

Arkansas Highways

SPRING 2009



Director's Message

As we look back on the last twelve months, suffice it to say that Departments of Transportation across the country have seen quite a few changes come their way. Some of these changes have been for the better, and others have resulted in serious challenges to our industry.

In Arkansas, we have experienced changes in the Department's funding sources. Happily, they are changes for the better. In April of last year, Arkansas' legislators held a special session at the state capitol at which time they voted to raise the state severance tax on natural gas in order to fund road improvements. The prior severance tax brought the state approximately \$600,000 annually. It is projected that the new tax rate will raise that figure substantially and provide millions of dollars in funding for road repairs over the coming years. This represents an investment in Arkansas' highways and will provide revenue to make improvements in every area of the state. We commend Governor Beebe and the legislature for their hard work on this issue.

Another positive change we are going to feel is the effect of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This economic stimulus package was signed into law on February 17th. A portion of the package is scheduled to be spent on improving the nation's infrastructure. That translates into new construction on roads and bridges across the country. In Arkansas, we expect to receive approximately \$352 million for our highways. No fewer than 245 road projects representing every corner of the state stand ready for construction to begin.

The additional funding for Arkansas and the rest of the nation couldn't have come at a better time. Rising oil prices experienced this past summer and fall resulted in changes in construction costs. Higher oil prices resulted in higher asphalt prices for Departments of Transportation across the country. The challenge, as we now see it, is to determine a way to answer the needs on our road systems while dealing with these rising construction costs. Add to that a change in our driving habits. Because of the higher gas prices experienced over the past months, motorists have changed their habits and are now driving fewer miles. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, travel on all roads and streets dropped by approximately four percent for March of 2008 as compared to March of 2007. That is the sharpest year-over-year decline for a single month since the U.S. Department of Transportation began estimating road traffic in 1942. In Arkansas, our situation was a little better. During that same time period, travel on all roads in Arkansas was up almost 1% from the year before.

Considering these changes and the challenges that lie ahead, I'm proud of the accomplishments we have made and am confident that in the future, we will continue to provide the best service possible to motorists across the state.

In this issue, we say farewell to our friend and former Commission Chairman Jonathan Barnett as his term expires. His ten years of service have been invaluable and we will miss him. We wish him success in his future endeavors. At the same time, we welcome Dick Trammel of Rogers, Arkansas, to the Commission and look forward to working with him on transportation issues that lie ahead. We also take time to recognize staff members who have received special recognition for their hard work from organizations outside the Department. Those commendations come from the Caddo Nation and the American Road and Transportation Builders Association and we congratulate our staff on this special recognition.




Director of Highways and Transportation

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Arkansas Highways



Arkansas Highways

Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department - Spring 2009

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Front Cover: U.S. Highway 278
in Hempstead County

Back Cover: State Highway 341
in Baxter County

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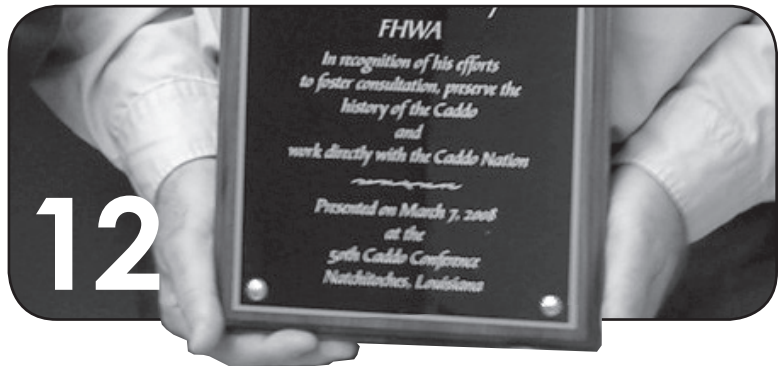
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Rogers Businessman is New Commissioner

Dick Trammel, of Rogers, has been appointed by Governor Mike Beebe to serve a ten-year term on the Arkansas Highway Commission. Trammel replaces Jonathan Barnett, whose term ended in January.

A resident of Rogers, Trammel currently serves as Executive Vice President, member of the Board of Directors and Board Secretary of Arvest Bank in Rogers. He is also a founding member of Northwest Arkansas Community College. He was chairman of the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board, a position he gave up when he was sworn in as Commissioner.

"Dick Trammel is somebody who cares about Arkansas," stated Governor Beebe.

"I don't know any one person in such a huge area like northwest Arkansas, an area of 50,000 people or more, who is as universally revered as Dick Trammel," Beebe said.

Trammel moved to Rogers in 1975 from his hometown of Pocahontas. He graduated from the University of Arkansas. He was sworn in on January 12th in Bentonville. His term will run through January of 2019.



Commissioner Dick Trammel



Dick Trammel will be an advocate for the above shaded counties in northwest Arkansas.

"Dick Trammel is somebody who cares about Arkansas," stated Governor Beebe.

An Interview with Commissioner Jonathan Barnett



Jonathan Barnett's service on the Arkansas State Highway Commission ended in January of this year. He was appointed to serve on the Commission by Governor Mike Huckabee on January 1, 1999. A native and current resident of Siloam Springs, he is a self-employed building contractor. His company, Jonathan Barnett Enterprises, specializes in commercial and residential construction.

