

The background of the cover is a photograph of a white electric car parked at a charging station. The car is a Tesla Model S, and it is plugged into a ChargePoint charging station. The station is orange and white, with a screen and a charging cable. The car is parked under a large, corrugated metal roof structure. The background shows some greenery and a clear sky.

Arkansas HIGHWAYS

SUMMER 2022

A PUBLICATION OF THE
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | MAGAZINE

Plugging in to Cleaner Air

AN ARDOT EMPLOYEE EMBRACES THE MOVE TO ELECTRIC VEHICLES

ARDOT OPENS
Satellite Office in
Northwest Arkansas

HIGHWAY 412 SECTION
Receives Future
Interstate Status

AGENCIES LAUNCH
Boat Ramps at
Arkansas City

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

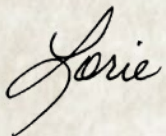
Dear ARDOT Family,

Welcome to the Summer 2022 issue of the Arkansas Highways Magazine. I hope you enjoy this issue. It has a lot of great articles. ARDOT's Public Information team always does a fantastic job!

The feature article in this issue is about electric vehicles (EVs). It is very timely since we are on the brink of some real changes here in Arkansas. Certain EV manufacturers are now calling Arkansas home. Over the next 5 years, ARDOT will receive over \$54 million in Federal funds to help finance the construction of EV charging stations along critical highway corridors – removing range anxiety for EV owners. In the Fall 2022 issue, we will provide more detail on the build out of the EV charging infrastructure and how ARDOT and Arkansas' Department of Energy and Environment are partnering together in this effort. These are exciting times of change and innovation not only in Arkansas, but across the nation. So, stay tuned. More on this topic to come!

I hope everyone is having a good summer. It is definitely a scorcher – but I guess Arkansas was due one. We've had some pretty mild summers for the last several years. The other day, my car thermometer read 117 degrees. I'm not kidding. But, writing this message gave me a moment to reflect about summertime in Arkansas. It reminds me of being young and out of school, baseball, softball, vacation, camping, swimming in the creek or the lake, playing in the sprinkler, eating watermelon and homemade ice cream, shelling peas with my grandma, hanging out with friends, no cares, no worries. Summertime is a state of mind that helps to make the heat a little more bearable when remembering those carefree days of my youth. At least that is what I'll try to tell myself when my car thermometer reads 117 degrees and it feels hotter than the face of the sun. Hang in there – it will be Christmas before we know it, another magical time of youth!

All my best,



Lorie H. Tudor, P.E., *Director*



FRONT COVER:
Franklin's Charging in Little Rock

BACK COVER:
State Highway 215 - Mulberry River
Scenic Byway

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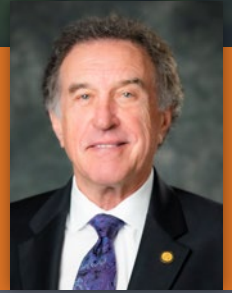
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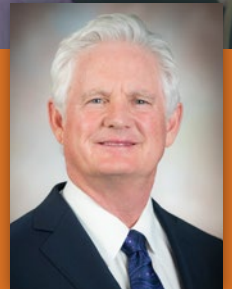
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SUMMER 2022

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ARDOT'S JEFFREY WARD

Embraces the Move to Electric Vehicles

BY DAVID NILLES

YOU SEE THEM IN TELEVISION COMMERCIALS AND IN MAGAZINE ADS. THERE ARE AN INCREASING NUMBER OF ARTICLES ABOUT THEM ON SOCIAL MEDIA THAT MAY PIQUE YOUR INTEREST. AND OCCASIONALLY, YOU MAY SEE ONE PULL UP NEXT TO YOU AT A TRAFFIC LIGHT.

I'm talking about electric vehicles, the latest trend in automotive manufacturing and one that is here to

stay. Looking to the future, there's a probability that you may one day be driving one.

For ARDOT's Jeffrey Ward, the future is now. Ward is a Utility Coordinator in the Right of Way Division in the Central Office. He also happens to be a big proponent of electric vehicles. Not only has he owned one, a BMW i3, he is also active in advancing electric vehicles here in Arkansas.

