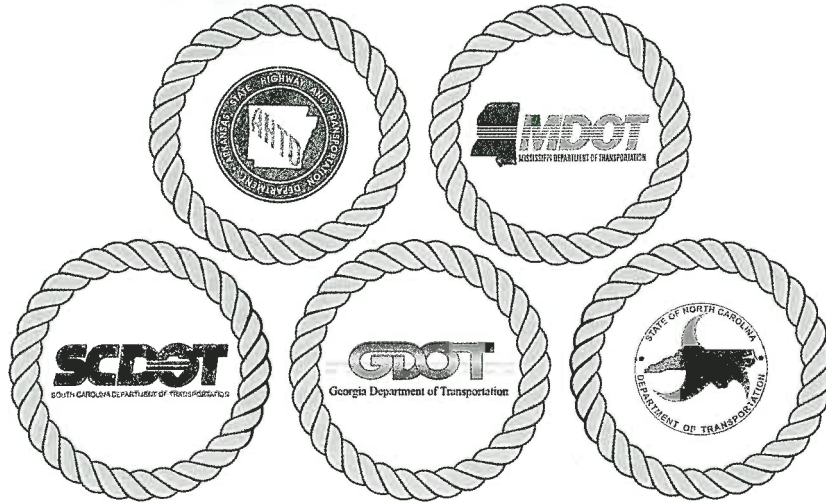
CVSA's membership includes all 50 states, the District of Columbia, 12 Canadian provinces and territories, Mexico, Guam, Samoa, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and the Northern Marianas.



Above: (l. to r.) Jim Dailey, Little Rock Mayor; Bob Walters, Chief Engineer for the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department; and Patrick Hays, North Little Rock Mayor at the CVSA meeting.

Left: Arkansas Highway Police First Lieutenant Paul Claunch addresses attendees of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) annual conference in Little Rock. Claunch is serving as 2004 President of CVSA.

AHTD Keeps Regional Roadeo Trophy at Home



A group of 17 employees from the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department packed their bags and headed to Gulfport, Mississippi, October 20th and 21st to compete in the 2nd annual Regional Equipment Operators Roadeo.

The first Regional Roadeo was held in Little Rock in the fall of 2003. The second time around featured a larger field of competition as teams from Arkansas, Mississippi, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina participated.

The day's events featured the top three winners in each field from the state competitions held earlier in the year. Categories included Tractor/Lowboy, Tandem Axle Dump Truck, Single Axle Dump Truck, Tractor Mower, Backhoe and Motor Patrol events.

After a day filled with fun, food and competition, Arkansas' team had come out on top and was named Regional Roadeo Champions for a second year in a row.

Next year's event promises to be even more competitive! A host site for 2005 will be selected soon.



Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department Regional Roadeo Team with Director Dan Flowers (middle) and Championship Cup.

TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

1st Place



Arkansas State Highway
and Transportation Department

2nd Place



Mississippi Department
of Transportation

3rd Place



South Carolina Department
of Transportation



INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

TRACTOR/LOWBOY:

1. Steve Sites - AHTD
2. Stanley Thorne - MDOT
3. Pat Edmonson - AHTD

SINGLE AXLE DUMP TRUCK:

1. James Reed - MDOT
2. Larry Hayes - SCDOT
3. Jim Bob Lamb - AHTD

TANDEM AXLE DUMP TRUCK:

1. Kenny Howard - AHTD
2. Keith Carpenter - AHTD
3. Danny King - NCDOT

BACKHOE:

1. Kenny Riley - AHTD
2. David Rutledge - MDOT
3. Tommy Johnson - SCDOT

MOTOR PATROL:

1. Jerry Ellett - MDOT
2. Randy Chrestman - MDOT
3. Randall Edgmon - AHTD

TRACTOR/MOWER:

1. Joey Hood - MDOT
2. Jason Forrest - MDOT
3. Fred Ridenhour - AHTD



Employees Called Away To Serve Our Country

For some, it has meant specialized training and preparation at military bases in the United States. For others, military obligations have sent them overseas to the heart of the action in Iraq or Afghanistan. Regardless of where they are serving, many AHTD employees have temporarily left the comforts of home and loved ones to serve our country due to acts of terrorism or military conflict.

It is likely that many AHTD employees know a coworker who is currently away on duty or has served and returned home. According to the Department's Human Resources office, 29 employees are currently seeing active duty while another 18 have returned home. *Arkansas Highways* invited these men and women to share their experiences with our readers, and many responded with the following photographs and stories.

KIMBERLY SANDERS is a Transportation Planner in the Central Office and has been with AHTD for nine years. She is a Master Sergeant and Team NCOIC (Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge) in Unit 431 Civil Affairs. She served in Operation Iraqi Freedom from January 2003 to January 2004. The mission of Civil Affairs during wartime is to minimize civilian interference in military operations. In peacetime Civil Affairs provides humanitarian relief and aids in civil administration. During the war phase, she assisted the 2nd and 3rd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Air Assault Division in managing the Iraqis (civilians) on the battlefield including providing English/Iraqi translators and advising the brigade commander on civilian related matters. After the war, she helped coordinate the construction of water wells and later worked with transportation managers in Mosul on funding and rebuilding. She served in Talafar for four months and Mosul for four months, with beginning and ending stops in Kuwait.



RUFUS MITCHELL is a Rest Area Attendant in District 10 and has been with the Department for four years. He is an SPC (Specialist) with the 1123rd Transportation Company. Mitchell spent 368 days on the ground in Baghdad, Iraq, where he was a Tractor Trailer Driver.