Barnett recently visited with Public Information Specialist David Nilles to reflect on his role as a Highway Commissioner and the accomplishments of the Commission and Department over the past ten years.

Nilles: As you look back on your ten years of service on the Commission, was it what you expected that it would be when you began your term?

Commissioner Barnett: It's probably been what I expected it to be and then some. You don't really know what to anticipate having never been there and done that. I hadn't been exposed to the Highway and Transportation Department in any way previously. I knew some of the Department employees but that was the extent of it. I think what surprised me the most was the professionalism of the people at the Department as well as the integrity and quality of the individuals on staff. I didn't really expect that for some reason or other. I had never worked with a state agency and I didn't realize there were so many good people in the Department. I was very pleasantly surprised in that respect.

Nilles: What would you say are some of the highlights of your term on the Commission?

Commissioner Barnett: When I came onto the Commission in 1999, the Interstate Rehabilitation Program was just getting underway. It went through the Legislature for an increase in the gas tax and the diesel tax to help pay for the bonds. Obviously, at almost a billion dollars the program was a highlight...that's a big deal.

I remember asking Bob Walters, the Chief Engineer at that time, if the Department could handle something like that. I asked if we could design the roadways and have all of this work done within five years. Bob said he had a high level of confidence that, yes; we could do it, accomplish it in a timely way and have a good quality Interstate system. I felt assured after talking to Bob and I knew that the Highway Department was on top of it. We were able to rebuild almost half of Arkansas' Interstate system, so that was a highlight. I think people came to see that the Highway and Transportation Department can do great things when given the financial assistance to get the job done.

I think that the development of the Department's Partnership Program was also a highlight. We were able to make working agreements with numerous cities, especially in the Third District. We were able to take projects that may not have been funded quite so soon, and moved them up and got them completed. We did a good number of projects in northwest Arkansas that helped our communities and had a tremendous economic impact. They created jobs and allowed us to get jobs done sooner than

expected. That was something that I was involved in early on and the ideas for partnering turned out very, very well. I think it has set a strong precedent for the future as a way to get projects done more quickly with some financial help because there never seems to be enough money to get everything done. So, I was really proud of that.

Another thing I was proud of, and that I considered to be a highlight, had to do with toll roads in Arkansas. I was involved in getting legislation drafted and through the Legislature that would allow the Highway and Transportation Department to be in position to consider future projects as toll roads. I was very much a part of getting that accomplished and I feel like that was special to see that get approved.

I was involved with the Design Build legislation as well and I would consider that a highlight. We are also beginning to see some positive results from the Regional Mobility Authority legislation and I think that we will see benefits from that in our future efforts. Those are some of the things that come to mind. I'm sure there are many more that may be on the list but those come to mind immediately.



Jonathan Barnett was sworn in on January 14, 1999.

Nilles: Have there been any projects not completed that you would have liked to have seen done in your term?

Commissioner Barnett: Absolutely. There are always going to be some of those. There's always something else that you want to accomplish. The Bella Vista Bypass comes to mind. I felt like that would have probably been under way by now and, you know, that hasn't happened just yet. We've had some problems there and one of those is that costs have increased. Also, the feasibility study didn't turn out quite as we had planned so there was a shortage of funds and it just hasn't taken place yet. I would have liked to have seen that farther along. I also would like to be farther along on the Springdale Bypass, Interstate 49 and Interstate 69. Highway 412 also comes to mind.

Looking back, I know more now than I did when I began. I think



The 48th Arkansas State Highway Commission

that I see things more realistically today. Projects take time. You have to consider the environmental process, the design process, the public hearings and purchasing right-of-way before construction begins. And, you must have the money for those projects in place. Unfortunately, it seems there is never ever enough funding – not even close.

Nilles: You are moving to another chapter in your life – that of being a state representative. You have served on the Commission with two former legislators, John Lipton and Cliff Hoofman. Both came to the Commission after long tenures in the General Assembly. Have they offered you any advice as you make the transition to the legislature?

Commissioner Barnett: They have. I think that's very interesting how that's all come about. They came from the legislative process into the Highway Commission and I am actually going from the Highway Commission into the legislative process. I think that I have an edge on them in the sense that I have been able to spend ten years learning how a state agency, the Highway and Transportation Department, operates and so I think I have a better perspective...at least on infrastructure issues and transportation issues and how to go about handling some of those. But yes, they've both visited with me about the legislature and advised me. They've made fun of me a little bit and said, you know, before you were asking for money and now you may vote against tax increases and the like.

Looking at my future in the legislature, I hope to share with my fellow legislators the process for constructing new roadways. They may not understand the process and the fact that projects take a great deal of time and adequate funding. The Department wants to improve our roadways as much as they do. I hope to share the fact that it takes resources to do so.



Something that I may add to that is I actually ran for the House of Representatives when I was 25 years of age and that was 29 years ago. I was defeated in the primary. I just barely got beat, but I still lost. It was early in my life, I was just starting my family so you know I was blessed that I lost because I was able to focus on my family, making a living and developing my future. I learned a tremendous amount of patience. Over the years, I have recruited a lot of good people to run for the House and Senate and other public offices including Mike Huckabee, who became our Governor. That is one of the reasons why I'm here today.

