

The background of the cover is a photograph of a highway construction site. In the foreground, several orange and white striped traffic barrels are lined up on the right side of the road. A black pickup truck is on the left, and a white van is further ahead. A white semi-trailer is also visible. The road is flanked by green grassy embankments and a dense forest of tall trees in the background. The sky is clear and blue.

# Arkansas HIGHWAYS

SPRING 2022

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | MAGAZINE

## Slow Down, Phone Down IN WORK ZONES

**NATIONAL ROADWAY  
Safety Strategy**

**HISTORIC HIGHWAYS  
of Arkansas**

**SYLAMORE  
Swinging Bridge**



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear ARDOT Family,

I have always loved new beginnings – especially each January 1. I think it is because of the anticipation of what is to come. It is exciting to think about where we have been and where we are headed. I hope each of you and your families have a healthy and prosperous new year. I hope our collective ARDOT family has a successful and productive new year. As long as we stay on the right path and keep our focus - the future is bright!

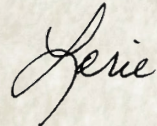
ARDOT's focus is to serve the citizens of Arkansas who have entrusted us with their safety and transportation needs. We all have a high calling as public servants and you are part of something important and meaningful. We should all be proud of our contribution to the State of Arkansas. Thank you for all you do to make ARDOT successful. Thank you for choosing to be a part of the ARDOT team.

I recently discovered a new phrase – Esprit de Corps. It is a French noun that means a spirit of pride and honor shared by the members of a group. It is a feeling of belonging. When I discovered this phrase – I was immediately intrigued.

Esprit de Corps is the sense of unity and motivation to achieve a common mission. It is camaraderie – a sense of trust and friendship that develops within a team. This emerges over time and is increased by meaningful shared experiences such as overcoming difficulties together. Esprit de Corps is pride in the accomplishments of an organization or team. It is an environment whereby people support each other's success.

Esprit de Corps is what makes ARDOT such a great place to work. But, we can never take something so important for granted. Please join me in continuing ARDOT's Esprit de Corps as we head into 2022. We all know that times are changing – and ARDOT is changing as well. But one thing we will work hard not to change – it is our Esprit de Corps! It is what binds us together and makes our future bright.

All my best,



Lorie H. Tudor, P.E., Director



**FRONT COVER:**  
Work zone along U.S. Highway 70  
between Interstate 30 and Hot Springs

**BACK COVER:**  
State Highway 215 - Mulberry River  
Scenic Byway

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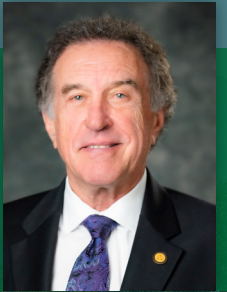
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# SLOW DOWN PHONE DOWN in work zones

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

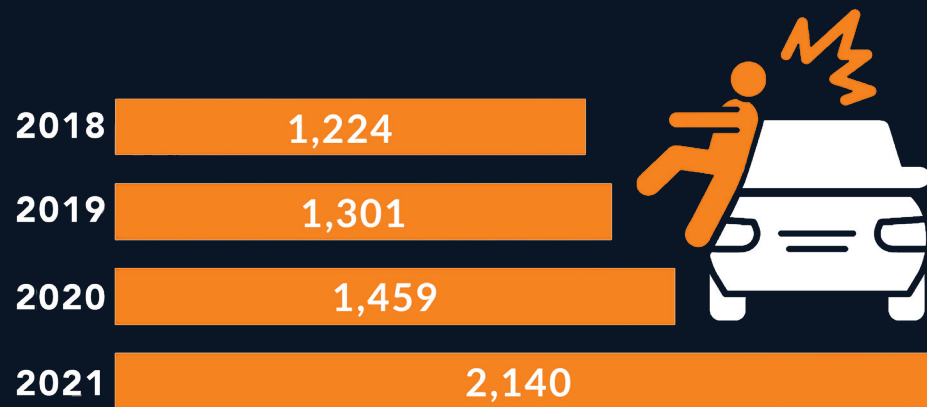
**T**HE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, ARDOT'S ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE AND ARKANSAS STATE POLICE ARE COLLABORATING ON A NEW SAFETY CAMPAIGN AIMED AT CRACKING DOWN ON RECKLESS AND DISTRACTED DRIVING IN WORK ZONES ACROSS THE STATE. The Slow Down, Phone Down campaign will deploy increased ASP and AHP patrols in work zones to watch for dangerous driving. The goal is to eliminate preventable accidents.

(continued on page 6)





# In four years, work zone crashes in Arkansas have increased by more than 70%.



In 2021, there were 2,140 crashes reported in Arkansas work zones resulting in 16 fatalities and 54 serious injuries.

ASP and AHP will be issuing citations to motorists observed using their phone, following too close or speeding through a work zone – all of which are illegal in Arkansas.

“The number of work zone accidents and injuries is rising at an alarming rate in Arkansas,” said ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor. “Even one injury in a work zone is one too many.”

“As crews go about their jobs improving Arkansas highways, they deserve our best attempts to make their work environment as safe as possible,” said ASP Director Colonel Bill Bryant. “State Troopers will be lending support to the Arkansas Highway Police in their effort to stop motorists who ignore the rules of the

road and endanger the lives of those working to make our highways better and safer.”

The Slow Down, Phone Down campaign will take place statewide and will target all motorists – including both commercial trucks and civilian vehicles.

“It’s our duty to protect work zones, the men and women working within them and the citizens driving through them,” said AHP Chief Jeff Holmes. “We have zero tolerance for distracted and reckless driving. We hope this campaign makes it clear that we need people to slow down and put their phone down when entering a work zone.”

## DETAILS IN THE DATA

Work zone crashes and injuries are on the rise. Incidents have steadily increased since 2018, when the total number of crashes reached 1,224.

Then, we saw 2,140 in 2021. In four years, work zone crashes in Arkansas have increased by more than 70 percent.

Analysts are working to understand this alarming trend both nationally and locally but have yet to find causation related to the spike in occurrences. Several theories offer some insight such as reduced traffic due to the pandemic, so people drive faster. Evidence suggests a nationwide shortage of law enforcement officers; electronic devices, games and social media are as distracting as ever.

## CLOSE TO HOME

For ARDOT, this is not just another safety campaign. Two of ARDOT’s own employees recently went to work one day and never made it home.

On December 8, 2021, a driver struck construction crew member Kurt Cottier on Interstate 40 near Conway. Kurt was in a work zone, performing his job duties in a lane closure when the vehicle hit him. He passed away on December 19, 2021, due to complications from his sustained injuries. He was 28 years old.

“It seems so senseless that he had to die that way...he was only 28 years old. He had his whole life ahead of him,” shared Kelly Cottier, Kurt’s mother.

On January 18, 2022, maintenance crew member Winfred Terrell Petty went to work on Interstate 30 near Little Rock and was the victim of a hit-and-run in his work zone; “Papa Terry” was 69 years old. Arkansas State Police arrested the alleged hit-and-run driver eight days after the incident.



# FOR ARDOT, THIS IS NOT JUST ANOTHER SAFETY CAMPAIGN.

Two of ARDOT’s own employees recently went to work one day and never made it home.



Winfred Terrell Petty



Kurt Cottier

The Arkansas Highway Commission is urging citizens and workers to increase work zone safety.

“On behalf of the entire Arkansas Highway Commission, we are deeply saddened and concerned by the alarming rise in work zone crashes, injuries and deaths in Arkansas – especially the two most recent deaths in the past month,” said Robert Moore, Chair of the Commission. “Our hearts go out to the families whose loved ones went to work one day and never made it home.”

ARDOT began development of the Slow Down, Phone Down campaign in the fall of 2021. The campaign debuted February 2, 2022.