MARVIN RISLEY, Motor Patrol Operator/Finish in District 4, serves in Company C- Battery 2/142 Field Artillery where he is an Operations Officer. He was active from September of 2002 until July of 2003. Marvin was stationed at Fort Polk, Louisiana, where he served as a Chief Warrant Officer 4.

MIKE BROWN is a Senior Traffic Investigator in the Maintenance Division of the Central Office. He has been with the AHTD for 26 years. Brown is a Sergeant First Class with the 489th Engineer Battalion. While in Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 489th mobilized and deployed to a theater of operations in support of a corps maneuver force to conduct mobility, counter-mobility and survivability tasks. The battalion also reinforced divisional engineer units as required.

BRANDON BOWEN, a Mechanic in District 4, is a Sergeant E-5 in Company C - Battery 2/142 Field Artillery in Ozark, Arkansas. He served one year in active duty at Fort Polk, Louisiana, as Post Security. He has been with the Highway and Transportation Department for three years.



ASHLEY HALE (l.) is a Ferry Boat Pilot in District 9 and is a Sergeant with the 224th Maintenance Company. He was deployed in 2003 to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for Operation Enduring Freedom where he was a welder. In 2004, Hale was deployed for Operation Noble Eagle with the HHSB 1/142nd Field Artillery to Pine Bluff, Arkansas. He was Squad Leader for 1st squad and 2nd platoon and carried out security detail for chemical stockpiles. He has been with the AHTD for 11 years.

RANDALL WILLIAMS (r.) is a Pilot/Deck Hand in District 9 and has been with the AHTD for 8 years. He is a Staff Sergeant with the 224th Maintenance Company. He was deployed in 2003 for Operation Enduring Freedom to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where he was Squad Leader over the Quarter Master/Chemical Repair Squad. Williams was deployed for Operation Noble Eagle with the HHSB 1/142nd Field Artillery to Pine Bluff, Arkansas. He was squad leader over 3rd squad in 3rd platoon and carried out security detail for chemical stockpiles.



JACKY BALDWIN, JR. has been with the Highway and Transportation Department for close to 11 years. He is a District Bridge Inspector Helper in District 4. He is also a Staff Sergeant with the 188th Fighter Wing of the Arkansas Air National Guard in Fort Smith. Baldwin's duty station was in Fort Smith while on active duty. He served meals for the personnel in the unit. He also helped with lodging the personnel that lived outside the commuting area and augmented with the security forces for two months during activation. His time of activation was September 11, 2001, to September 21, 2002. In the photo are Jacky, his wife Shellie, their son Mason and daughter Savannah.

ELVIS RICHMOND is a Senior Construction Materials Inspector in District 10. He has been with the AHTD for 15 years. Elvis has been with the Guard for 13 years where he presently is a Sergeant First Class. His title is Platoon Sergeant, 2nd Platoon with the 1123rd Transportation Company out of Blytheville, Arkansas. He served active duty for 14 months, 12 of those months were spent in Iraq. His unit was stationed at the Baghdad International Airport where he hauled missiles and ammunition, and converted trucks to gun trucks in order to provide protection for drivers transporting mail from camp to camp.



JAMES L. CLARK is a Sergeant with the Arkansas Highway Police and has been with the Department for over 28 years. Clark is also with the U. S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit out of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His rank is Master Sergeant Technician/E-7. He is on his 4th year of active duty and has 28 years total service between the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard. He has spent one year at the Marine Safety Unit in Baton Rouge for security of facilities and vessel transportation, one year in the Marine Safety Office in New Orleans as facilitator for screening of foreign vessel arrival within the Mississippi River and two years at the Marine Safety Unit in Baton Rouge completing the requirements for facility security under the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002.



DONALD PARKER has been with the Department for 17 years and is currently a crew leader in the Maintenance Division. He is a Sergeant E5 with the C2/153 Infantry 39th Brigade. Parker saw active duty in the Kuwait Operation Southern Watch. He was a squad leader and was involved in guarding a retransmission sight. His active duty dates were from May of 1999 to April of 2000. He served in the military for almost 12 years.



LARRY CROW is a Multi-Axle Truck Driver in District 2. He has nine years of service with the AHTD. Crow is a Specialist E4 with the 1123rd Transportation Company of the Army National Guard out of Marked Tree. He was on active duty for just over one year. Crow served in Iraq close to the Baghdad International Airport. His unit escorted the mail to camps and hauled ammo and food from Iraq to Kuwait.



AL LANGHORN is a Maintenance Aide II in District 6 and has been with the AHTD for close to 26 years. He is a Staff Sergeant with the HQS 212th Signal Battalion of the Army National Guard at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock. He spent 10 months at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, in mid-2003 and early 2004. While there, he was responsible for security of the gates on a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week basis. Security checks were made on 174,000 vehicles a week, resulting in 500 arrests. Langhorn has recently been activated for deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

KENNEDY EZELL has been an employee of the Highway and Transportation Department since 2001 and works in Heavy Bridge. He has been in the military for 14 years and is currently a member of Troop E 151 Calvary. He was activated in October of 2001 and assigned to Fort Hood in Texas. While at Fort Hood, he served as a Gunner, 19 Delta Scout. He returned from active duty in September of 2004. Ezell stated he is very appreciative of the Highway and Transportation Department for being so supportive. He thanks Glenn Cheatham, Keith Briggs, Raymond Parker and Ann Jordan, among others, at the Department.



LARRY RICHARD is a Senior Body Repair and Painter in District 9. He has been with the AHTD for 34 years. He is an E-6 with the 224th Maintenance Company and was deployed in 2003 for Operation Enduring Freedom to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He was a cook while stationed there.