Ward's fascination with electric vehicles started at an early age.

"There was an episode of Superman where he was badly hurt but began to rejuvenate simply by getting out of the shade," Ward shared.

"As a kid I thought that would be really cool if we got power from the sun. Fast forward six years and I read in *Popular Science* magazine about solar panels. Since then, the dream is to live in a rural county where living off-grid is legal. The thought of my vehicle being powered by the sun is no longer a dream but rather reality, thanks to solar panels."



Franklin's Charging Station in Little Rock

ENJOYING THE BENEFITS BEHIND THE WHEEL

Ward's dream became a reality when he purchased an all-electric BMW i3.

"Goodness, the anxiety I had when I first dipped my toes in the electric vehicle (EV) realm as an owner," Ward recalled.

Some of that anxiety had to do with range, something all potential EV owners have to consider.

"I quickly realized I don't travel as far as I thought, and this EV was less expensive than others. At the time, a certified pre-owned BMW i3 with all the options with under 20,000 miles was only \$17,900 and with .9% incentive from BMW financial, it meant I could actually get into an electric vehicle."

Other than the obvious benefit of not using gasoline, there were many other advantages to an EV Ward shared.

- ✓ Acceleration. It is instant and jarring if you're not ready for it.
- ✓ Greater cabin space. No transmission means more space in the interior.
- ✓ Lower maintenance costs. People assume it's just spark plugs, oil fluid changes, air filters and the like. Also, the regenerative braking also cuts down on brake pad & rotor wear.
- ✓ The low center of gravity provides better handling and stability as most of the weight is down low.
- ✓ The serenity. We've been trained throughout the years to "tune out" micro vibrations caused by our transmissions and internal combustion engines (ICE). But with an EV, you don't get any of those vibrations.
- ✓ Reduced noise pollution. (I say reduced because tires still produce noise after a certain mph is reached.) Don't get me wrong, I love the sound of a straight piped V-8 but not when I'm trying to sleep. And not at the expense of having to smell fumes during grid lock rush hour.
- ✓ Better crash ratings as seen by IIHS, NHTSA and Euro NCAP.
- ✓ Free charging at some places (in Arkansas, most places with a Level 2)
- ✓ The ability to charge via the sun (for those that have solar panels and battery banks.)
- ✓ Cleaner air on the highways. Without ICE vehicles in front of you, you receive cleaner air flowing through your cabin.
- ✓ With solar farms and battery banks to store the electricity produced on the solar farms, we will not need to rely on foreign countries for their gasoline.

☑ Ability for automation. Being able to automate my vehicle contingent on my calendar on my phone or laptop to precondition my interior during days I had appointments or had to go into the office was great. Also, in the IFTTT app, you can set up a geo fence and the app will talk to the BMW app and with GPS location permissions I can enter a geofence I created, and the garage door will open. And when I leave the geofence the garage door will close. This is just one example of automations available with EVs because most EVs have a smartphone app associated with them.

FOCUS ON DRIVING RANGE

One feature of electric vehicles that may make potential buyers wary is driving range. The worry being, can

you get to your destination and back without running out of battery power.

"Range does vary by vehicle and battery capacity," Ward commented.

"Another factor is if it's cold outside. EVs, currently, do not like the cold and thus range is reduced. However, people typically regain their daily mileage they lose when they get home and plug in (even to a typical household outlet).

"I believe people would be very surprised how far a pre-owned EV, with under 100 miles of maximum range, can take them when they realize they don't really drive as far as they thought in a day.

"I will say that, for me, I was fine with 60 miles of range in the dead of winter in my i3. Commuting from Mayflower to Little Rock with two stops for errands going home from

work, I still had miles of range to spare. Still, I would plug in using the regular outlet (level 1) in my garage and never

had range anxiety the next morning when it was time to commute all over again."

A GROWING NUMBER OF CHARGING STATIONS

Without a doubt, motorists are going to see a proliferation of charging stations in the near future.