Nilles: Ten years can be considered a long time to serve on the Commission but highway improvement projects, like you said, take a long time to develop and plan. After serving a full ten-year term, do you feel that ten years is about the right amount of time to serve or should a term be longer or shorter?

Commissioner Barnett: I think it's about the right amount of time. I would hate for a Commissioner to have to serve fewer years because I don't think they would be that effective. They wouldn't have a chance to get their arms around it, especially specific projects. If you are an outsider looking in, it's probably hard to understand why the terms are ten years. But to conceive a road

project and see it through to its completion is a lengthy process. Some people may not understand it because they have never walked in those shoes. I think ten years is just a good tenure.

Ten years works because it creates more stability at the Department and with the Commission. When you are working with the legislature and the Governor, you need to have people with knowledge and experience. You benefit from serving with people who have been down the road before during their term. I wouldn't advocate changing it one way or another because I think it's just about right.



Nilles: In ten years you have had the opportunity to get to know many AHTD employees. What's been your impression of them and the responsibilities that they have?

Commissioner Barnett: The quality of the people and the professionalism come to mind. I said something about the professionalism earlier. The people who work at the Highway and Transportation Department are like all the rest of us. They are hard working and diligent. There are a lot of really fine individuals that come together from many different paths and I have found that they have good, strong core values similar to mine. That strikes me as being very beneficial.

If all state agencies operated as well as the State Highway and Transportation Department, I think we would be very well off. Now I don't have experience with other agencies, just this one, but if they all operate this efficiently we can be proud of our state government and we can certainly be proud of our Highway and Transportation Department.

Nilles: As you have learned, being a Highway Commissioner can be very time consuming. How has serving on the Commission affected your personal life?



Dedication of the rehabilitated Cotter Bridge.

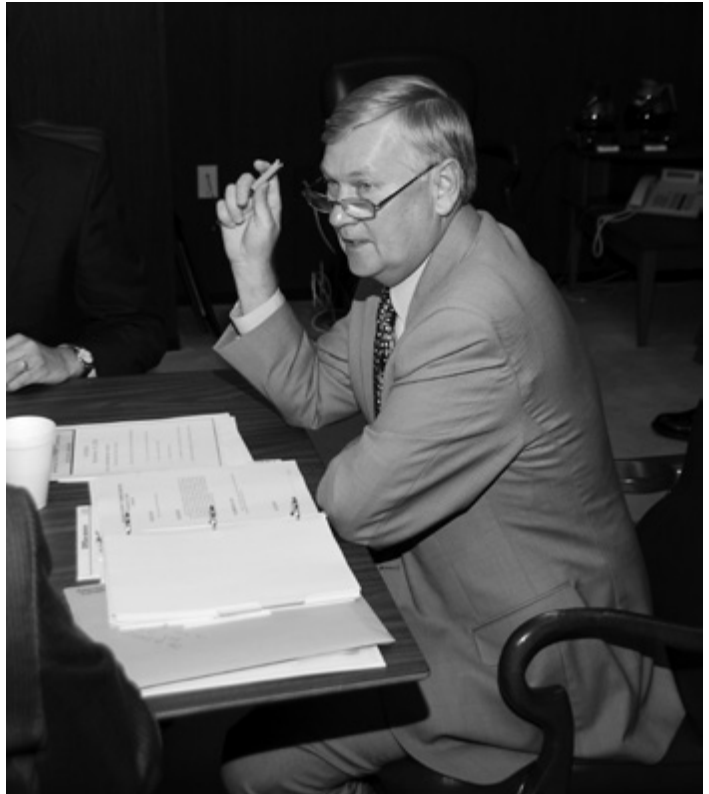
Commissioner Barnett: Most people who get appointed to the Highway Commission are older, but a few of us were appointed early in life. I was in my early 40s. I was well into the productive years of my adult life when appointed. I seemed to be in fairly good shape financially and the development of my family had progressed, so I could devote quite a bit of time to being a Highway Commissioner.

Obviously, as a Commissioner, you can devote as much time as you want or as little time as you want to the Commission. Some have almost served fulltime. I didn't take the fulltime route, but, the learning curve is high and it takes a long time to grasp all the information that you need. You get to the point where you are comfortable. I think that I had my house in order well enough before the fact that I was able to come in and spend an adequate amount of time learning, as quickly as possible, the functions of the Department and was able to work it to the best of my ability. I think that I spent the right amount of time to more than adequately do the job.

Nilles: As for serving on the Commission, if you had the opportunity, would you serve again?

Commissioner Barnett: You know I would. I've said being on the Highway Commission is kind of like jury duty, I think more people should have the opportunity to do it. If they did, they would better understand the process and understand how it works. I think they would be much more tolerant of the job we face and would appreciate the system even more so. I think they would learn to be more receptive to an increase in our resources.

I'd like to see more people be involved in the working of state government. I know I would do it again. It has been a very positive experience for me. Even though I may not be walking away with a degree... you know, either an engineering degree or a degree in transportation, I feel that I have spent enough study time learning how it all comes together. I don't know if I'm quite as good as an engineer yet, probably never will be, but I feel like I've got some type of degree in transportation.



Nilles: Do you have any areas that we haven't discussed that you would like to share?