RONALD SLIGAR has been with the AHTD for 21 years. He is a Crew Leader in District 9. Sligar is a Technical Sergeant with Home Unit 188th Security Forces Squadron of the Air National Guard. His first deployment was to 379th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron for Operation Enduring Freedom. He was stationed at ALUDEID Air Base, Qatar, for four months in 2002. Duties included perimeter security and supervising vehicle checkpoints. His second deployment was to Akrotiri, Cyprus, for Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was there for three months in 2003 and assigned to the 44th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron while working with the British Royal Air Forces. His duties were Air Base Defense and Weapons Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge.

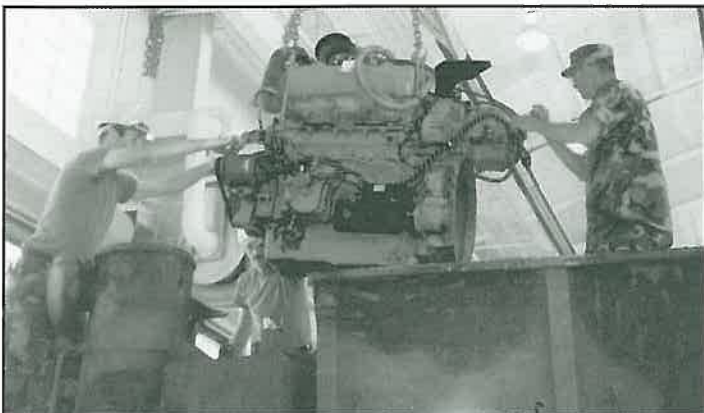


(l. to r.) TSGT. Ron Sligar, TSGT. Mike Walker, SGT. Mike Ritchie and SGT. Brian Pethrage

W. C. TOBAR, a Maintenance Aide I in District 10, has been with the Highway and Transportation Department for 12 years. He is a Sergeant E-5 with the 1123rd Transportation Company. His active duty sent him to Baghdad and Kuwait from February of 2003 to June of 2004. Tobar is seen here fueling his HET (Heavy Equipment Transporter) while overseas. He began driving the HET just out of training.



NATHANIEL DAY is a Crew Leader in District 9. He is also a Staff Sergeant with the 489th Engineers (C) (Mech). During his active duty, he was deployed to Balad, Iraq. He served as section leader in charge of 16 personnel. As Heavy Equipment Construction Supervisor, SSG, Day planned and supervised all heavy equipment combat operations. He has been with the AHTD for 2 years.



DONNIE DUVALL (right) is a Senior Mechanic in District 8 and has 31 years of service with the AHTD. He is Sergeant First Class with the 224th Maintenance Company at Mountain Home. He is a veteran of Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. His unit was mobilized March of 2003 through October 2003 to Fort Sill in Oklahoma. Donnie's duty position is Mobile Maintenance Team Chief. He supervises a 13-person maintenance team. He has been in the military since August of 1977.

REGINALD SMITH an Electronic Technician in the Planning and Research Division, has been with the Department since 1999. Smith is a Staff Sergeant with the 489th Engineering Battalion. He served stateside at Fort Hood, Texas, and was attached with III Corps Headquarters working with deployable units. Smith's job was that of Platoon Sergeant and also acting Motor Sergeant. He was activated from February of 2003 to March of 2004.

STEVE HALSTED has been with the AHTD for 12 years. He is a Hydraulic Excavator Operator Finish in District 9. He was promoted to 1st Sergeant (E-8) for the 224th Maintenance Company in May of 2004. At the time of his deployment he was Platoon Sergeant for the GSE Platoon. Halsted was deployed in 2003 for Operation Enduring Freedom with the 224th to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. His duties included administration and training. The GSE Platoon consisted primarily of Engineer Equipment Repair.



ANDRE L. JACKSON has been with the AHTD since September of 2001. He is a Maintenance Aide II in District 6. Jackson served in the U. S. Army and was stationed at Camp Victory in Kuwait for the first six months, and then, at Camp Cooke, Iraq, for the next six months. His rank was Staff Sergeant in the 217th Transportation Company out of San Antonio, Texas. His duties included driving an H.E.T. (Heavy Equipment Transporter) and moving equipment such as tanks, humvees and tractors to designated areas.



J.L. RAMSEY is a Maintenance Aide II in District 1 and has been with the AHTD for 28 years. He serves as a Staff Sergeant with Det. 1 CO. C2, Battalion 153 Infantry. He served in Operation Enduring Freedom in the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt, from October of 2001 to July of 2002. He has served as Team Leader, Squad Leader, Platoon Sergeant, Section Leader, Supply Sergeant and Dining Facility Manager. Ramsey served in the US Marine Corps Reserve from 1975 to 1981 and the Arkansas National Guard from 1989 to 2003.



WILLIAM ALVEY is Area Maintenance Supervisor in Yell County for District 8. He has worked for the the AHTD since April of 1985. Alvey is a Sergeant in the Army National Guard. His Company is Det. 1 Maintenance 224th in Marshall, Arkansas. He served for eight months at Ft. Sill in Oklahoma. His duties included work as a crane operator and cook.