“We are urging Arkansans to do their part: slow down in work zones, stay off the phone and pay attention,” said ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor. “It’s going to take all of us working together to reverse this concerning trend.”

Kelly Cottier recalled what Kurt told her about working on the interstate: “He said everybody drives so fast, people were always knocking down the barrels and stuff like that. Even though sometimes the Highway Police were stationed at the end of the construction zone, people just drive right by like they don’t even care; they didn’t even slow down or anything.”

(continued on page 8)



I love my son a lot. I miss him every day. It’s difficult to describe—it’s like a piece of me is gone. I still think about getting that call. I still wake up about the time the call came through. I still remember the things the State Trooper said...**I can’t forget that part. That’s hard to forget.**

- Kelly Cottier





## TAKE ACTION

You can incorporate several safety measures into your driving practice to help prevent work zone deaths and injuries:

- **LEAVE YOUR PHONE ALONE** | Holding your phone for any reason—even getting directions or choosing a playlist—counts as a moving traffic violation. Put your phone down and focus your attention on the work zone around you.
- **WATCH YOUR SPEED** | When you see orange barrels and signs, it's safe to assume the speed limit will be significantly reduced. Be proactive and slow down; this simple action could save someone's life.
- **BACK OFF** | Following too closely is typically the cause for fender-benders, one of the most common types of collisions in work zones. The chances of secondary and tertiary crashes soar in these conditions. Use the three-second rule: keep three seconds of distance between you and the car in front of you. Add another second for inclement weather and double the seconds when following a large truck.

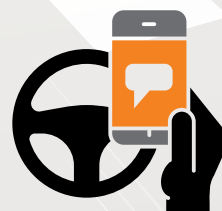
## EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT

Arkansas State Police and Arkansas Highway Police will have marked and low-profile patrols stationed in work zones across the state. When an officer observes someone speeding, using their phone or following too closely in a work zone, the driver will be pulled over and cited. This is a zero tolerance campaign. The rules are simple: slow down, phone down. ■

# THESE THINGS ARE **ILLEGAL** in a **Work Zone** in Arkansas:



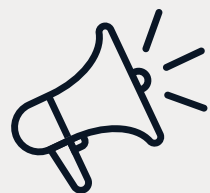
**SPEEDING**



**HANDHELD DEVICE USE**



**FOLLOWING TOO CLOSE**



Help us promote  
**SLOW DOWN,  
PHONE DOWN!**

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Arkansas Highway  
Safety Office



**AGC**ARKANSAS



# HOLMES NAMED CHIEF OF ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE

BY DAVID NILLES



**J**EFF HOLMES WAS NAMED CHIEF OF THE ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE (AHP) IN LATE DECEMBER OF 2021.

Holmes began his career with the Department as an AHP Patrol Officer at the Lehi Weigh Station in West Memphis in 1993. He was promoted to Patrol Officer First Class in 1998 and was promoted again in 2000 to AHP Sergeant. In 2003, he was promoted to AHP First Lieutenant in Special Services. Five years later, he returned to AHP District 5 in his former role as AHP Captain and District Commander.

"Holmes is a proven leader for the AHP, especially during this difficult year prior to Chief Jay Thompson's

retirement," stated ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor. "I am confident that he will continue to lead the AHP forward with integrity and excellence to accomplish the AHP's mission of protecting the State's infrastructure investment and safety."

Holmes is a graduate of the University of Arkansas Criminal Justice Institute's Arkansas Leader Program and School of Law Enforcement Supervision. He also holds a senior certificate in law enforcement from the Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training. ■



# U.S. DOT ANNOUNCES National Roadway Safety Strategy

As the nation grapples with a rise in traffic fatalities, new strategies outline steps for the U.S. Department of Transportation, and call on stakeholders from across sectors to take action to address this urgent crisis.

- Pete Buttigieg  
United States Secretary of Transportation

(via [transportation.gov](https://www.transportation.gov))

**T**HE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (USDOT) HAS ANNOUNCED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S NEW COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL ROADWAY SAFETY STRATEGY (NRSS), A ROADMAP FOR ADDRESSING THE NATIONAL CRISIS IN ROADWAY FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES.

Almost 95 percent of the nation's transportation deaths occur on its streets, roads and highways. While the number of annual roadway fatalities declined for many years, progress plateaued over the last decade and now alarmingly fatalities have risen during the pandemic. The NRSS provides concrete steps that the Department will take to address this crisis systemically and prevent these tragic and avoidable deaths and serious injuries.

"We cannot tolerate the continuing crisis of roadway deaths in America," stated U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "These deaths are preventable, and that's why we're launching the National Roadway Safety Strategy today - a bold, comprehensive plan, with significant new funding from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. We will work with every level of government and industry

to deliver results, because every driver, passenger and pedestrian should be certain that they're going to arrive at their destination safely, every time."

The USDOT, as part of the NRSS, is adopting the "Safe System Approach," which acknowledges both human mistakes and human vulnerability, and designs a redundant system to protect everyone by preventing crashes and ensuring that if they do occur, they do not result in serious injury or death.

The USDOT will use a five-pronged model to address safety: safer people, safer roads, safer vehicles, safer speeds and post-crash care. And importantly, the NRSS recognizes that reducing traffic fatalities will take sustained and concerted action from everyone across all sectors and all levels of government.

A few of the key actions in the program include:

- Working with states and local road owners to build and maintain safer roadways through efforts including updates to the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*; a *Complete Streets Initiative* to provide technical assistance to communities of all sizes; and speed limit setting.
- Leveraging technology to improve the safety of motor vehicles on our roadways, including

rulemaking on automatic emergency braking and pedestrian automatic emergency braking, and updates to the New Car Assessment Program.

- Investing in road safety through funding in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including a new \$6 billion *Safe Streets and Roads for All* program, hundreds of millions for behavioral research and interventions, and \$4 billion in additional funding for the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

The strategy was developed in coordination with the Department's Executive Safety Council led by Deputy Transportation Secretary Polly Trottenberg. The NRSS builds on and harmonizes efforts from across the department's three roadway safety agencies: the Federal Highway Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

"The Roadway Safety Action Plan is designed to focus all of the USDOT's resources, authorities and incredible expertise, working with our stakeholders, to combat the tragic number of fatalities and serious injuries we see on U.S. roadways – from our largest cities and towns, to rural and tribal communities all across the

country," said Deputy Transportation Secretary Polly Trottenberg.

"This National Roadway Strategy represents a collective effort across the Department, and under the leadership of Secretary Buttigieg, to embrace the Safe System approach, and to recognize that no loss of life on our nation's roadways is acceptable. As we move towards swift implementation, we look forward to partnering with every level of government, industry, advocacy groups and all who will come together to address this crisis," said Robin Hutcheson, former U.S. DOT Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety Policy, and Acting Administrator for FMCSA.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Deputy Administrator Dr. Steve Cliff considered the future and the importance of the program.

"No longer can we as a society accept traffic deaths as routine. Every life lost is a tragedy, and we all can, should and must do more to change the culture. The National Roadway Safety Strategy and the Safe System Approach offer all communities a roadmap to save lives and reduce injuries." ■



# Historic Highways of Arkansas

BY DAVID NILLES

RECENTLY RETURNED TO ARKANSAS FROM A TRIP OUT WEST TO COLORADO AND UTAH. ON THE DRIVE HOME, WE STOPPED FOR GAS IN THE SMALL TOWN OF SHAMROCK, TEXAS, LOCATED IN THE PANHANDLE OF THE LONE STAR STATE.

As we left Interstate 40 and arrived at the end of the exit ramp, I was surprised to discover we were suddenly driving on U.S. Highway 66. Yes, the historic two-lane Route 66, immortalized as the place to “get your kicks” in a song penned by Bobby Troup in 1946. The famous highway is also known as the Mother Road; Main Street, America; and the Will Rogers Highway. According to the National Park Service, Route 66 has been documented in prose, song, film and television and has come to represent the essence of the American highway culture.