Commissioner Barnett: Let me just say that it's been a real privilege to serve on this Commission. I've enjoyed being an advocate for the people of northwest Arkansas and serving the citizens of Arkansas. I've done my best to help move the trans-



portation infrastructure system of our state forward. It has been an honor and privilege and I will always be blessed by that and blessed by the relationships and contacts that I have made. I am a better person because of it, and for that I am very thankful and grateful.



Department Visitors Interested in Transportation Careers



Chris Wald, Bituminous Engineer, of the Materials Division, (left) explains tensile strength to delegates from Boys State.



Of the Bridge Division, Civil Engineer Joey Parker (left) and Bridge Design Engineer Philip Terry (right) assist Summer Transportation Institute students with computer bridge models.



HNTB Project Engineer Mike Caulfield discusses the Highway 82 Bridge project with student engineering interns.

The Central Office of the AHTD was the destination of numerous groups of students interested in learning more about careers in transportation this summer.

Approximately twenty delegates from Arkansas Boys State were our guests on June 6th. Following an overview of the Department by Public Affairs Specialist David Nilles, the group took a tour of the Materials Lab with Chris Wald, Bituminous Engineer. During the tour, the delegates learned about tests on soil strengths, effects of traffic on asphalt and concrete compression limits.

Boys State is a six-day program of experience and education for high school juniors. The experience gained by participating in the program can be invaluable to students in their senior year in school and in choosing a career. Each boy is sponsored by a Legion Post or by some other patriotic, civic, fraternal or religious organization for the week-long program.

Students from the National Summer Transportation Institute visited the Department on June 23rd to learn about bridge construction. Seventeen high school students spent the morning with Joey Parker, Phillip Terry and Holly Thomas, all of the Bridge Division, learning about types of bridges, bridge materials and bridge strength. That was followed with a bridge design competition among the students using computer models.

The Transportation Institute is a four-week introduction to all modes of transportation. Students in the ninth through twelfth grades can apply for the program through their local schools. The program is one of several educational initiatives of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. Since it began, the Institute has reached more than two million youth across the country.

"It is always a pleasure to open our doors to young people and to share what we do on a day-to-day basis here at the Department," stated AHTD Director Dan Flowers.

"The insight these students gain is invaluable as they consider their upcoming careers."

On July 24th and 25th, AHTD interns from across the state gathered for a two-day Engineering Student Intern Orientation at the Central Office. Twenty-five participants learned more about the daily operations of the AHTD and employment opportunities with the Department. This year's orientation featured a special presentation by Mike Caulfield, Project Engineer with HNTB, on the construction of the new Highway 82 Mississippi River Bridge in Lake Village. On the second day of orientation, interns visited the Materials Lab and toured the Roadway Design, Programs & Contracts, Bridge, Construction and Planning & Research Divisions. Attendees also heard an intern's perspective from Jeff Maze, an Engineering student intern with Resident Engineer Office 43 in Fayetteville.

Work Progressing on Greenville Bridge

A glimpse toward the new Highway 82 bridge currently under construction over the Mississippi River near Lake Village not only reveals two impressive tower piers in the distance but a great deal of construction activity as well.

Work on the bridge began in the summer of 2001. Construction is moving right along and when completed, it will be the longest cable-stayed bridge on the Mississippi River and the third longest in the United States.

The bridge's main span is significantly completed. Attention has now turned to the approaches to the bridge coming from the Mississippi and Arkansas sides. For the Mississippi side, the total length of the project is 8,475 feet including 6,535 feet of bridge. For the Arkansas side, the total length of project will be 7,504 feet including 4,660 feet of bridge.

Crews have reached completion on most of the work on the Mississippi approach. On the Arkansas side, progress is being made with completion expected in the spring or summer. Crews are working on the concrete bridge deck, the last major component of the approach.