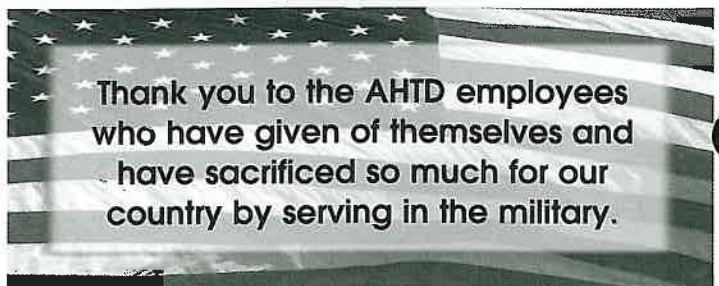
LAMARIS MITCHELL is a Single Axle Truck Driver in District 1. He has been with the Highway and Transportation Department since January of 2003. He is an SPC. with Troop E of the 151st Cavalry of the Arkansas National Guard - 39th Infantry Brigade. He was activated in October of 2003 and is currently serving in Iraq. He received a Purple Heart for being wounded when his patrol convoy came under attack.



General Chastain pins the Purple Heart on SPC, Lamaris Mitchell of West Helena.

Other military personnel activated due to acts of terrorism and/or military conflict include include:

- LESLIE BARNETT**, Const. Project Coord., Resident Engr. Ofc. #41
- MICHAEL BUNTON**, Single Axle Truck Driver, District 8
- BART DUDLEY**, Environmental Analyst I, Environmental Division
- WILLIAM FALES**, Backhoe/Frontend Loader Operator, District 8
- SHAWN FOUST**, Sergeant, Arkansas Highway Police
- MARK GREEN**, Reproduction Technician, Reproduction Section
- SHIRLEY HAMMETT**, Area Headquarters Attendant, District 6
- GREG HELLMAN**, Const. Aide III Insp., Resident Engr. Ofc. #55
- ANTHONY LEWIS**, Multi-Axle Truck Driver, District 1
- HENRY LEWIS**, Permit Technician, Arkansas Highway Police
- ANDREW MADDOX**, Motor Patrol Operator, District 2
- J.W. MCDORMAN**, District Bridge Inspector Helper, District 6
- TRAVIS NELSON**, Safety Insp. Officer, Human Resources Div.
- LEOYD ROBINSON**, Single Axle Truck Driver, District 2
- JACK STEPP**, Sergeant, Arkansas Highway Police
- BISHOP TERRELL**, Sign Maker II, Maintenance Division



Convoy Raises Money For Special Olympics



The Arkansas Highway Police joined in hosting the world's largest truck convoy on September 18th and raised \$7,000 for Arkansas Special Olympics athletes.

This was the first year Arkansas Highway Police have hosted the convoy in Arkansas. Truckers from across the state gathered in northwest Arkansas at the University of Arkansas' Baum Stadium before rolling out. Once the convoy left the stadium, it stretched for over a mile as it traveled up Interstate 540 to Lowell.

Arriving at Lowell, convoy participants congregated at the FedEx terminal on Highway 71 for lunch, music and awards. A total of 30 commercial motor vehicles from ten different motor carriers based in Arkansas participated.

This was the fourth year for the event. Over 2,500 trucks participated nationally to help further the opportunities for Special Olympic athletes.

"Special Olympics-Arkansas is an organization that has a positive impact on the lives of some very special people," stated Arkansas Highway Police Chief Ron Burks. "We are extremely pleased to have been involved in this event."

Special Olympics is the world's largest year-round program of athletic training and Olympic style competition for children and adults with mental and physical disabilities. Presently, Special Olympics Arkansas serves over 14,000 individuals statewide.

Highway Police Golf Tournament Aids Arkansas Special Olympics

The Arkansas Highway Police (AHP) sponsored the Arkansas Highway Police/Special Olympics Classic golf tournament on June 15, 2004, for the tenth year in a row. The event was held at the Harbor Oaks Golf Course in Pine Bluff in heavy off and on rain.

Despite the weather, 54 teams participated, with 24 of them being comprised of AHTD employees. Due to the enormous support and growth of the tournament, two separate tee times were offered for the first time. The two tee times allowed every participant wishing to play a spot in the event.

By the end of the day, the tournament had raised \$25,000 to benefit Arkansas Special Olympics. Special Olympics currently serves in excess of one million persons with mental and physical disabilities in over 200 programs in more than 150 countries. Over the life of the tournament, the Highway Police Division has contributed \$138,000 to benefit the special athletes of Arkansas Special Olympics.

Shelly Yielding of Arkansas Special Olympics presented a plaque to AHP Chief Ron Burks for the "Top Fund Raising Department Award." This is the third year in a row the Arkansas Highway Police have received the award.

Chief Burks stated, "Once again and in spite of the inclement weather, the tireless efforts of AHP personnel contributed to the outstanding success of the tournament. Because of their dedication and increased fundraising efforts, the athletes of Arkansas Special Olympics are able to participate in the challenges and spirit of athletic competitions, which they may otherwise never be able to experience."



(l. to r.) Tammy Goshien of the AHTD Programs & Contracts and TLT Jan Weinberg of AHP sit in the rain watching golfers' attempts to win the "closest to the hole" prize.



(above) Golf carts were lined up as participants prepared to begin the tournament.

(l. to r.) Melinda Davis, Area Director of Special Olympics of Arkansas Area 9 and Shelly Yielding, Development Director of Special Olympics Arkansas, present AHP Chief Ron Burks a plaque for the Top Fund Raising Department. This is the third consecutive year they have received a check for \$25,000 from the AHP Special Olympics Golf Classic event.



(l. to r.) Jim McFarland, Director of Risk Management with ABF swings as members of ABF's safety management team watch.

AHTD Auction Attracts Large Crowd

The arrival of fall signals the annual AHTD auction at the Equipment and Procurement Division parking lot in Little Rock.