The U.S. Departments of Transportation and Energy recently announced nearly \$5 billion will be used to build a national electric vehicle charging network. The money will be distributed to states over five years and comes from the \$1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Arkansas is eligible to receive funding to create a statewide transportation infrastructure that supports electric vehicles. According to a news release, Arkansas has 490 miles of pending and ready electric vehicle corridors.

The National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program was established by the new infrastructure law and is expected to help states create a network of



electric vehicle charging stations along designated Alternative Fuel Corridors, particularly along interstates.

"A century ago, America ushered in the modern automotive era; now America must lead the electric vehicle revolution," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "The President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will help us win the EV race by working with states, labor and the private sector to deploy a historic nationwide charging network that will make EV charging accessible for more Americans."

The goal is to build 500,000 charging stations across the country.

ARKANSAS ELECTRIC VEHICLE OWNERS

Ward is more than just an electric vehicle driver. He is also involved in the advancement of EVs in Arkansas. He recently founded Arkansas Electric Vehicle Owners (AEVO), an online group for EV owners.

"At the time there were no support groups for EV owners, or people curious about owning an EV," Ward shared. "Now they have a place to go and have group discussions about vehicle problems and solutions, and ownership costs. We also have in-person meetups. In creating this online group, I aimed to create a

fellowship for EV owners in the state of Arkansas.

"Note that 'EV' is all encompassing in our group. With 219 members, we have electric bicycle owners, electric motorcycle owners and, in time, you'll see boat and airplane owners in the group too."

Ward is also on the board of the Arkansas Electric Vehicle Association's Arkansas Chapter (AEVA).

"AEVA is a more formal setup compared to the group, AEVO, that I founded, Ward explained. "In AEVA we're focused on being a voice for EV owners for state and local governments as they begin to outline new laws and regulations for EVs. We also aim to work with businesses that aren't aware of the benefits of installing charging stations on their property."

ARKANSAS' FUTURE MOBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

In February of this year, Arkansas state officials and members of its private sectors took steps to establish the state as a leading destination for companies that want to build future mobility technologies.

In a press conference, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced the formation of the Future Mobility Advisory Council, geared toward

attracting businesses and innovators to Arkansas to develop the state into a global giant in next-generation transportation.

"The goal of the council that I am creating by executive order today is to ensure that we are prepared for electrification, autonomous vehicles and advanced air mobility to integrate into our existing infrastructure and create an environment in which they can thrive," Hutchinson said at an introduction ceremony.

ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor is a member of the Council as are representatives from Walmart, Canoo, J.B. Hunt, Entergy, the Arkansas Trucking Association, the Arkansas Auto Dealers Association, the University of Arkansas, Southern Arkansas University and several other state agencies.

"I'm excited about the Advisory Council," Ward shared. "I recently had a meeting with our Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer Randy Ort, and I came out motivated. Mr. Ort shed light on some subjects I hadn't even thought of. The move towards creating the Future Mobility Advisory Council shows that state officials have placed future mobility at the forefront of their objectives."

NEED A CHARGING STATION?

Here are a few of the apps that will get you there:



SHOPPING FOR AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE?

HERE ARE SOME TO CONSIDER

“Electric vehicles registered in Arkansas are up 43% in the first five months of 2022 compared to 2021.” – AR DF&A



CANOO IS COMING TO ARKANSAS

Electric vehicle manufacturer Canoo announced in late 2021 that it has selected Bentonville as its new headquarters. It will open a research & design center and an advanced industrialization and low-volume production facility for small package delivery vehicles.

The R&D center will be located in Fayetteville and will support advances in vehicle electronics and powertrain. The industrialization facility will be in Bentonville. The company expects to bring 545 high paying jobs to northwest Arkansas.

“We are proud to partner with the State of Arkansas to develop American-made clean energy vehicles,” said Tony Aquila, Investor, Chairman and CEO of Canoo, Inc. “Our investment in these new facilities will accelerate the development of high demand delivery vehicles for customers around the world. We thank Governor Hutchinson and his team for their leadership and vision for the state’s role in the mobility revolution.”

The announcement is part of a plan to transform the Highway 412 corridor in Arkansas and Oklahoma into a center of electric vehicle research, development and manufacturing power.