Though Route 66 does not pass through Arkansas on its way west, I began thinking about a number of highways in the Natural State that hold historical significance and have a story of their own to tell. Here are the ones that made my list.

## THE DOLLARWAY ROAD

The Dollarway Road, in Jefferson County, stands as one of Arkansas’ early efforts to build a durable highway that could handle the rising traffic volumes of the early 1900s. The roadway was built by the Jefferson County Road Improvement District No. 4 and stretched from the city of Pine Bluff to the Pulaski County Line.

Crews began work on the project in November of 1913 and had the job completed in October of 1914. The 23-mile Dollarway Road was constructed of concrete and measured five inches tall and nine feet wide. The only pieces of machinery used during construction were two one-half-yard capacity stationary concrete mixers. Four bridges were included as part of the project. The Dollarway Road became the first use of reinforced concrete for road and bridge construction in Arkansas. The concrete had a thin coat of



Dollarway Road

bituminous seal on its surface, marking the first use of the seal in this area of the country.

The highway became known as the Dollarway Road because the construction costs were almost equal to one dollar per linear foot. However, the final cost was closer to \$1.36 per foot.

The road had the distinction of being the longest continuous length of concrete pavement in the nation.

Today the highway only exists in the history books. Highways 65 and 365 in Jefferson County cover most of the original Dollarway Road. No markers point out the route, but sections of the roadway can still be seen in the towns of White Hall and Redfield.

## THE WALNUT RIDGE ARMY AIRFIELD ACCESS ROAD

Near the town of College City in northeast Arkansas, is a highway that led many service men and women down the path to becoming successful pilots. Built in the 1940s, Fulbright Avenue extends eastward off U.S. Highway 67 to Stafford Lane. In its heyday, Fulbright was part of the main access road to the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield and went by the name of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road.

The two-lane highway was constructed as part of the National Highway Defense Act of 1941. The Act represented



US Highway 61 historical photo sourced from Joe Sonderman

an effort to construct adequate motor-truck transportation routes for the defense and military industries to adequately move goods, people and materials from location to location in the case of the United States' entrance into war. Arkansas’ access road was heavily used to carry thousands of military personnel in and out of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield.

The airfield dates back to 1942 when the city was selected by the Army Air Corps for construction of a basic flying school as part of the 70,000 Pilot Training Program. It was one of many airfields built in the United States during World War II. The facility featured three runways, a huge apron covering over 63 acres, four large hangars, a 203-bed hospital and its own water plant and sewer plant. It was opened in August of 1942. During its heyday, the school at Walnut Ridge successfully trained over 4,600 graduates to fly BT-13s.

As World War II came to a close, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) established a disposal and reclamation facility at Walnut Ridge for excess aircraft. RFC at Walnut Ridge became one of the largest disposal sites for aircraft in the United States with 10,000 war planes flown to the facility in 1945 and 1946 for storage, dismantle or sale. Today, the Walnut Ridge Municipal Airport stands on the site. The Wings of Honor Museum is located nearby and preserves the history of the airfield.

Selected sections of Fulbright Avenue were rehabilitated in the summer of 2015 by ARDOT. The project patched the concrete pavement and smoothed it utilizing a process called diamond grinding. The original concrete can still be seen, but to keep it in the best condition possible for the traveling public, it has a slightly different look and texture. The access road was named to the National Registry of Historic Places in 2017.

## HIGHWAY 61 IN NORTHEAST ARKANSAS

This historic highway connects Arkansas and Missouri in the northeast corner of the state. It was known as the North-South Road in the early 1900s. The highway was already a major route between St. Louis and Memphis when it was designated as part of U.S. Highway 61. What makes it a renowned highway today is a historic arch spanning the highway between Blytheville, Arkansas, and Steele, Missouri. The concrete horseshoe arch reads “Entering Arkansas” on one side and “Entering Missouri” on the other. The Mississippi County Arkansas Road Improvement District built the arch in 1924 after paving the heavily traveled highway. The district erected a similar arch over the highway at the Crittenden County line, but that arch was removed in the 1950s. The arch at Blytheville is the only archway over a U.S. highway in Arkansas. The structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

*(continued on page 14)*





State Highway 23 - The Pig Trail



The Arkansas Road (Southwest Trail)

## HIGHWAY 23 – THE PIG TRAIL

What would an article on Arkansas' historic highways be without including the Pig Trail? Mention the Pig Trail to almost any Arkansan, and they know you are referring to Highway 23 passing through the Ozark National Forest of northwest Arkansas. Leaving Interstate 40 at Ozark, the Pig Trail stretches northward until it intersects with Highway 16 and heads into Fayetteville. The route serves as a Scenic Byway and is popular with football fans traveling to University of Arkansas Razorback football games. The highway is a break from Interstate travel and takes motorists under a canopy of hardwood trees as it zigzags through the Boston Mountains. Along the way are scenic overlooks, waterfalls, a Mulberry River crossing and incredible fall foliage, if your timing is right. The Pig Trail is a popular ride for motorcyclists and USA

Today lists the route as the #2 best motorcycle ride in America.

## THE ARKANSAS ROAD (SOUTHWEST TRAIL)

Following the route of Highway 67 in northeast Arkansas and continuing southward down Interstate 30 in southwest Arkansas you have the path of one of Arkansas' first roads. Dating hundreds of years back, this route began as a footpath used by Native Americans. In the 1820s, it developed as a wagon trail as immigrants made their way west. The famous route down what is now Highway 67 and Interstate 30 is historically known as Arkansas' section of the Southwest Trail.

The trail began near St. Louis, made its way across Arkansas and then down to northeast Texas. In the early days, the route was referred to by many names including the Arkansas

Road, National Road, U.S. Road, Red River Road and the Natchitoches Trace. No matter the name, the route has enjoyed an important history. A majority of Arkansas' early population traveled into the state using the Southwest Trail. By the 1830s, Congress had begun providing funding for improvements to the road. The 1870s saw the railroad arrive in Arkansas and several railroad companies laid their track parallel to it.

Today, the trail is still faintly visible as wagon wheel ruts in some rural areas. It also exists as major roadways in some urban areas. Stagecoach Road in Little Rock follows the original route, as does Batesville Pike in northern Pulaski County.

Plans are in the works for a new multi-use trail in central and southwest Arkansas that will follow the original route of the trail. ■

# SPECIAL EVENTS AROUND THE STATE



## HIGHWAY 18 RIBBON CUTTING MANILA, ARKANSAS

The northeast Arkansas town of Manila was the site of a ribbon cutting on November 18 of 2021. The ceremony officially opened 1.8 miles of Highway 18 that had been widened from two to five lanes.

"With this event, we now have two travel lanes in each direction stretching from Blytheville westward all the way to Jonesboro," ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor told the crowd.

The improvements on this job extend from southeast of Manila eastward through the Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

Highway Commissioner Alec Farmer provided a bigger picture of improvements in Mississippi County.

"Over the past 10 years, ARDOT has projects totaling \$232 million that have been completed on 220 miles of highways, county roads and city streets. These are projects that have resulted in safer highways for Mississippi County motorists."

W.G. Yates & Sons completed the improvements for \$35.5 million. Construction was funded through ARDOT's Connecting Arkansas Program. ■



## HIGHWAY 62 GROUNDBREAKING PIGGOTT, ARKANSAS

A crowd that included local dignitaries, ARDOT staff and Highway Commissioners gathered for a ground breaking in Piggott on November 18 to officially begin safety improvements on Highway 62 through town.

The project will construct three roundabouts and improve one traffic signal.

"These improvements are all about safety and safety is always a top priority at ARDOT," ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor shared. "We are seeing more and more roundabouts featured in construction projects around the state. The reason is simple... they provide a safer way to travel through intersections."