Potential bidders from Arkansas and numerous other states arrived on October 26th, 2004, looking for attractive bargains on items ready for the auction block. The inventory offered something for everyone - riding lawn mowers were typical of some of the smaller items up for auction. A large selection of four-door sedans and pickup trucks also proved to be popular with the crowd. On the large end of the scale were items such as a paint striping truck and concrete mixer, plus a wide variety of dump trucks.

Blackmon Auctions, Inc. handled the bidding throughout the day. By the close of the auction, 489 total lots had been sold to the highest bidders. Final net proceeds to the Highway and Transportation Department totaled \$774,665.



Boys State Delegates Visit AHTD

The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) had an opportunity to welcome a group of high school seniors attending the 64th session of American Legion Boys State in June.

Nine delegates arrived at the Central Office on June 4th interested in gaining insight into the operations of the state's highway system.

The morning began with an overview of the Department presented by Frank Vozel, Assistant to the Director. A trip to the Materials Lab was next on the agenda.

The special guests were full of questions for host Chris Wald of the Materials Lab and other staff members. Among them, "What happens if the soil isn't strong enough to support the weight of a new highway?" and "What kind of classes do I need to take to become an engineer?"

A highlight of the trip to the lab was watching a test of the tensile strength of bolts and tests on concrete compression limits. Staff demonstrations in the Chemistry Lab also proved to be popular.

The visit to the Highway Department was the last stop on a week filled with activities. Arkansas Boys State is a six-day training course in study and practical application of problems of self-government. It is planned so that delegates may put into practice the theories of American Government by participating in the operation of city, county and state offices. In addition to the Highway Department, delegates visited the Arkansas Forestry Commission, Camp Robinson and the Arkansas State Police, among others.

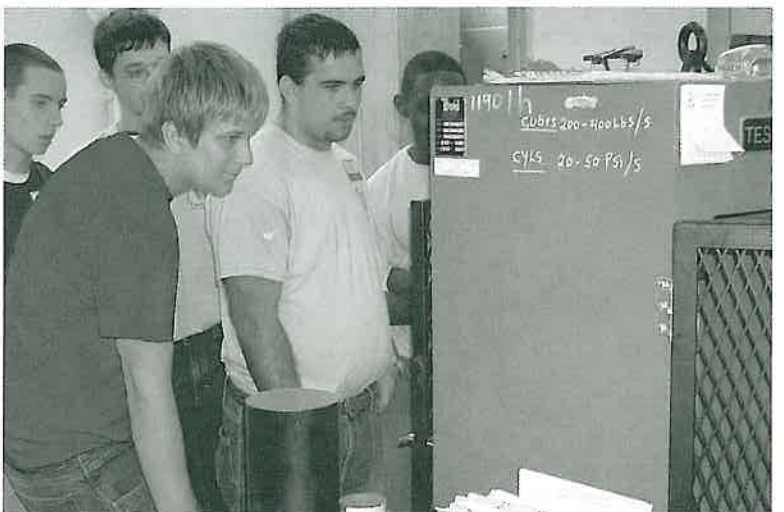
"We are pleased to participate in a program that helps to shape our leaders of tomorrow," stated the AHTD Director Dan Flowers.



Boys State delegates examine asphalt samples in the Materials Lab.



Frank Vozel, Assistant to the Director, welcomes participants.



Delegates watch a test of concrete strength in a compression machine.

Students Gain Insight Into Careers in Transportation

Eighteen junior high students spent four weeks of their summer learning firsthand about careers in transportation during the National Summer Transportation Institute.

The program is presented by the Federal Highway Administration and is designed to encourage students to consider careers in the transportation field.

On a visit to the AHTD June 22nd to 24th, 2004, participants used flashlights to learn more about the reflectability of road signs. They also used hammers to test the durability of pavement reflectors.

Emanuel Banks, AHTD Staff Construction Engineer, spent time with the students to explain the many different career choices available in the field of engineering.

Also on the agenda was a trip to the Materials Lab to observe tests being performed on soil, core samples and fuels. While at the lab, students heard from Cynthia Williams Campbell of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration of the U. S. Department of Transportation, who shared a presentation on preparing for college and the responsibilities that come with it.



(l. to r.) Valera McDaniel of the Federal Highway Administration and Cynthia Williams Campbell of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration talk with students about responsibility and accountability in their school work.



Laura Johnson, Chemist II, shows students the science side of transportation.



The students study Harold Banks, Materials Technician IV, as he uses a soil proctor to look for optimum moisture and maximum density of the soil.

Later in the week, staff members visited the students at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff to discuss environmental issues involved in constructing a highway and to present a "hands on" bridge building project.

The Institute is one of several educational initiatives of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Students are selected on the basis of their interest in engineering and transportation, academic performance and recommendations from counselors and teachers.

In addition to Federal Highway Administration support, the Institute receives assistance from local chapters of the National Urban League, state departments of transportation such as the AHTD, private sector companies and other federal agencies. Participating colleges and universities host the institutes and provide housing and instructors for each session. Arkansas' host college was The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.



AHTD Carpenter Ray Brown applies lettering to an "Exit" sign as students look on.

Roadcheck 2004 Gets Underway With International Kickoff in West Memphis

The 17th annual International Roadcheck took place June 8th through June 10th in Arkansas and across the nation. The 72-hour event began with an international kickoff held in West Memphis at the Riverside Weigh Station on Interstate 40.

AHTD Director Dan Flowers and Chief Ron Burks of the Arkansas Highway Police joined Stephen Campbell, Executive Director of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA), and other dignitaries at the opening ceremony to get the event underway. Also in attendance were law enforcement agencies representing Arkansas, Tennessee and Mississippi.

"With the large number of people traveling North American roadways today, the safety of commercial vehicles sharing those roadways is always a high priority," stated Director Flowers.