“Canoo is certainly bringing cool to the minivan world,” Ward commented. “Coming to northwest Arkansas is an

incredibly smart move on their part. Canoo has positioned themselves in an area that is nearly central to the USA which will be great for logistics. That’s further compounded by northwest Arkansas being a melting pot of young talent due to Walmart Headquarters and other companies that supply Walmart with goods. NASA recently announced a partnership with Canoo to build taxis to take astronauts to their launch pads.”

THE FUTURE IS NOW

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, transportation activity emits more greenhouse gases in the U.S (29% of total emissions in 2019) than any other sector of our economy. But with electric vehicles arriving on the scene, numbers are changing.

The record 761,000 electric vehicles sold in 2020 represented the fifth consecutive year of growth in EV sales. Public charging stations are also increasing across the U.S.

The U.S. started pursuing the EV market in 2011. Today, there are 38 electric vehicle models on sale in the U.S. According to Ward, that’s just the beginning of the EV revolution.

“Mention EVs today and people think of cars, trucks and SUVs. But in the near future, as batteries become more efficient, you’ll start seeing more electric vehicles on land, in the air and on the water.” ■

BRAND	MODEL
Audi	Q4 E-Tron
BMW	iX
Chevrolet	Bolt, Silverado EV
Ford	Mustang Mach E, F-150 Lightning
Genesis	GV60
GMC	Hummer EV
Honda	e
Hyundai	Ioniq 5
Jaguar	I-Pace
Jeep	Wrangler 4xe
Kia	Niro
Lucid	Air
Mazda	MX-30
Mercedes	EQS
Nissan	Ariya, Leaf
Polestar	2
Porsche	Taycan
Rivian	R1S
Tesla	Models 3, S and X
Toyota	bZ4X
Volkswagen	ID.4, ID.Buzz
Volvo	XC40 Recharge



ARDOT OPENS

Satellite Office in Northwest Arkansas

BY DAVID NILLES

THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HAS TAKEN A BIG STEP IN PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE BY OPENING A SATELLITE OFFICE IN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS.

The Department's new 5,560-square foot second home is located in the Lakeside Center at 1801 Phyllis Street in Bentonville and represents a proactive step in attracting engineering graduates from the University of Arkansas and the surrounding region.

"ARDOT has always found it a challenge to hire and retain engineers, especially in our Design Branch, due to the competitive nature of the field of engineering," stated Rex Vines, Deputy Director and Chief Engineer.

"This began in a brain-storming session where we were discussing methods to improve our recruiting and retention. Necessity is the mother of invention... when the COVID pandemic hit, industry adapted, technology adapted, we had to adapt. In doing so, we learned that we could still produce our program, even

if everyone wasn't on-site every day. We learned how to communicate effectively through various formats that really shrank the world. This really expanded opportunities that weren't available just a couple of years ago.

"There has been a huge migration to Northwest Arkansas in the last few years. It's a great place to live and one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. There is much to do, it has beautiful scenery and still has much potential. We have heard multiple times that engineering recruits were interested in working for us but would much prefer to live in Northwest Arkansas. Most recruits understand that ARDOT is a great organization...some are just more interested in the opportunities available in Northwest Arkansas that may not be as available in other regions of the state."

Staffing for the new office will start small with perhaps five to ten employees from the Roadway Design and Bridge divisions. The Department will monitor how this works and make beneficial adjustments. A few Design

Photos and map courtesy of Cushman & Wakefield and Sage Partners.



staff members will be relocating to Northwest Arkansas as part of this effort. In addition to fulltime staff, ARDOT employees from around the state who are working in the area and need office space for a few hours will now have a place to get work done.

"With a closer proximity to the University of Arkansas, we intend to incorporate engineering students more throughout the year to give them experience, allow them to get to know what ARDOT is really about and determine if they see themselves as part of our culture," Vines added.

As business gets underway in the new office, Assistant Chief Engineer of Design Mike Fugett will coordinate efforts on location.

Advances in video communication over the past several years will make working with staff at Central Offices and Division offices around the state easy.