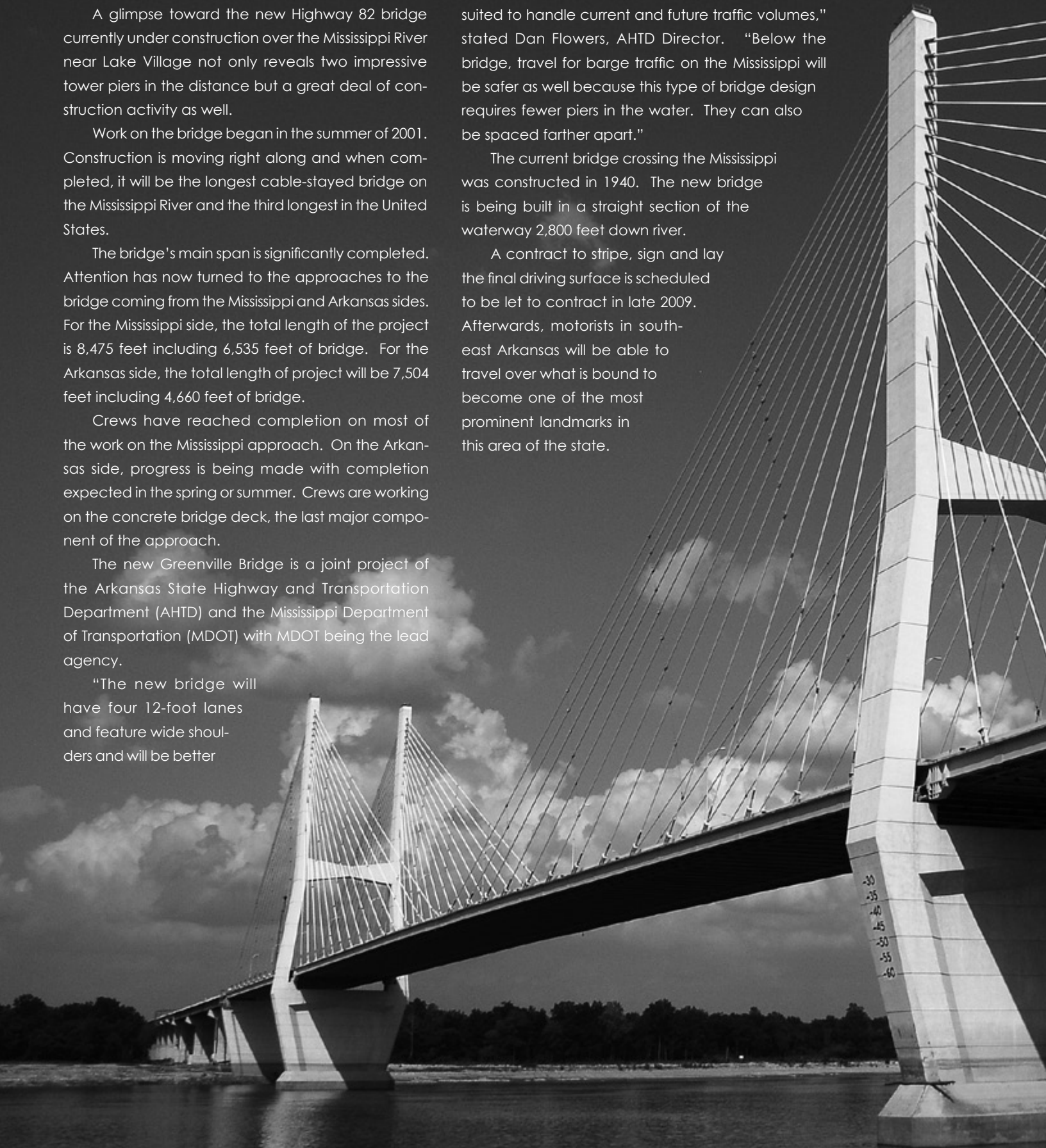
The new Greenville Bridge is a joint project of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) and the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) with MDOT being the lead agency.

"The new bridge will have four 12-foot lanes and feature wide shoulders and will be better

suiting to handle current and future traffic volumes," stated Dan Flowers, AHTD Director. "Below the bridge, travel for barge traffic on the Mississippi will be safer as well because this type of bridge design requires fewer piers in the water. They can also be spaced farther apart."

The current bridge crossing the Mississippi was constructed in 1940. The new bridge is being built in a straight section of the waterway 2,800 feet down river.

A contract to stripe, sign and lay the final driving surface is scheduled to be let to contract in late 2009. Afterwards, motorists in south-east Arkansas will be able to travel over what is bound to become one of the most prominent landmarks in this area of the state.





Caddo Nation Praises Work of John Miller

John Miller, Section Head of Archeology in the Environmental Division, has received an award from the Caddo Nation.

Presentation of the award to Miller and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Environmental Coordinator Randal Looney was made at the 50th Annual Caddo Conference held in March of this year in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

The award recognizes Miller and Looney for their efforts to work directly with the Caddo Nation when it comes to new construction projects and the overall goal of preserving the history of the Caddo.

All of southwest Arkansas and perhaps much of the western half of the state was once occupied by the Caddo.

"Current regulations require all federal agencies to consult with federally recognized tribes regarding projects that may affect ancestral lands or sites that may be of cultural or religious significance to a tribe," states Miller.

"We generally notify the tribe about any projects that occur in this area and they let us know if they want further consultation regarding a specific project."

Further consultation may range from simply providing additional information on a project to actual on-site visits with members of the tribe.

"The tribes have unique knowledge and expertise when it comes to their culture, history and religion and they are often the only ones that can provide proper guidance and assistance when assessing, mitigating, managing or preserving a resource that is culturally important to them," Miller adds.

"Because federally recognized tribes are considered as sovereign nations, the consultation process is generally conducted through FHWA in order to maintain a nation to nation relationship."

"For me, this award is a great honor," Miller adds.



John Miller, left, and FHWA Environmental Coordinator Randal Looney were presented plaques for their work with the Caddo Nation.

Department Receives Environmental Award

The Department was the recipient of a 2008 Globe Award for Environmental Excellence from the American Road & Transportation Builders Association Transportation Development Foundation (ARTBA-TDF) this past summer.

Highway and bridge improvement projects across the country were recognized May 20th for their contributions to environmental protection and mitigation during ARTBA-TDF's ninth annual "Globe Awards" event, held in Washington, D.C., as part of the association's Federal Issues Program.

Established by the ARTBA Board of Directors in 1998, the "Globe Awards" recognize private-sector firms and public-sector transportation agencies that do an outstanding job in protecting and/or enhancing the natural environment in the planning, design and construction of U.S. transportation infrastructure projects.