"These inspections take place all year, but during Roadcheck, we are able to step up the inspections and remind drivers that while they are behind the wheel, safety is a top priority," Flowers added.

Following the ceremony, members of the Arkansas Highway Police joined approximately 10,000 certified truck and bus safety inspectors across the country to perform safety inspections on commercial trucks and buses. Checkpoints were set up on interstate highways across the country. Roving patrols were also in operation. In Arkansas, checkpoints were in place on Highway 270 near Sheridan and on Interstate 30 at Benton.



PFC Robert Samons (left), of the Riverside Weigh Station in West Memphis, demonstrates a Standard Level I Inspection at the Roadcheck 2004 kickoff.



Director Dan Flowers addresses the crowd at the Roadcheck 2004 Kickoff in West Memphis. Standing on either side of Flowers are AHP officers PFC Todd Turman of the Marion Weigh Station on Interstate 55 (left) and PFC Roy Mayo of the Riverside Weigh Station on Interstate 40 in West Memphis (right).

“**T**hese inspections take place all year, but during Roadcheck, we are able to step up the inspections and remind drivers that while they are behind the wheel, safety is a top priority.”

-Dan Flowers

By the end of the third day, 595 inspections had been performed in Arkansas resulting in 1,262 violations. A total of 132 vehicles were placed out of service for various violations.

“Each year Roadcheck finds a significant number of vehicles with safety violations,” stated 1st Lt. Paul Claunch, Assistant Commander of Special Services with the Arkansas Highway Police and this year’s CVSA president.

“But we also come away impressed with the number of commercial vehicles that are in good condition and helping to keep our highways safe across the country.”

Roadchecks have been conducted on the nation’s highways since 1988 with participation from enforcement agencies in Canada, the United States and Mexico.



PFC Shad Overman monitors brake systems utilizing the Infra Red Inspection System.



Members of the Arkansas Highway Police prepare to inspect a commercial vehicle on Interstate 30.

Highway Officials Break Ground, Dedicate

Arkansas Highway Commissioners and Department officials have been busy with ceremonies at several locations during 2004. The following projects are among those where construction began or was completed in the spring, summer and fall of 2004.

On March 22, Commission Chairman J.W. "Buddy" Benafield and AHTD Director Dan Flowers joined local officials to break ground on the seven-mile, \$13 million project to widen Highway 63 from Hoxie to the Craighead County line. Combined with other construction between Hoxie and Jonesboro, over \$43 million in improvements to Highway 63 are underway.

A large crowd gathered on May 27, on the new Highway 70 White River Bridge at DeValls Bluff to cut a ribbon and officially open the structure to traffic. The new \$16.7 million span is just over 3,300 feet long, 40-feet wide and rises a minimum of 52 feet over the river. The original DeValls Bluff Bridge, constructed in 1925, was brought down in a series of explosions in July.



Highway 63, Hoxie, March 22, 2004

Highway 70, DeValls Bluff, May 27, 2004



New bridge
Old bridge





Highway 71, Ashdown, June 8, 2004

Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee joined Commission Vice Chairman Prissy Hickerson, Director Flowers and local officials on June 8 to dedicate the Ashdown Bypass from Highway 32 west to Highway 71. The Governor was also on hand in 2001 when the AHTD broke ground for this \$15.3 million, 3.7-mile section.

On August 25th, ground was broken for the Stuttgart Bypass, an extension of Highway 165 around the north side of town and connecting to Highway 79 on the east side of town. The \$3.2 million contract was awarded to D.B. Hill, Contractor of Little Rock and is expected to be complete by the end of 2005.

Highway 165 Bypass, Stuttgart, August 25, 2004





Rainbow Bridge, Highway 62B, Cotter, September 24, 2004

With much fanfare, the famous Cotter Bridge on Highway 62B was dedicated on September 24. Commissioner Jonathan Barnett was among the dignitaries that cut the ribbon and opened a weekend of celebration for the town of Cotter. The historic structure over the White River was constructed in 1929 and opened as a toll bridge in 1930 to replace the Cotter and Denton ferries. The new bridge has been restored to original construction standards.

Officials gathered to cut the ceremonial ribbon for completion of the final section of the Forrest City Bypass on October 7. The eight-mile, two-lane roadway on new location cost just over \$26 million. It includes new interchanges at Interstate 40 and Highway 70, and a railroad overpass. Holman Construction had the first \$3.2 million project for 2.2 miles of grading and structures between Interstate 40 and the Union Pacific Railroad. APAC Tennessee had the final \$23 million contract for the remaining grading and structures, and construction of the base and surface for the entire bypass.



Interstate 40 & Highway 1 (Forrest City Bypass), Forrest City, October 7, 2004

Governor Helps Dedicate Welcome Centers, Highway 549

Governor Mike Huckabee led a large contingent of dignitaries as two new Arkansas Welcome Centers in El Dorado and Texarkana were dedicated in late 2004.

In 1997, the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) conducted a study of conditions at the 13 existing Tourist Information Centers (TIC) and concluded that improvements were needed. Working together with the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism (ADPT), the AHTD developed a plan to rebuild eight of the TICs. The first decision was to rename them Arkansas Welcome Centers.

Welcome Centers are a joint venture of the two state agencies, the AHTD builds and maintains the Centers while the ADPT staffs and operates them.