"There isn't a real necessity to have a full staff structure in the new office," Vines commented. "With Zoom and other similar video programs that businesses adopted during COVID-19, we've found that work can be done successfully from remote locations such as this."

The new building will allow plenty of room for growth in the years ahead.

"I expect that this expansion effort will be successful," Vines shared. "I think it will be a win-win situation for the Department and for employees that want expanded options on where to live and work." ■





Marie Holder
Arkansas Highway Commission Member

ARDOT RECEIVES SAFER PROGRAM FUNDS

BY DAVID NILLES

THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM THE STATE AGENCY FLEET EMISSION REDUCTION PROGRAM (SAFER).

The national program is a one-time competitive funding opportunity for Arkansas and other state agencies across the country seeking to repower or replace eligible medium trucks, heavy trucks or buses with new lower-emitting technologies. The goal of the SAFER program is to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from state agency fleets.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The state of Arkansas was allocated \$14,647,709 to be used toward projects that reduce emissions from motor vehicles as a result of two partial consent decrees in a case filed against Volkswagen of America, Inc. for alleged violations of the Federal Clean Air Act.

The corporation allegedly sold approximately 500,000 model year 2009-2015 2.0-liter diesel engine vehicles and approximately 80,000 model year 2009-2016 diesel engine vehicles equipped with emissions control defeat devices. These defeat devices resulted in up to 40 percent higher nitrogen oxide emissions during normal driving.

In January 2016, the United States and the State of California filed a lawsuit against Volkswagen alleging that the manufacture and sale of diesel cars with systems intended to defeat emissions tests were in violation of Section 203 of the Clean Air Act.

As part of the settlement, Volkswagen will pay \$2.7 billion to an Environmental Mitigation Trust to fund projects to reduce emissions of NOx.

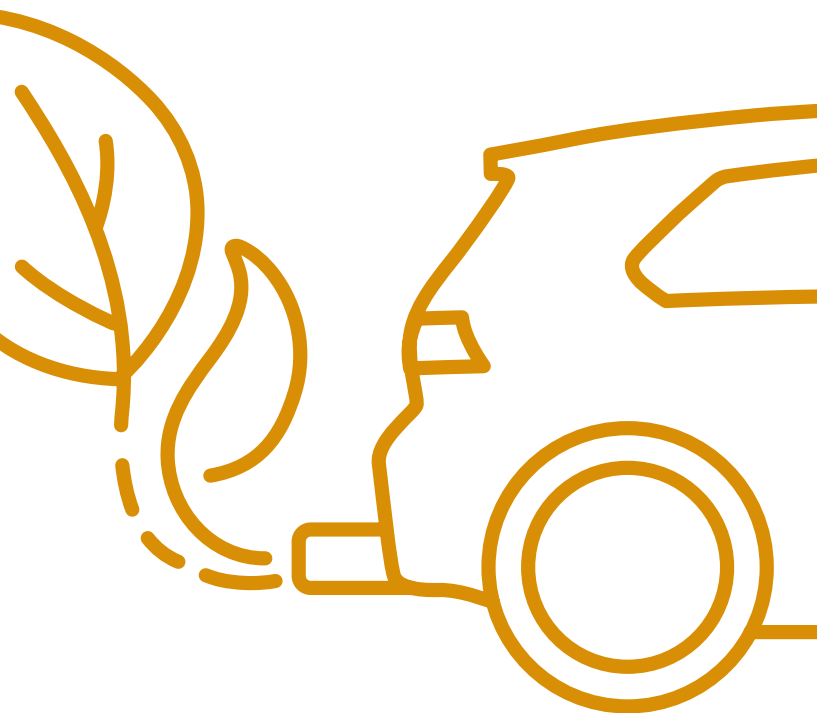
Governor Asa Hutchinson named the Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) as the lead agency to develop and implement a plan to utilize the Environmental Mitigation Trust funds allocated to Arkansas.

PLANS FOR THE ARDOT ALLOCATION

Arkansas' allocation will be used for projects that reduce emissions from motor vehicles as a result of the Volkswagen case.