The AHTD, along with contractor Gilbert Central Corporation, were recognized in the "Highways" category and received second place for a project that added passing lanes to Highway 65 in the Buffalo River area of north Arkansas.

The project constructed nearly three miles of passing lanes through Buffalo National River parkland near Harrison. The work included a specific emphasis on protecting landscape features using native and regionally-appropriate rock and stone materials and providing extensive storm water runoff control sites. The Department also used native tree species for landscaping that integrated with existing forestlands. The project was a good example of blending highway construction with environmental reservation programs.

An independent panel of federal agency environmental specialists reviewed all of the nominations and selected the winners.

The Globe Awards program is a Foundation project that complements ARTBA's "Pride in Transportation Construction" campaign to focus public attention on the many positive contributions the transportation construction industry has made to the U.S. economy and quality of life.



Newly added passing lanes on Highway 65, near the Buffalo River.

Railroad Overpass Prescott

A total of 58 people attended a Design Public Hearing at Callom & Carney Clinic Community Center in Prescott on January 10, 2008, to hear about plans for a new railroad overpass in Prescott.

The proposed plans call for an overpass on new location over the Union Pacific railroad tracks that will connect Highway 371 to Highway 67.

Staff from the Roadway Design, Right of Way and Environmental Divisions, plus District officials, were in attendance at the meeting.

Highway 65/Highway 82 Lake Village

Approximately 100 people gathered at the Lake Village Fire Station on March 6, 2008, for a Location and Design Public Hearing on Highway 65.

The proposed highway project calls for widening six miles of Highways 65 and 82 to five lanes in the Lake Village area. The project would extend from the Tourist Information Center southward to the Mississippi River Bridge.

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

Highway 18 Monette/Manila

The Department held Design Public Hearings on May 19, 2008, at the American Legion Building in Monette and on May 20, 2008, at the Manila Municipal Airport to share plans for improvements to Highway 18.

The proposed improvements call for widening Highway 18 from two to five lanes extending from the St. Francis River to Highway 181.

In attendance from the AHTD were staff members from Roadway Design, Right of Way, Environmental, as well as District officials.

Springdale Northern Bypass

Springdale

Design Public Hearings were held in Springdale on June 3, 2008, at the Willis D. Shaw Elementary School and on June 4, 2008, at The Jones Center for Families to discuss plans for the proposed Springdale Northern Bypass.

Those in attendance saw plans that call for building a four lane, divided highway on new location on the north side of town.

A total of 475 people attended including AHTD staff from Roadway Design, Public Affairs, Right of Way, Environmental and District officials.

Highway 62

Garfield

Local residents gathered at Garfield First Baptist Church on June 12, 2008, for a Location and Design Public Hearing to hear about plans for improvements to Highway 62 in Benton County.

The proposed plans call for widening approximately eleven miles of Highway 62 to five lanes extending from Avoca eastward to Gateway.

Staff from Roadway Design, Right of Way and Environmental, plus District officials, were in attendance at the meeting.

Highway 162

Alma

Approximately 65 people attended a Design Public Hearing on June 17, 2008, at Alma Highway School to discuss plans for improvements to Highway 162 in the area.

Proposed improvements would construct a section of Highway 162 as a two-lane highway on new location on the east side of Alma.

In attendance from the Department were representatives of the Roadway Design, Right of Way and Environmental Divisions as well as District officials.

Dedications

Work Zone Safety Awareness Attracts Crowd in N. Little Rock

Staff of the AHTD and others concerned with safety awareness in the workplace were brought together April 7th in North Little Rock to kick off "Work Zone Safety Awareness Week." To highlight the importance of the subject, the group convened at a busy construction site on the Highway 70 widening project.

Everyone is responsible for work zone safety. Engineers and planners are responsible for making sure work zones are designed and managed properly; drivers and pedestrians are responsible for being alert and obeying the traffic laws; the police and courts have the responsibility to enforce the traffic laws.



New Interstate 40 Interchange Dedicated in Conway

Tornadoes were touching down to the north as a rather large crowd gathered for a quick dedication of the new Interstate 40 Interchange in Conway on May 2nd. AHTD Director Dan Flowers joined Conway Mayor Tab Townsell and other local elected officials to cut a ribbon and officially open the new interchange. The ceremony coincided with Conway's annual Toad Suck Daze Festival and the new interchange was a big factor in getting thousands of visitors in and out of Conway that weekend.

The interchange was built in two phases – a grading and structures contract with McGeorge Contracting of Pine Bluff, and, a base and surfacing contract with the Rogers Group of Nashville, Tennessee.

The \$9.1 million interchange is located one-half mile west of the existing Highway 25 partial interchange. The new interchange features three straight ramps and one loop ramp. Right of way has been purchased to replace the loop ramp with a straight ramp when future improvements are made to Highway 25, north of the site.



New Railroad Overpass Opens in Maumelle

The opening of the new Highway 100 Railroad Overpass in Maumelle attracted a large local crowd on May 16th to witness the official cutting of the project ribbon. AHTD Director Dan Flowers and Commissioner Carl Rosenbaum joined Maumelle Mayor Mike Watson, local elected officials and a throng of others from the community, to praise the safety of the new overpass.