Signed by Governor Huckabee, Act 345 of 2001 proposed \$9 million from the State's general improvement fund to help pay for the rebuilding of eight of the Centers. The first four centers being constructed are in the cities of El Dorado, Texarkana, Van Buren and Corning. Also on the agenda was a trip to the Materials Lab to observe tests being performed on soil, core samples and fuels. While at the lab, students heard from Cynthia Williams Campbell of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration of the U. S. Department of Transportation, who shared a presentation on preparing for college and the responsibilities that come with it. The first four being constructed are in El Dorado, Texarkana, Van Buren and Corning. The next four have been identified as West Memphis, Blytheville, Lake Village and Bella Vista. Plans for the Bella Vista Center will be delayed until it can be located along the proposed Bypass.

The new Welcome Centers are one of two designs of either 3,000 square feet or 6,000 square feet. Each facility is constructed with a rock and log exterior, and features separate tourism and restroom areas. The Centers offer visitors large screen televisions broadcasting news, weather and tourist information videos, as well as computer kiosks that feature internet hook-up.



El Dorado was the site of the opening of the first new Welcome Center in Arkansas. Governor Mike Huckabee joined Highway Commissioner R. Madison Murphy, AHTD Director Dan Flowers, ADPT Director Richard Davies and others on November 5 to cut the ribbon and officially open the new Center.



Commissioner R. Madison Murphy addresses the crowd at the ribbon cutting for the new Arkansas Welcome Center in El Dorado.



TEXARKANA WELCOME CENTER (left)

December 16 was the official opening day of the new Arkansas Welcome Center at Texarkana. Governor Mike Huckabee and First-Lady Janet Huckabee were among the special guests for the dedication ceremony. Highway officials included Highway Commission Chairman Prissy Hickerson, Commissioners J.W. "Buddy" Benafield, Jonathan Barnett and Carl Rosenbaum, and AHTD Director Dan Flowers. ADPT Director Richard Davies was also on hand for the ribbon cutting, as were several ADPT Commissioners and other officials.



HIGHWAY 549 (left and below)

The morning of December 16 marked the opening of a new 13-mile stretch of Highway 549 in Texarkana. U.S. Representative Mike Ross and Governor Mike Huckabee addressed the large gathering as the \$90 million section of future Interstate 49 was opened from Loop 245, on the south side of Texarkana, to Fouke. Highway Commission Chairman Prissy Hickerson noted that the next 12-mile section between Fouke and Doddridge should open around the same time next year.



Meetings Held To Discuss Scenic Byways



The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department occasionally receives requests from citizens to designate particular highways across the state as scenic byways.

Such was the case this past summer in northern Arkansas as requests were received to consider making Highways 10, 21, 23, 71 and 96 part of the scenic byway system.

The Arkansas State Highway Commission has a specific set of criteria that must be met for a highway to be designated a scenic byway. This criterion requires that a route contain abundant scenic, cultural and/or historic qualities that would be of interest to travelers.

The Highway 21 meetings were held on July 26 and 27 in Berryville and Clarksville. About 100 people attended to listen and make comments

concerning the 99-mile corridor that would become a scenic byway. The route proposed would begin at the Highway 21 and Highway 64 Intersection in Clarksville, and would run through Newton and Madison Counties to the Missouri State line in Carroll County.

Meetings in Huntsville and Booneville were held on August 2 and 3 to discuss Highways 10, 23, 71 and 96 being designated scenic byways. Around 70 people attended those meetings. The highway segments under consideration at the August meetings were: Highway 10 from Ola to the Oklahoma State Line, excepting the city limits of Greenwood; Highway 23 from Highway 71 to the Missouri State Line; Highway 71 from Mena to Interstate 540; and Highway 96 from Highway 71 to Hartford.

AHTD Receives Henry Award for Pave the Way Program

On March 9th, 2004, the AHTD's *Pave The Way* safety & information campaign received a Henry Award from the Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism. The *Pave The Way* campaign won first place in the Natural State Award category. Governor Mike Huckabee and Whitney Kirk, Miss Arkansas 2003, presented Henry Awards in eight categories.

The Natural State Award is presented to a community, organization, special event or attraction that "stands out in the

crowd" because of its unique appeal, media coverage, creative approach and/or enhancement of community pride, thus benefitting the state's quality of life.

The Henry Awards are named for Henri de Tonti, who is considered by historians to be one of the first "Arkansas Travelers." Other finalists in the Natural State Award category were Dardanelle State Park Visitor Information Center and White River National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center.



Miss Arkansas 2003, Whitney Kirk, the AHTD's Farrell Wilson, Special Projects Coordinator and Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee.

Letters to the Department

TO: AHTD

We sincerely want to thank you for the quick response to the flooding problem we experienced a month ago at the base of our property on Highway 5. It occurs each time there is a heavy downpour. With each summer rain we were inundated with mosquitoes in front of our house from that waterhole.

We called the Highway Department and spoke to Stan Risley, Area Maintenance Supervisor in Baxter County. He came to Norfolk that day amid dealing with other massive flood problems all over the area. The following day, Tony Parnell arrived with workers to further assess the problem. He assured us the problem would be rectified but that it might be the end of the month before they could do it because of more serious flood areas. A truck came down a few days later, painted the problem area and put up flags. One week later the workers were here, and are here again today digging, putting in culverts and doing what it takes to fix the problem.

Stan, Tony and staff, we can't thank you enough for a job well done in getting on this problem and seeing it through. We appreciate you!

Bea & Ken Watson
Norfolk, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Lyndal Waits:

All employees of NAEC in the Ash Flat office would like to commend the Sharp County Highway Department for a job well done.

NAEC can always count on (James) Marty Morgan (Area Maintenance Supervisor in Sharp County) to quickly get his road crew out to help clear roads so that our utility crews can safely reach areas with power outages due to hazardous weather conditions. It is gratifying to know that I can call Marty in any given situation and know that he will do everything in his power to assist us in any way he can.