The \$3.8 million contract was awarded to R.L. Persons Construction, Inc. in September of 2021.

"These new roundabouts may take a week or so to get used to, but motorists will learn to enjoy them as they travel through the downtown area," Highway Commissioner Alec Farmer told the crowd. "Roundabouts are safer than traditional intersections because they reduce crashes, resulting in fewer injuries and fatalities."

Completion of the improvements is expected in late 2022. ■







# Sylamore SWINGING BRIDGE

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

**S**TEP BACK IN TIME—MORE THAN 100 YEARS BACK—WHEN YOU VISIT THE SYLAMORE SWINGING BRIDGE IN MOUNTAIN VIEW, ARKANSAS.

Originally built in 1914, the Swinging Bridge is located on the first road through the Ozark National Forest, then known as the Big Flat-Sylamore Road. The steel cabling weighed

more than two tons and reached Sylamore via railroad; then, horse-drawn wagons hauled it to the current location.

This critical thoroughfare carried foot traffic, horseback riders and large trucks transporting timber and large equipment. After becoming part of State Highway 14 in the 1940s, the bridge received upgrades in the 1940s to reach state guidelines—the original

steel cable remained in use.

Sadly, a hard and fast 19-inch rainfall destroyed the bridge on December 3, 1982. The bridge was designed to withstand the rise and fall of water below, but it could not sustain the pressure of the flooding of the White River, much less the debris-filled waters of the Sylmore continually smashing into the structure. Surprisingly, the steel cabling and

concrete anchors from 1914 held firm.

After the flood, the historical significance of the bridge allowed for the preservation of the structure. Franks Construction of Mountain View rebuilt the bridge from the same blueprints used in the 1940s. The abutments and original steel cables were used again and the bridge reopened in March 1985.

The bridge was a favorite meeting

place for families and friends, for picnics and reunions, fishing and fireworks, pranks and parking. It is now a tourist destination for Arkansans and visitors. Roll the windows down and drive across the bridge to hear the tires clickety-clack on the wooden deck; you may feel it flex with the weight of your vehicle (don't worry—it's designed to do that)! Or walk across the bridge

and stop to enjoy the view of the Sylamore Creek below. It remains the only bridge of its kind in the Natural State. ■

*\*Information for this article was obtained from the historic marker erected by Anglers Resort, Stone County Historical Society, and Nikki Lee Atwell Foundation*





# Rolling through River Towns

BY DAVID NILLES

## CALICO ROCK, AR

Arkansas is known as the Natural State due to its beautiful landscapes featuring mountains, valleys, rivers and lakes. Without a doubt, there are plenty of places to escape in order to enjoy the outdoors. In this series, Arkansas Highways explores Arkansas' river towns. With 33 rivers running through our state, we will explore communities that have grown up along the riverbanks.



Calico Rock, AR

Calico Rock became an important river port for steamboats on the upper White River as early as the first half of the 1880s.

The brick and stone buildings that make up Main Street (Highway 5) were built in the 1920s. Visitors will find shops, antique stores and a museum just after crossing the river. The **CALICO ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT** consists of one block of buildings on both sides of Main Street between the railroad tracks and Walnut Street. It also includes the coal house and the River View Hotel. All 17 buildings contribute to the historic significance of the district, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 for its collection of buildings featuring early 20th century commercial-style architecture.

Be sure to visit the **CALICO ROCK MUSEUM & VISITOR CENTER** housed in the historic E.M. Rand Building and Bluff City Bank building. On view are collections and exhibits telling the history of this area beginning with American Indian culture, the history of Frank and Jesse James in the area, the building of the railroad and progressing right up to the 1960s.



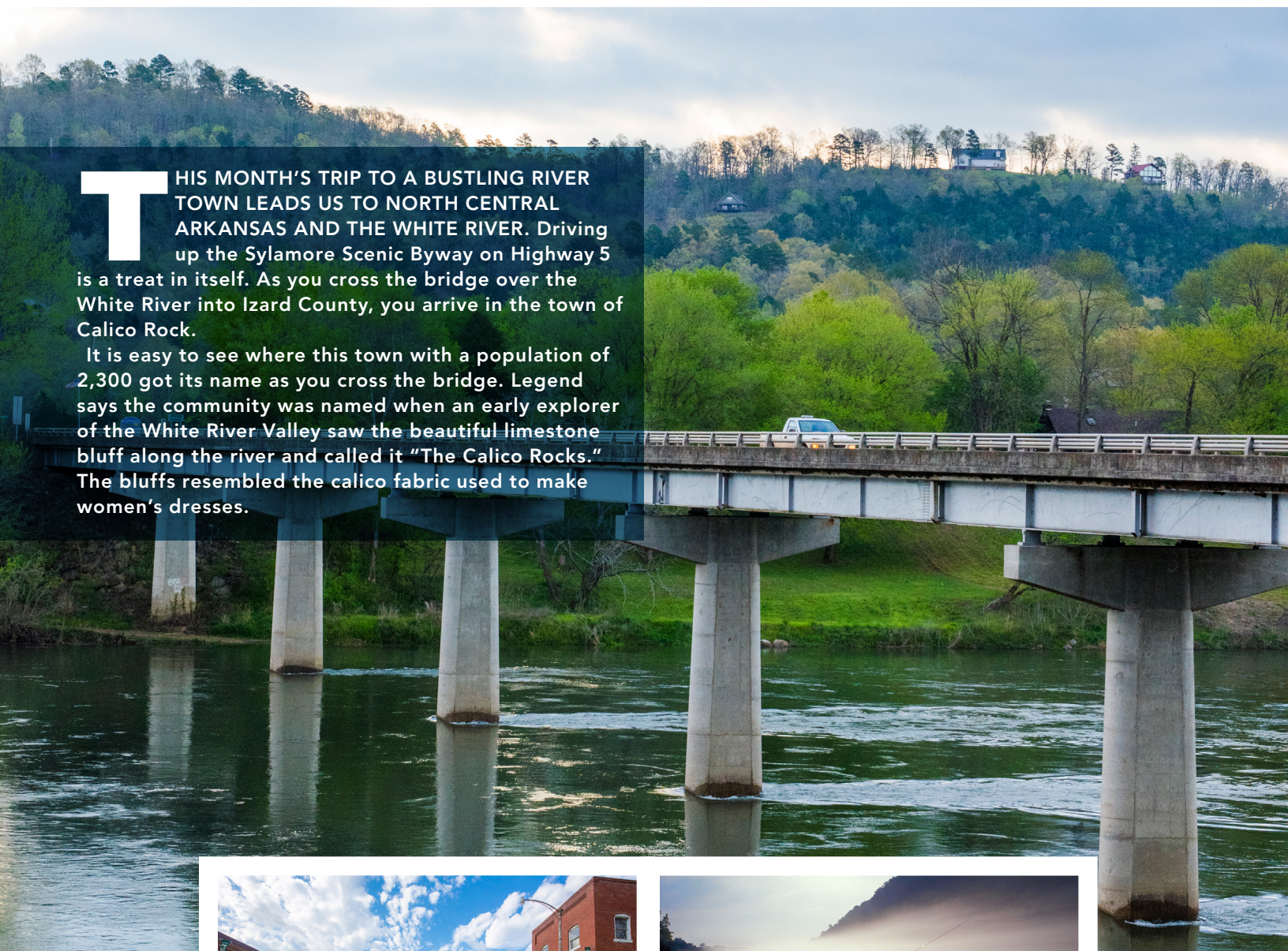
Not far from the action on Main Street is a slower paced area known as the **EAST CALICO HISTORIC DISTRICT**. The area was home to the industrial district in years past and features old deserted buildings from days gone by. In fact, the area is known as a ghost town. A walking tour focuses on approximately fifteen deserted buildings. Strategically located signs share the history of each structure and display historical photos. Among the buildings are an old funeral home, a barbershop, a theater, a cafe and a jail.