ADEQ developed a Beneficiary Mitigation Plan that describes four new programs that ADEQ intends to implement to reduce emissions using funding from Volkswagen.

The program that applied to ARDOT is the State Agency Fleet Emissions Reduction Grant (SAFER), which is a funding assistance program for Arkansas state



agencies to repower or replace medium and heavy-duty diesel local freight and drayage trucks and diesel buses.

ADEQ was required to evaluate SAFER proposals to determine the cost-effectiveness of each project and determine the cost-effectiveness in terms of dollars per pound of NOx reduced.

"We will be awarded the full amount of \$1,109,790 for this portion of the Environmental Mitigation Trust," said Danny Keene, Division Head of Equipment & Procurement.

"With these funds, we will be replacing four diesel-powered tractor trucks and three diesel-powered dump trucks with 2020 or newer diesel-powered equivalent trucks."

"With today's automotive technology, these new trucks will result in cleaner emissions as they are used day to day by our crews," Arkansas Highway Commissioner Marie Holder shared at a news conference introducing the trucks.

"We value the goals of the SAFER program and ARDOT is pleased to be a part of a program that is bringing cleaner air to the Natural State."

As part of the program, ARDOT will provide a quarterly progress report and a detailed final report containing a project summary, costs, lessons learned, as well as challenges and successes encountered. ■

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**WITH THESE
FUNDS, WE
WILL BE
REPLACING
FOUR DIESEL-
POWERED
TRACTOR
TRUCKS AND
THREE DIESEL-
POWERED
DUMP TRUCKS
WITH 2020 OR
NEWER DIESEL-
POWERED
EQUIVALENT
TRUCKS.**
”

HIGHWAY 412 SECTION RECEIVES FUTURE INTERSTATE STATUS

BY DAVID NILLES

A SECTION OF HIGHWAY 412 IN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS AND NORTH CENTRAL OKLAHOMA WAS RECENTLY DESIGNATED A "FUTURE INTERSTATE" ON THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM. The designation was included as part of the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed in November 2021.

The designated section of Highway 412 lies between Interstate 49 in Springdale and Interstate 35, west of Tulsa. The section measures 189 miles in length.

The Indian Nations Council of Governments in Tulsa passed a resolution in May 2021 seeking support from Oklahoma and Arkansas transportation departments, elected officials and the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission. Both ARDOT and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) expressed support for the proposal in a letter to Senator Jim Ihofo of Oklahoma. Senator Ihofo, and Senators John Boozman and Tom Cotton of Arkansas then introduced a bill the same month to designate the route a future Interstate highway.

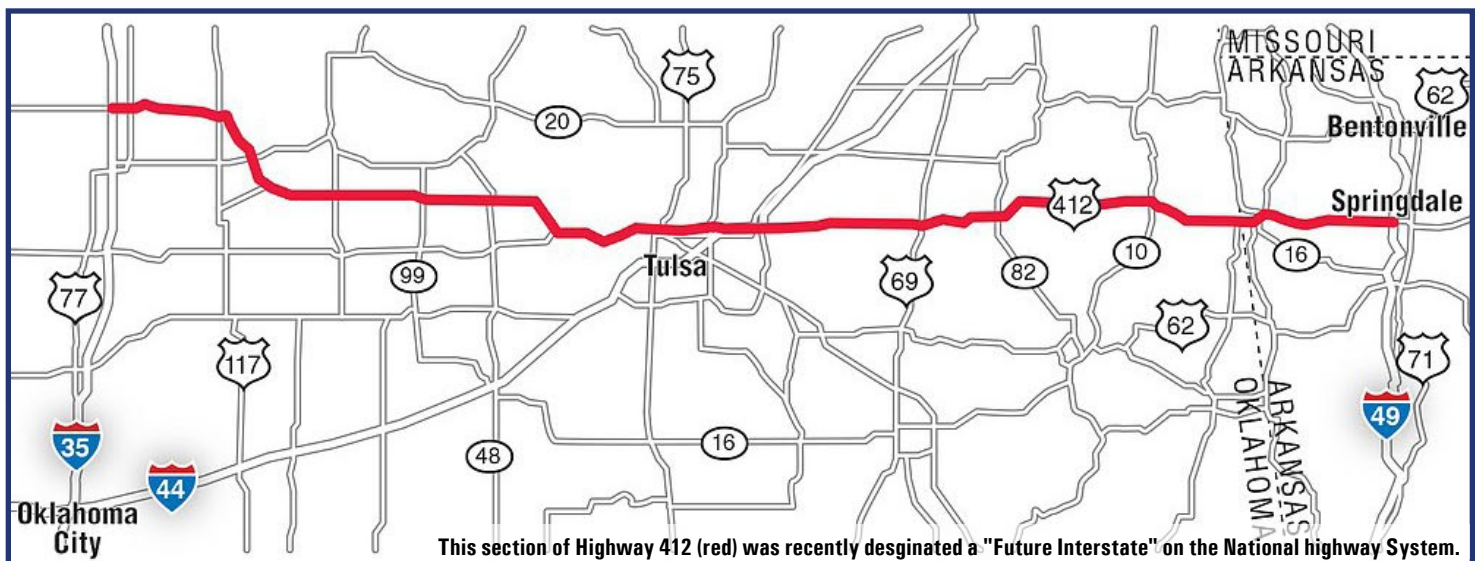
According to the letter signed by Tim Gatz, Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation, and Lorie Tudor, Director of the Arkansas Department of Transportation,