If there is any way that the NAEC Ash Flat office can be of assistance to the Highway Department please do not hesitate to call me.

Sherman Ables, Ash Flat District Superintendent
North Arkansas Electric Cooperative, Inc.

To Whom It May Concern:

With very special thanks: My name is Amanda Thiessen. I was the lady that you (*Stanley Storment, District 8 Sealing Supervisor and Jim Rye, Josh Bryant and Heather Loveless from the Sealing Crew*) helped get the U-Haul unstuck on Marina Road (*Highway 326*). It is very nice to know that there are people and companies that are kind enough to help out those in trouble. Not everyone would be so kind. My family and I wish to thank all that helped me that day. I am very grateful for your kindness. Thanks.

The Thiessens, Amanda, Scott & Jordan

Dear Mr. Harold Beaver:

It is my understanding that your Department and your organization and maintenance crews were instrumental in the recent repair to the railroad crossings on both North A and North B Streets (Hwy 255) in downtown Fort Smith.

In recent years the streets around these crossings have been in great need of repair. In that these tracks must be crossed by visitors to our city as they come to our Visitor Information Center at 2 North B Street, we regard these areas as critical to the first impression of our city to guests.

Your crews have done a tremendous job of repairing the areas in question, and I would like to express our thanks on behalf of the Fort Smith Visitor Center, and the Convention and Visitors Bureau. We very much appreciate your efforts in helping us to all make the proper impression on those who visit our City.

Sincerely,
Claude W. Legris
Executive Director
Fort Smith Convention & Visitors Bureau

Dear Mr. Flowers:

Recently we had the opportunity to negotiate for highway right of way on the Hollywood to Highway 51 project in Clark County with your employee (Right of Way Negotiator) Connie Stayton.

Connie was always cheerful, knowledgeable in details of her job and just great to work with. We feel that the Department is fortunate to have such an employee who represents her employer so well.

Sincerely,
Rita & Charles Nickels
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Flowers:

The Arkansas and Missouri Railroad completed a major transportation security exercise on Sunday, September 12, 2004, in Mountainburg, Arkansas. It involved a hostage situation on our excursion train and the subsequent response of state, local, and industry agencies. The Arkansas Highway Police played a major role in the success of this exercise.

Captain Glen Holloway assisted us with many aspects to support the full-scale exercise. The Incident Management System and unified command process established command and control over the activities, and introduced all of the agency players/participants to the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

AHP officers, Sgt. Howard Beset and Cpl. Alice Murphy, were instrumental in the secondary exercise - a surprise element during the major hostage rescue mission. They were asked to locate and stop a truck that was headed to our location with possible explosives. With limited information, they were able to stop, detain and search the truck and locate the alleged explosives inside the vehicle.

I want to commend, in the strongest possible terms, the professionalism, organizational and interpersonal skills and visionary "out of the box" thinking that the Highway Police officers brought to the table for this exercise. The federal, state, local and industry stakeholders were extremely impressed with their interaction during the briefings being conducted and commented on their willingness to do whatever it took to get the job done.

The organizational and operational perspectives that these individuals brought with them helped to make this exercise a huge success for our railroad and the other transportation entities participating.

On behalf of the Arkansas and Missouri Railroad, please extend our sincerest appreciation to your officers for a job well done, above and beyond the call of duty. We could not have reached this level of success without them. We look forward to the continuation of cooperative efforts such as this one in the future with your team of professionals.

Sincerely,
G. Brent McCready, President
Arkansas & Missouri Railroad, Springdale, Arkansas

To Whom This May Concern:

I was recently taking a road trip when I was stopped by Officer (Pfc. Anthony) Lewis, badge no. 374. Officer Lewis is the most polite and helpful patrolman I have ever encountered! It was truly a pleasure to meet and talk with him. He is a credit to the profession of law enforcement, and I hope he continues this work. Although I was issued a ticket I still say thank you, Officer Lewis, for your kindness shown.

Yours truly,
Charlotte Jackson
Waldron, Arkansas

Mr. Dan Flowers,

Recently, my wife and I drove from Kansas to near Pine Bluff to visit relatives. I am writing to let you know how we appreciated the excellent condition of your roads and bridges. We were impressed with the smooth ride and surrounding beautiful scenery. Even through extensive construction around Little Rock, the routes were well marked and as good as could be expected.

Please pass along a 'thank you' to your highway engineers, and construction folks. We are planning more trips to Arkansas in the future and are looking forward to returning. I am sure the citizens of Arkansas realize the quality work your people are doing and hopefully they will continue to support your efforts.

Sincerely,
Michael Orth
Lawrence, Kansas

Dear Mr. Dan Flowers,

I want to bring to your attention the very positive efforts of your staff toward improving the Bridge Scour Program.

Garland Land, David Ball, Charlie Hart, Aileen Schubel, Collin Boone and Bill Marlowe of your staff all participated in a meeting yesterday with Terry Daniel, Arkansas Division Bridge Engineer and Cynthia Nurmi, FHWA Resource Center Hydraulics Engineer.

As a result of this meeting, it appears that the last of the problems with the scour database and scour program in general have been or will soon be corrected. Thanks especially to Mr. Land for bringing together the right group of people to work out the problems. Updating the bridge database, converting to Pontis and developing Plans of Action for Scour Critical Bridges will require the continued efforts of many people. However, with the enthusiasm and expertise of your staff I am confident that our agencies' mutual objectives will be achieved.

Once again, I wanted to commend your staff for their dedication and interest in developing an outstanding Scour Program.

Sandra L. Otto,
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration



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