On the creek side of the East Calico District is Pepper Sauce Alley. This former disreputable part of town was originally an old wagon yard. When farmers came to town on their buying trips, they would park their wagons in the yard and stay overnight. They would often visit the old taverns in the area dating back to the 1890s. The drink of choice along the alley was known as "Pepper Sauce", the local name for area moonshine brewed there.

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**T**HIS MONTH'S TRIP TO A BUSTLING RIVER TOWN LEADS US TO NORTH CENTRAL ARKANSAS AND THE WHITE RIVER. Driving up the Sylamore Scenic Byway on Highway 5 is a treat in itself. As you cross the bridge over the White River into Izard County, you arrive in the town of Calico Rock.

It is easy to see where this town with a population of 2,300 got its name as you cross the bridge. Legend says the community was named when an early explorer of the White River Valley saw the beautiful limestone bluff along the river and called it "The Calico Rocks." The bluffs resembled the calico fabric used to make women's dresses.



Main Street, Calico Rock.



Fishing on the White River.

Photo courtesy of Arkansas State Parks & Tourism







City Rock Bluff

### TROUT FISHING IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

After exploring the downtown area, make time to hit the White River and do some trout fishing. The fishing is excellent up and down the river near Calico Rock, as is the scenery. A fun way to experience fishing on the river is to utilize one of the fishing services in town. Rent a boat for a few hours or for the day while you enjoy the river, the bluffs and great fishing.

Guided trips are an excellent way to experience the river. Among the fishing services along the banks in town are Jenkins, Bill Terry's and Calico Rock Trout Dock.

### A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

For an impressive view of the Calico Rock area, travel out Highway 56. It is just a few miles to [CITY ROCK BLUFF](#), one of the most spectacular views of the White River to be found anywhere. Standing on the bluff, you can enjoy a panoramic view of the river down below and the city in the distance. It is a great place to spend some leisurely time taking in the view. To reach the bluff, turn right onto Culp Road (County Road 53) at New Hope Church and go approximately 2.5 miles. This gravel



Trimble House

road has some scenic views of farmlands and cedar rock glades. Watch for the turnoff to the parking area on the right because there are no signs leading to the area.

### STEPPING BACK IN TIME

Just a few miles up Highway 56 but still in town is the [TRIMBLE HOUSE](#), one of the few log cabins in existence predating the Civil War. James and Phebe Trimble built their log cabin in 1815. It was there that they raised ten children. James was an elder in the Mount Olive Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Whenever the circuit-riding minister arrived, the Trimbles would open their house and land for a camp meeting or worship services. In 1858, James and Phebe donated 107 acres to the Union C.P. Church, now Trimble Campground Church. The land had a cemetery, meeting house, large spring and campground. The cabin has been relocated from Dolph to a location right on Highway 56 across from Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Whether on the White River or exploring around town, Calico Rock makes a great place to spend an adventurous day. [■](#)



## THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE BOX

### New Strategy Means Faster Bridge Replacements in Northeast Arkansas

BY DAVID NILLES

**A** RECENT BRIDGE COLLAPSE IN PITTSBURGH MADE HEADLINES ACROSS THE NATION. An event like this doesn't occur often, but it focuses attention on how important it is that our nation's bridges be properly maintained and replaced when necessary.

#### ARDOT BRIDGES UNDER WATCHFUL EYE

At the Arkansas Department of Transportation, an updated bridge inspection program was put into place in 2021. The program is currently receiving review and recommendations from a consultant. The Department has 7,389 bridges under its watch.

This story focuses on bridges in ARDOT District 10 in northeast Arkansas where a new bridge replacement program is underway and showing positive results.

District 10 includes seven counties. There are 867 bridges in the District and the majority are in good condition. However, 101 bridges are in poor condition and that is something that District Engineer Brad Smithee was determined to do something about.

"We have 272 bridges in our District built between 1960 and 1980," Smithee shared. "Bridges were being closed at a rate that was incomprehensible. District 10 generally has 35% of Arkansas' posted bridges, depending on when one looks at the statistics. Posted bridges limit the weight of vehicles that can cross over them due to the conditions of the bridge. There was a point when we had 10 bridges closed at once.

"Construction funding and new projects could not keep pace and we had to find options. With closures often recommended and no options for repairs on so many bridges, every conceivable method had to be considered."

#### A PATH TO FASTER BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS

With a goal of finding a solution to the pressing needs in his District, Smithee joined forces with Highway Commission Vice Chair Alec Farmer of Jonesboro, ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor and Deputy Director and Chief Engineer Rex Vines.

"We received a great deal of advice from the public and began talking about options," Smithee explained. "Commissioner Farmer asked what we could do to address

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Crews work on the approaches to a new box culvert in Craighead County.

the situation and make changes if the Commission could provide funding. We looked at the history of construction at ARDOT. We found that Department employees before us built numerous existing bridges. Planning, designing and constructing projects are the best way to build roadways and bridges, but they come with costs and can take a good deal of time to come to fruition. While this is the best solution for installation, we needed to be able to remove structures and get roadway sections back in service as quickly as possible."

Thinking outside the box allowed the District to use tools that previously had not been used.

"We in the District began performing demolition and installation of

Reinforced Concrete (RC) Box Culvert sections ourselves using our own crews when and where hydraulic data would allow," Smithee said. "With fast work from Equipment & Procurement, we accepted phone bids, advertised and did whatever possible to accelerate acquisition of materials. Then our District crews went to work. Our team in District 10 spent long days and some nights moving forward to make things happen replacing bridges.

#### REPLACING BAD BRIDGES WITH GOOD BOX CULVERTS

Taking these extraordinary steps, ARDOT tracked costs such as materials, labor and equipment used to complete installations. With a few bridges replaced, cost and time

summaries were reviewed and showed replacing bridges with box culverts using District crews offered rapid solutions at reduced costs.

"We had good, safe installations and opened roads," Smithee explained. "We replaced bad bridges with good box culverts and solved the prevailing problem. ARDOT now builds some structures with Department staff, in a way that can more quickly address needs and more efficiently utilize funds."

#### MORE HANDS-ON DECK

Not only has District 10 found a solution to a pressing problem, a new Heavy Bridge Maintenance Crew (HBM) has also been established in northeast Arkansas to help with installation. While the predominate

problem was in District 10, the issue was not geographically unique.

"It was decided that Heavy Bridge Maintenance would add staff in order to create this new crew. The intent is to focus on our immediate needs in northeast Arkansas, but certainly be available to work statewide wherever needed," Smithee stated.

#### AT WORK AND SEEING RESULTS

Before the HBM crew was formed, District 10 installed seven precast RC boxes with most using multiple barrel sections.

"The Hydraulics Section in Roadway Design was always ready to help us analyze and size what was necessary, and we utilized rental cranes for the installations."



Military Bridge installation on State Highway 141 in Greene County.

Once formed, the HBM crew began repair work such as deck patching, T-Splicing and piling repair. This work was performed on bridges that could be repaired to serve a longer life.

Today, the new plan is succeeding. HBM and District 10 crews have had a number of bridges restored to operation within two weeks of closure. HBM crews have also been pressed into service outside of District 10 at several locations.

#### MILITARY STEEL BRIDGE UNITS

As part of the new bridge plan, Smithee explained how portable military bridge units made of steel have come into play.

"District 1 has long had military bridge units and they offered some as a possible solution. HBM quickly designed a way to utilize them on a project and we mobilized those units. When we started demolition of the old concrete bridge, District staff handled the workload. We brought the steel units in and performed preparation work to ready the units for installation. HBM, along with some reinforcements from the District, installed the steel structure over a couple of days.