"Northeast Oklahoma and Northwest Arkansas share historic, geographic and economic interests and a future Interstate designation will improve economic development opportunities for both regions while providing the state DOTs with sufficient time to fully upgrade the corridor to Interstate standards."

ODOT has commissioned a study that will determine design needs for the route, access control for the roadway and future improvements required for Interstate designation. Phase 2 of the study will determine alignment changes that would be required.

Significant portions of Highway 412 between Interstate 49 and Interstate 35 have already been designed and constructed to interstate standards (approximately 133 miles.)

As part of the National Highway System, Highway 412 is designated a high-priority corridor from Nashville, Tennessee, to Tulsa. ■



Funding For Interstate 49 in Western Arkansas



BY DAVID NILLES

THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FOR A PORTION OF INTERSTATE 49 IN WESTERN ARKANSAS.

A total of \$18 million has been secured through the efforts of Third District Representative Steve Womack of Rogers. Womack is a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government.

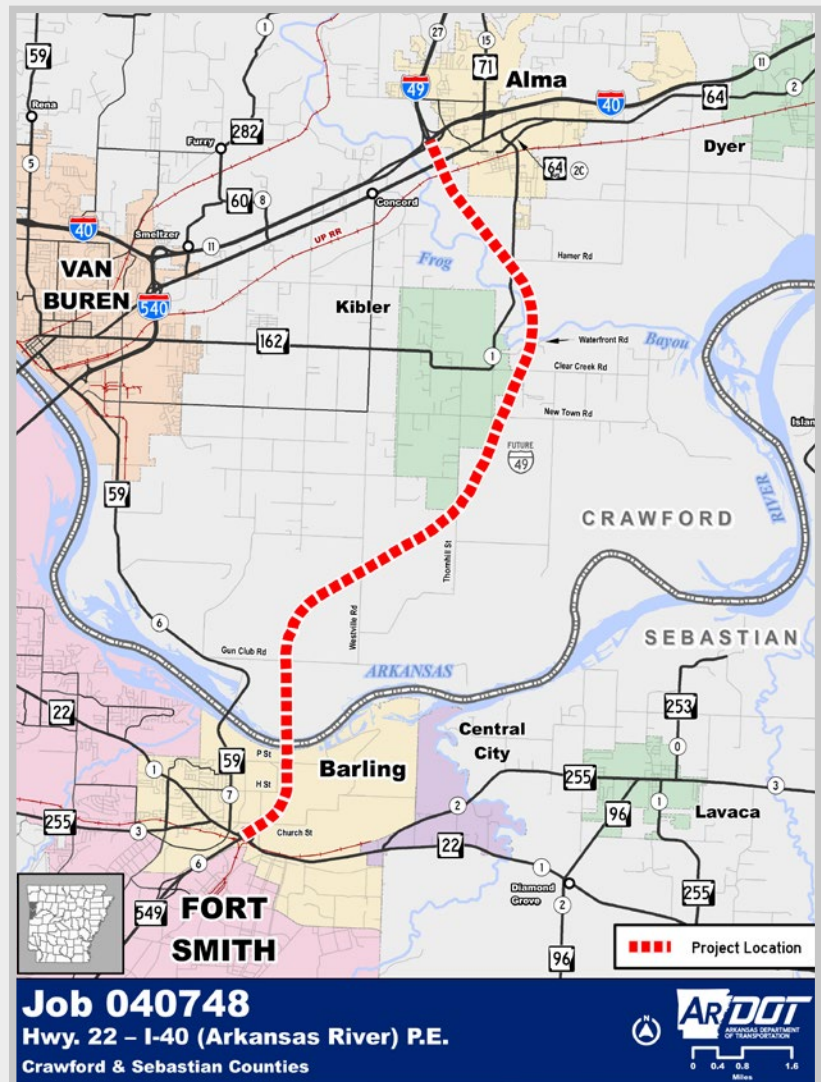
The funding will be utilized to construct a 13.6-mile section of Interstate 49 stretching from Highway 22, near Barling, northward to the interchange of Interstate 40 and Interstate 49 at Alma.