The \$7.4 million project was let in 2005 to Southern Pavers of Pine Bluff. The new structure eliminated at grade crossings on Highway 100 and replaced them with a mile-long, four-lane overpass with sidewalks and bicycle lanes. The project also added a traffic signal at the southern end of the bridge at Rolling Oaks Drive.

Approximately 15,000 vehicles and twenty trains pass through the area each day at this north Maumelle location.

There are 2,700 at-grade railroad crossings in Arkansas. Just over 30 percent of those crossings have active warnings, such as lights and arms. The others only have warning signs. The AHTD allocates about \$3.5 million in federal money each year to upgrading railroad crossings.

Of course, building a railroad overpass such as the one on Highway 100 in Maumelle is the only way to completely eliminate railroad hazards.



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Notes Completion of Flippin Bypass

Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman Jonathan Barnett and AHTD Director Dan Flowers joined with local officials on May 29th to note the completion of the Highway 412 Flippin Bypass. The \$11 million project, begun in April 2004, created a three-mile, five-lane roadway on new location just south of Flippin.

Built in two phases, the original contract with Dumey Contracting of Benton, Missouri, was for the grading and structures portion of the project. In April 2007, the final phase for base and surfacing was let to Twin Lake Quarries of Mountain Home.

Commissioner Barnett noted that this project is just one of many construction jobs on Highway 412 that have been completed, are underway or are scheduled along this major east-west northern corridor that connects Oklahoma (at Siloam Springs) to Missouri (just east of Paragould).

During the past ten years, over \$250 million in projects have been completed, over \$110 million in projects are under construction and another \$60 million are programmed for improvements to Highway 412.



Letters to the Department

May 12, 2008

I would like to thank Lt. James Speer and the other employees of your fine organization. On May 2nd, Earle Arkansas, suffered an F-3 tornado that caused severe damage. Lt. Speer was soon in constant contact with our Department, and sent his personnel to help with evacuation, search and rescue, and traffic control.

The officers of the Arkansas Highway Police assisted our Department for many hours, and many came back on Saturday to do more. Thanks to the officers whose names I do not know and to Lt. Speer for diligence in helping my Department and the citizens of Earle. He is truly an asset to the AHP and we are thrilled to have him in Crittenden County.

R.E. Busby
Crittenden County Sheriff

June 15, 2008

Thanks so much for the work done at Nix Lake Road and Woodsprings Road. The workers did an excellent job. My thanks to them, also. It looks so much better.

Dora McAlister
Jonesboro, AR

June 18, 2008

I am a lifelong resident of Arkansas and travel Interstate 40 several times a year. The rest area going west at Ozark is one of my favorites because it is clean, well-kept and a real asset for travelers. I appreciate the workers who keep it beautifully manicured and mowed. It is in such an excellent location with lots of trees, picnic tables and clean facilities. A great big "thank you" is in order.

Jane Hunt

March 13, 2008

Thank you for allowing Corporal J. B. Harwood to make a presentation to the students in the Criminal Justice course at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith.

Corporal Harwood was well organized and presented in a professional manner. The students found his presentation on the duties and responsibilities of the Arkansas Highway Police to be quite informative.

Lt. Steven A. Coppinger
Commander - Company D
Arkansas State Police
Fort Smith, Arkansas

June 20, 2008

I recently passed through Texarkana on my way home from Texas. I stopped at the Welcome Center on Interstate 30. I just want to say what a pleasant Welcome Center my mother and I thought it was. It was very clean, and they even serve complimentary coffee - a nice touch for long-distance travelers.

Dennis Owen Desiderio

February 15, 2008

I'd like to commend Tommy Lacey and other employees at the Hazen rest area on Interstate 40. One afternoon, I stopped there and dropped my wallet while I was in the restroom. Later, I got a voicemail that one of the employees had found my wallet.

I went to the AHTD's shop area in Hazen the next morning and my wallet was returned to me intact. The whole matter was handled in a professional, courteous manner. I was impressed with the staff's concern that my wallet was returned in the fastest way possible. I then learned it was Tommy Lacey who turned in the wallet. Their efforts and honesty are much appreciated.

Rick Ellington,
Eads, Tennessee

May 16, 2008

The members of the Hanger Hill Neighborhood Association would like to thank you for not mowing the red clover, purple vetch, and pink and yellow flowers that have bloomed along the roadsides. This gives them the time to spread their beauty. We hope that the AHTD continues this policy for visitors and residents to enjoy it throughout the blooming season.

Barbara Barrows, Secretary
Hanger Hill Neighborhood Association
Little Rock, Arkansas

May 9, 2008

On behalf of the Ouachita River Unit of the Arkansas Department of Corrections, I would like to express appreciation for the AHTD having paved the exit from Highway 270 to West Moline Street. It has provided a smoother and more comfortable ride for our staff members traveling this route to work, as well as the citizens of Malvern in general.

M.D. "Dale" Reed
Warden, Ouachita River Unit
Arkansas Department of Correction

June 5, 2008

I want to thank Cpl. Darren Smith for providing outstanding support. Cpl. Smith worked closely with Cpl. Anthony Maggitt to complete the tests needed to earn his certification as a Drug Recognition Expert.

The professionalism and dedication Cpl. Smith displayed while assisting Cpl. Maggitt are commendable. He is an asset to the Arkansas Highway Police.