"It was truly my privilege to see these crews work both separately and together. The plan worked like these good people had been a team for

many years and was truly amazing to see."

The military units have since been used again.

#### BUILDING INTO THE FUTURE

What is happening in District 10 has proved successful. HBM has plans for the District to install eight RC box culverts every year.

"Every old bridge placed out of service with a new structure is a site that should not need much attention for years. Our expectations are that over 2 or 3 years, we will gain enough ground to significantly impact what we can do to better keep up with true maintenance needs rather than emergent critical needs for so many of these older structures. Looking at our new bridge plan, let me say Commissioner Alec Farmer was instrumental in that he asked the questions and found a way. Today, we have forged a new concept. I give him full credit for making this idea happen."

The new path to bridge replacement is working in northeast Arkansas. With every question asked about a better way of replacing bridges, the answer has been unequivocally "yes" and has been met with ARDOT crew members eager to go to work for the betterment of Arkansas roadways. ■



# A CLEARER PICTURE

## Edgar Ariza's artwork helps motorists envision new highways

BY DAVID NILLES

**E**DGAR ARIZA IS A HISPANIC COMMUNITY SPECIALIST IN THE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE OF ARDOT'S ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION. He is on a team that plans public meetings in local communities when the Department has an upcoming highway project to share with area residents.

"We are like wedding planners," he stated. "We bring all of the components together to have a successful meeting out in the community. My responsibility within that team is to serve the Hispanic community of Arkansas. I am the liaison between the Spanish-speaking citizens of Arkansas and

ARDOT. I serve as a translator to explain documents, address concerns or answer questions related to the area's upcoming highway projects."

Ariza also serves as a Hispanic specialist for the Department in other areas as well. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, making it hard to hold public meetings, the Environmental Division began using the web conferencing platform Webex to conduct virtual meetings.

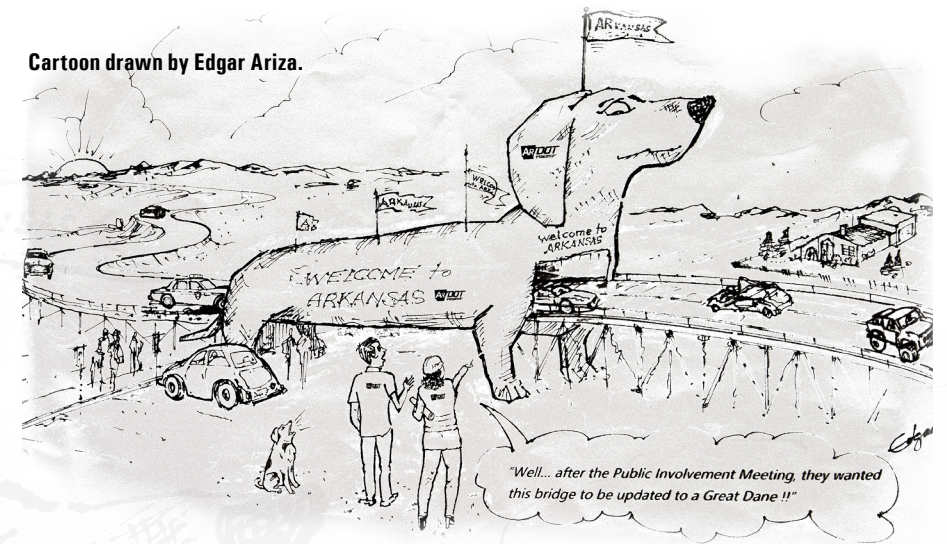


"For our virtual meetings, ARDOT requested all materials be available in Spanish, so I have been doing lots of translating to make sure we have what we need," Ariza shared.

### USING THE VISUAL ARTS AS A COMMUNICATIONS TOOL

It was only by coincidence that ARDOT discovered another of Ariza's talents, one that has since become an effective tool at public meetings. That talent is his love for drawing.

"We went to a public meeting in Lake Village to present a bridge project that featured multiple culverts," Ariza explained. "There was a group of older citizens there who didn't know what a culvert was. It made it hard for them to understand what we planned for the roadway. So, I grabbed a sheet of paper and a Sharpie and I drew the bridge. I even included a couple of people in the sketch for scale. It was a rendering. I showed it to the woman and she suddenly understood our



project. Ruby Jordan-Johnson, our Section Head for Public Involvement, decided then and there that whenever ARDOT has a complex project to present, we can use my talents as an artist to help people visualize the project. Our goal for this tool is to have the citizens go to the public meetings and walk out the door with a clear understanding of how the project is going to look."

Ariza grew up in Bogota, Columbia.

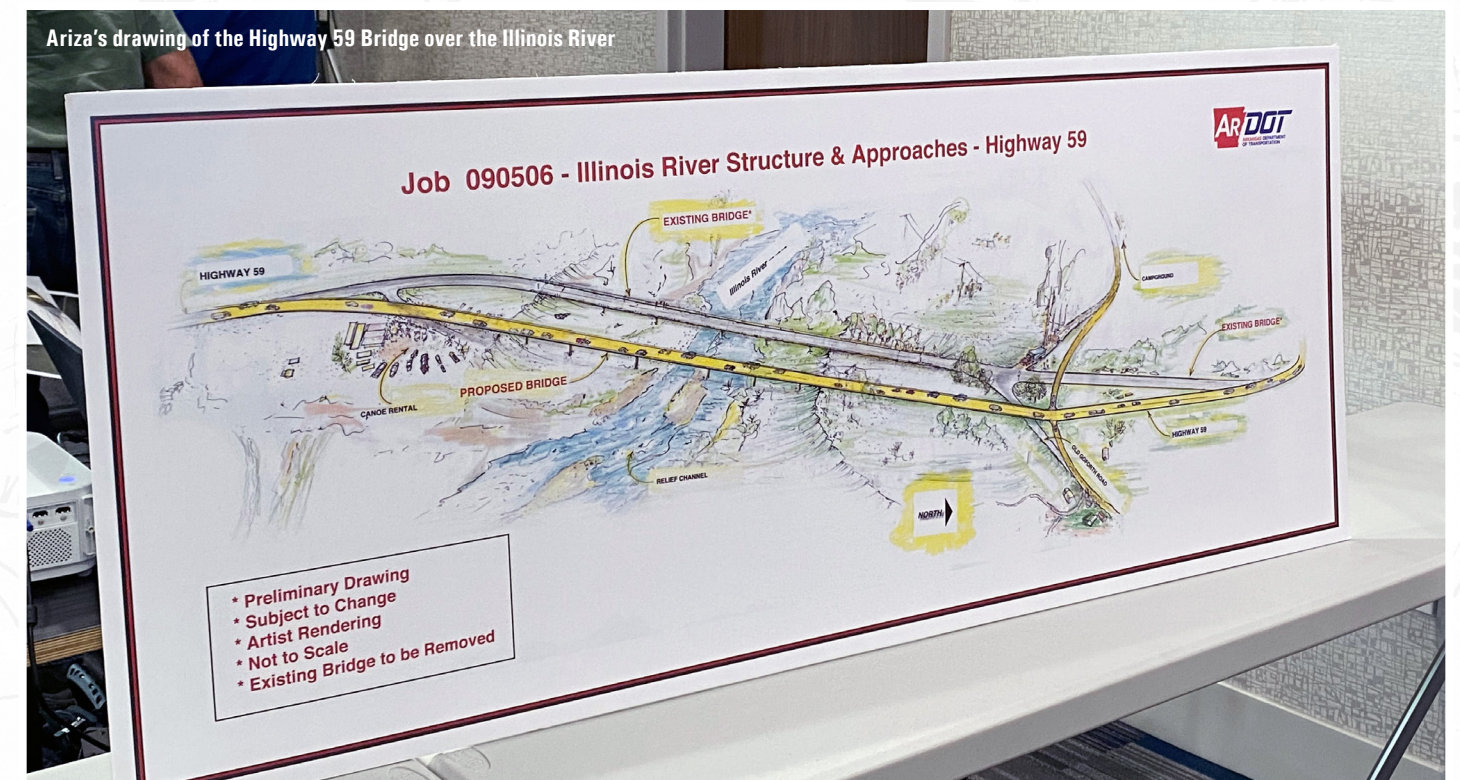
He attended the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Once he completed the English program there, he studied architectural drafting.

"I'm from the old generation when everything was done by hand. Even in architectural school, vanishing points and pencil techniques were done by hand."

Ariza works on his project drawings at the same time he is preparing other aspects of the meetings. It

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Ariza's drawing of the Highway 59 Bridge over the Illinois River







Staff from the Environmental Division's Public Information Office with a 3D model built by Ariza (far right).

usually takes him one to two weeks to complete a rendering.

"The drawings we present at meetings have to be to scale, so I collaborate with Linda DeMasi, ARDOT's Section Head of GIS. The engineers send us one-dimensional design drawings using Microstation. At that point, they are lines that do not make a great deal of sense to the untrained eye. Linda converts those into a semi-3D image and sends that to me. I visualize how the project will be built and use my architectural background to draw it. I draw under the engineers' supervision so that what you see is an accurate rendering of how the finished project will look.

Ariza shared that reaction to his drawings from those attending the meetings has been positive.

"Humans are naturally attracted to art. When they see drawings, they are pulled into them and feel very comfortable with them.

#### TAKING IT ONE STEP FARTHER

Ariza's talents go beyond his drawings. He has also created 3D models of future ARDOT projects. One such model was built for a planned

roundabout on Highway 112 in Fayetteville.

"In northwest Arkansas, people are not familiar with the concept of roundabouts and how much safer they are because there just aren't many in that area," Ariza stated. "I had the idea to build a model of a roundabout, so that is what we did. Everything in the model is to scale, including the vehicles."

The model was well received at the public meeting and served as an effective learning tool.

"The local residents were moving the model cars around to different lanes to better understand traffic flow. Once they saw how a roundabout works, they were fascinated with them. The model was well accepted and participants were able to identify with it."

Ariza shared that it takes about a month to complete a model while he is working on his other duties.

#### SPREADING THE WORD OVER THE AIRWAVES

The fact that Ariza is bilingual has enabled him to promote the Environmental Division's upcoming

public meetings over the airwaves to the Hispanic community.

"When we schedule our meetings, we advertise them in print and on the radio. I am humbled to serve as our on-air talent for our public service announcements (PSAs). I record the PSAs for each meeting, distribute the spots to radio stations and they air them across the state.

"Voice over work is a natural for me, but I have been to many seminars."

Ariza has done voice work for a number of organizations over the years. He has served as the voice for Lowe's and recorded "Click It or Ticket" PSAs for the California Department of Transportation. In addition, he has recorded movie trailers and done promotional voiceovers for professional boxer Oscar de la Hoya.

#### MAKING MEETINGS A PLEASANT EXPERIENCE

It is likely that Ariza will be doing more artist renderings for ARDOT in the future, depending on the complexity of the projects. Visual arts are something that he has enjoyed since childhood.

"God gave me a natural gift. I am addicted to drawing. I remember drawing cartoons of presidents at an early age. I also do a lot of calligraphy in my off time. I practice new fonts and have even created a few new ones.

"Here at ARDOT, we work for the public," Ariza concludes. "We are using certain talents and supplemental tools in our Public Information section to make our meetings a pleasant experience for our citizens. I have a passion for helping people understand. I believe Arkansans deserve the best and that is what we want to give them. If it is at hand, why not use it?" ■

# CENTERLINE RUMBLE STRIPES

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

**C**HANCES ARE THAT IF YOU HAVE DRIVEN ON A HIGHWAY, YOU HAVE SEEN, FELT AND HEARD THE VIBRATIONS FROM A RUMBLE STRIP. Drivers often encounter the rumble strips located along the shoulder—these alert drivers of lane departure. However, ARDOT is working to increase safety even further by installing rumble stripes along the centerline to keep drivers from crossing the double yellow into oncoming traffic.

#### WHAT ARE CENTERLINE RUMBLE STRIPES?

Centerline rumble stripes (CLRS) are grooves between the double yellow centerline that create audible noise and physical vibrations when the tires of a vehicle drive over them. CLRS are similar in design to the shoulder rumble strips.

The sounds and vibrations of CLRS alert the driver that they have departed from their lane, giving the driver an opportunity to recover. CLRS also have an additional benefit of helping drivers navigate during weather conditions that produce poor visibility such as fog, snow, and rain.

#### WHY IS ARDOT INSTALLING CENTERLINE RUMBLE STRIPES?

ARDOT is working to prevent lane departures that result in head-on collisions, side-swipe crashes from the opposite direction, and crashes that occur when a vehicle veers left off the roadway.

One of the leading causes of roadway departure crashes on Arkansas' highways is vehicles crossing the centerline. In Arkansas alone, there were 164 fatal crashes in 2020 that were a result of drivers crossing the centerline.



CLRS are a proven safety countermeasure and reduce cross centerline crashes by 40-60%, according to the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 641.

Finally, CLRS are one of the most economical safety measures available. The cost to install CLRS are very low, especially compared to the high payoff of saving lives.

#### WHERE CAN I EXPECT TO SEE NEW CLRS?

Several factors such as speed, roadway width, passing zones, and rural roads affect location choice for CLRS. For example, the speed limit must be 50 miles per hour or greater, and the combined width of the lane and shoulder must be 14 feet or greater in each direction.

Roadways across the entire state will soon be home to new CLRS; check out the map in the link below to see if these groovy sounds of safety will hit a highway near you. ■

Learn more at [www.ardot.gov/centerlinerumblestripes](http://www.ardot.gov/centerlinerumblestripes)



# ARDOT EXPANDS ONLINE PRESENCE

BY DAVID NILLES

**T**WENTY YEARS AGO, IF SOMEONE HAD ASKED THE AVERAGE PERSON ON THE STREET WHAT THE TERM "SOCIAL MEDIA" MEANT, CHANCES ARE THEY WOULD HAVE HAD NO IDEA.

Today, social media has become the major way most of us communicate and receive our news.

The Arkansas Department of Transportation has been utilizing Twitter for almost 13 years to effectively share information with motorists about developments on Arkansas' highways. The Department has over 55,000 Twitter followers.

In January of this year, ARDOT expanded its online presence by launching pages on Facebook and Twitter.

"It's now easier than ever for Arkansans to keep up with statewide transportation projects and road conditions," ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor shared. "Transparency and customer satisfaction are very important to us here at ARDOT. Increasing our social media presence is a great way to work toward both of those goals."

Motorists who use ARDOT's IDriveArkansas website and app in order to keep up with traveler information and road conditions will continue to receive live updates via the @iDriveArkansas Twitter account. The IDriveArkansas live update service is not available on Instagram and Facebook, but urgent alerts and information will be shared to the @myARDOT Facebook and Instagram pages.

Learn more about ARDOT developments and road conditions at the listed links. [■](#)

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## Dear ARDOT

**T**his email is EXTREMELY long overdue! It has been quite the year, so please forgive the delay. Even if quite overdue, it is always a good thing to send praise for excellent work!

Last February (2021), during the incredible winter storm event, my 79-year-old mother was hospitalized with COVID after falling one evening. My dad (82 years old) had to call EMS. My parents live in a remote part of Arkansas (outside Hatfield about five miles). My siblings and I were extremely concerned about both of my parents due to their ages and my dad being so far away from the hospital AND having a hearing problem.

Since I have a flexible job, can work remotely and had already had COVID, it made the most sense for all of us siblings that I be the one to assist our parents.