Please extend my sincere appreciation to Cpl. Darren Smith for a job well done.

Nathaniel Jackson, Captain
Commander - Troop D

June 9, 2008

We want to thank two employees of the AHTD, Trent Vanderzwaln and Nathan Thomason, who helped change our flat tire on June 2nd. We would never have been able to change it ourselves. They were very kind and considerate. These men went above and beyond the call of duty to assist us. They deserve recognition for their kindness.

Shannon Neely & Larry Young
El Dorado, AR

March 11, 2008

I had a citizen call to ask about his ticket, and he had nothing but good things to say about Pfc. Lewis. I wanted to share his comments. It is an honor to work with Officer Lewis and the other officers who work to keep the roads safe. The job sometimes is a thankless one, so anytime we can share praise from an officer's contact, it is our pleasure.

Jean Billings
District Court Clerk
District Court of Scott County
Waldron, Arkansas

March 11, 2008

I'm including this letter with my ticket to acknowledge the officer who wrote it. It is not pleasant to receive a ticket, but I am glad to pay - because I am guilty, but moreso because of the way I was treated.

I was driving toward our job site in DeQueen. I wasn't paying attention to my speed and was stopped by an Arkansas Highway Police officer. Pfc. Lewis, Badge #374, approached my window, politely told me why he stopped me and asked for my license. While I dug in my wallet, he joked with me and the other guys in my truck, and asked pertinent questions. He checked my record and returned with a ticket. He me advised to ask for a civil penalty due to my clean record, and to have a good day and slow down. Then he apologized that we had to meet that way.

The entire time he smiled and treated me with respect. I am disappointed in myself, not the officer, that I received a speeding ticket. Officers like Pfc. Lewis risk their lives daily to keep the roads safe for all of us. He has restored my faith in the term "protect and serve."

John P. VanGorder
Greenwood, Arkansas

May 6, 2008

Seeing the beautiful crimson clover along the Interstates in Pulaski County almost makes one forget the high price of gasoline. Thanks to the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department.

Joyce Irwin
Little Rock, Arkansas

February 21, 2008

We wish to express our thanks to Cpl. Mark H. Willis for being so helpful and courteous to us in our time of need. Recently our car lost power and completely stalled while we were driving from Hope to Arkadelphia. We were stranded on Interstate 30 east bound near the 48 mile marker with only a cell phone and a look of disgust on our faces.

Cpl. Willis appeared shortly and took us to Love's Truck Stop nearby. We got a fuel can and some gas and returned. After adding the fuel, the car still would not crank we called a wrecker.

Cpl. Willis then took us to Arkadelphia. Along the way, we noticed a man pushing his truck down an off-ramp. Willis said, "Looks like this is a day for running out of gas." Sure enough, he was out of gas. Willis used his car to push the man and his truck to get gas. His actions that day tell us he is dedicated not only to enforcing traffic laws, but in showing concern for his fellow man.

Please recognize Cpl. Willis for his going above and beyond the call of duty. His conduct and attitude reflect positively on him and the Arkansas Highway Police.

Don L. Egger & Billy Jackson
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

March 10, 2008

I am a corporal with the Arkansas State Police in Madison County. I am writing to praise the work your employees do by maintaining the roadways and helping us keep accidents to a minimum.

I have had the privilege to meet Kenny Riley several times this winter due to ice and snow storms. I have contacted your Department for areas needing extra attention with salt or sand. I have never been disappointed with the response time or the job that was being done.

I know letters of complaint come far more often than letters of praise. I wanted to express my gratitude for the job being done by your Department in this county. On behalf of myself and the troopers I work with, we appreciate the continuing support and cooperation!

Cpl. Matthew Sheley
Arkansas State Police

March 3, 2008

Please accept this letter as appreciation for the excellent work and assistance that two of your officers provided after the fatal crash involving a commercial carrier vehicle.

On December 16, 2007, a crash occurred on Joy Mountain in White County. Tragically, two small children were killed in a collision with a commercial vehicle. In keeping with policy, an investigation was initiated to determine if there were criminal actions. Cpl. Jeffery Yates and Cpl. Lowell Stephens responded to the request to conduct the investigation. The officers responded in a timely manner and were very involved in the investigation. I am proud that our officers worked as a team and I look forward to a continuing close relationship. Please express my sincere appreciation to Cpl. Yates and Cpl. Stephens for a job well done.

Capt. M.D. Davidson
Commander - Troop B
Arkansas State Police
Newport, Arkansas

April 18, 2008

I can't thank you enough for our new road, Highway 45 near Bonanza. It is so much safer and saves fuel. We love it.

Byra Burke
Hackett, Arkansas

April 1, 2008

I wanted to let you know how much I now enjoy the trip from Mammoth Springs to the Interstate at Bald Knob. I have been making this trip for 18 years. Before, it was difficult to even go the speed limit in places due to farm machinery or big trucks that could not pull the hills.

I made the trip to Texas to visit my parents in March. The ease of getting through the Ozarks now makes the drive a lot more pleasurable.

I used to take for granted the transportation system, but I want to say "kudos" to all the hard work put into making the highways the best they can be for the traveling public.

Angie Temple
West Plains, Missouri



Arkansas State Highway and
Transportation Department
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