Since I live in Florida, traveling to Arkansas to be with my parents was delayed due to a storm. As soon as flights were resumed, I flew to Little Rock. Upon arriving, I was quite concerned about the amount of snow on the ground. I have never driven in snow and was driving a rental car.

I want to say how incredibly surprised and happy I was that your amazing ARDOT teams had done an incredible job of clearing the roads. I was able to drive without any issues on very clear roads! In spite of the unprecedented storm event, your Department was able to get all of the roads cleared within a very short time following the event. I was confident driving all the way to Hatfield. The only road that was a little less clear was Highway 246W from Hatfield to where my folks live and it was passable! I was truly amazed! Great job ARDOT!

Thank you to your team and all of those who work hard to ensure the roads are wonderful in my birth state of Arkansas!

*Sincerely,*  
Floy Graves

### WOW! THANK YOU!

On December 4, 2019, I wrote a letter to you regarding an entrance lane into Interstate 40 East in Conway. Well, as I drove past this junction for work every day, I continued to wait to see if the "white solid line" would be painted on the 3rd lane entrance to the Interstate.

BAM, this morning at 5:15, I saw it. You did it... you extended the white solid line further down this entrance lane. Awesome job and thank you. This little bit of reflective paint may be the key to saving lives. Now the RVers coming from Branson and entering onto Interstate 40 know they do not need to merge, they are traveling on a new 3rd lane.

Again, hats off to not only the planners and painters, but also that person that remembered this request. Your organizational skills are proven sound.

Gregory W. Call  
Conway, AR

### POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

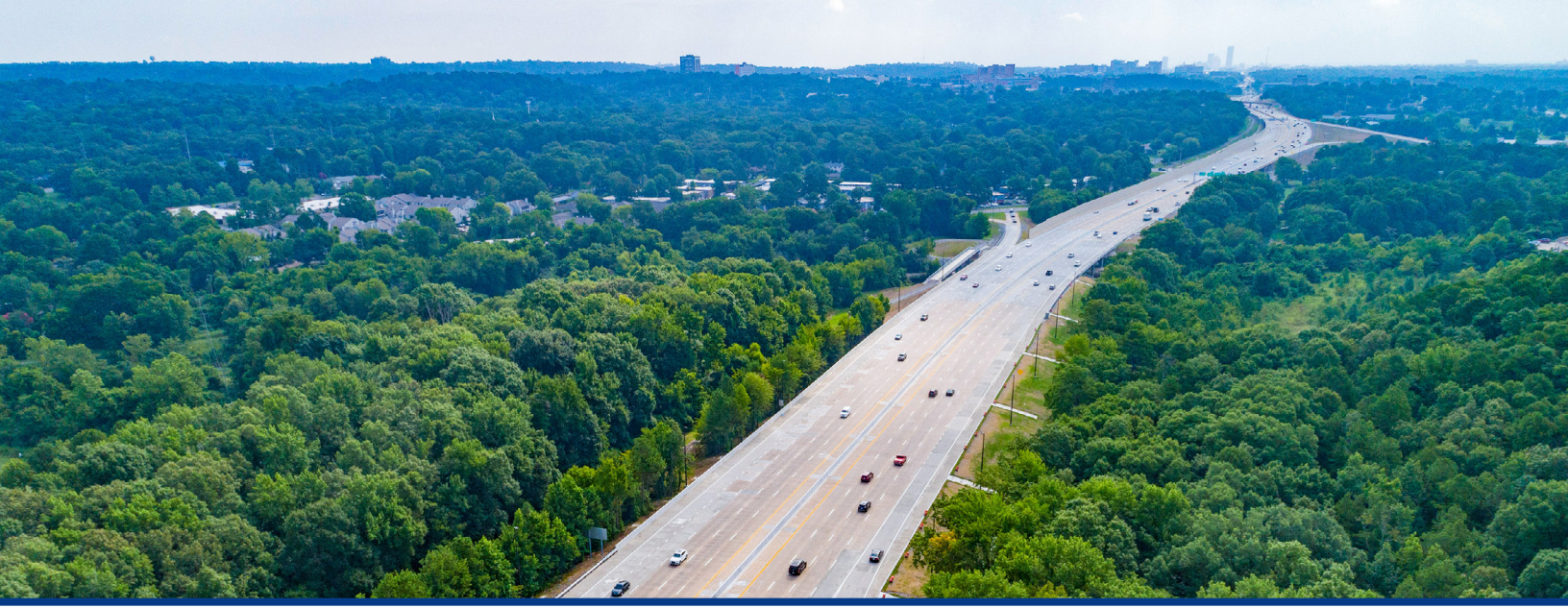
I would guess that most contacts about ARDOT are not necessarily happy ones but let me share a very positive experience I had just this week.

Our farm in Independence County is in District 5 based in Batesville. They have been treating some of the roadsides with herbicide to control growth. It just so happens we have some Certified Organic cropland along one of these roads. When I contacted the local office, I was put in touch with Ryan Herndon who drove out and met with me earlier this week. When I explained spraying next to our fields could endanger our certification, he told me he would instruct his guys to skip our section and I agreed to keep it mowed, which we have done for decades.

I wasn't sure how my request would be received but Mr. Herndon was very receptive and accommodating of our concerns. Just wanted to share this with you. It is good to know there are some real common sense and accommodating people in the department.

Matt





# ACPA Recognizes ARDOT Project

BY DAVID NILLES

**T**HE AMERICAN CONCRETE PAVEMENT ASSOCIATION (ACPA) HAS PRESENTED THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION WITH A NATIONAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE AS PART OF ITS "EXCELLENCE IN CONCRETE PAVEMENT" AWARDS.

ARDOT was recognized with a Silver Award for outstanding design and construction as part of a major widening on Interstate 630 in Little Rock. The project widened just over two miles of roadway to eight lanes between University Avenue and Baptist Hospital.

The contractor on the \$87.4 million project was Koss Construction Company. Bridge Farmer and Associates, Inc. served as engineers.

Work began in the spring of 2018 and was substantially completed in March of 2020.

"Interstate 630 is a major highway into the downtown area of Little Rock," ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor shared. "We commend Koss Construction for the excellent job they did on this project, especially with traffic continuing to flow through the work zone. We are honored to be recognized by our peers in the industry with this award."

For over 30 years, the ACPA awards have honored quality concrete pavements constructed in the United States and Canada. The awards program encourages high-quality workmanship in every concrete pavement project and



serves as a forum for sharing information about highly successful projects.

The awards program recognizes contractors, engineers and project owners who have completed outstanding projects. Winning an Award for Excellence in Concrete Pavement provides the contractors, engineers and owners with a level of prestige that can assist them in the development of future projects.

Founded in 1963, ACPA is the world's largest trade association that exclusively represents the interests of those involved with the design, construction and preservation of concrete pavements. The association develops and protects concrete pavement markets through education, advocacy, marketing and industry technical leadership. ACPA voices industry positions and represents the industry on key legislative issues that affect highways and airports. ■

DISTRICT 4

# CONSTRUCTION

# CORNER

**C**ONSTRUCTION ON HIGHWAY 59 IN CRAWFORD COUNTY IS ALMOST COMPLETE. THIS PROJECT BEGAN IN AUGUST 2020 AND CONSISTS OF REPLACING FOUR BRIDGE STRUCTURES ON THE HIGHWAY. EMERY SAPP & SONS WON THE CONTRACT AT \$8.8 MILLION. THE CONTRACTOR RECENTLY COMPLETED CONSTRUCTING ALL OF THE BRIDGE DECKS AND IS CURRENTLY BUILDING THE APPROACHES TO THE STRUCTURES. THE ESTIMATED COMPLETION FOR THIS PROJECT IS SPRING 2022. ■







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