"This project is the first step to having an uninterrupted interstate highway through the central United States, from Winnipeg, Canada to New Orleans," according to a statement from Womack's office. "Connecting Interstate 40 in Alma to Ft. Smith is vital to supporting the second-largest city in Arkansas and further opening up important commerce and transit routes."

Looking at a map of the central United States, the largest gap in Interstate 49 across the country is a 139-mile section between Texarkana and Fort Smith.

"ARDOT is excited to receive this funding through the efforts of Representative Womack," ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor stated. "This project will be a big step forward in completing Interstate 49 in western Arkansas."

Preliminary site work is expected to begin later this year. The project will include a new bridge over the



Arkansas River just north of Barling.

"The positive impacts that Interstate 49 will bring to western Arkansas and mid-America in terms of economic growth and development, quality of life and safety are immeasurable. It is a tangible result of the ½ cent sales tax that was approved by voters in 2020," stated Arkansas Highway Commissioner Keith Gibson of Fort Smith "We are excited to see this project get underway." ■



Governor Asa Hutchinson, Chairman Robert S. Moore, Jr., and Former Governor Mike Beebe

AGENCIES LAUNCH BOAT RAMPS AT ARKANSAS CITY

BY DAVID NILLES

GOVERNOR ASA HUTCHINSON AND FORMER GOVERNOR MIKE BEEBE JOINED FORCES IN ARKANSAS CITY, ON THE SHORE OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IN EASTERN ARKANSAS, FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE GOVERNOR MIKE BEEBE SCENIC OVERLOOK AND BOAT RAMPS.

The new boat ramps provide the only direct access to the Mississippi River on the Arkansas side between Helena and the Louisiana state line. Construction of the overlook and boat ramps was a joint project between the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and the Arkansas Department of Transportation.



The two boat ramps are within several hundred yards of each other. One is for daily use while the other is a high-water ramp to be used in flooding situations.

Austin Booth, Director of the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, welcomed hundreds that gathered for the event on May 4.

"We sell half a million fishing licenses every year, so this ramp is definitely an asset for anglers. This is a special day for the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and ARDOT. To see this through to the finish line is just wonderful."

"This new facility provides greater access to enjoy the beauty of our state," Governor Hutchinson shared. "It also reflects a great

“The new boat ramps provide **the only direct access to the Mississippi River on the Arkansas side between Helena and the Louisiana state line.**”

partnership between the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and ARDOT. It's good to be here in a bipartisan way celebrating all of Arkansas from the northwest to the southeast."

Former Governor Beebe looked back on the history of prosperity in Arkansas.

"For 180 years, southeast Arkansas carried the rest of the state. Now northwest Arkansas is carrying a heavier load, but remember, we are all one family, one Arkansas.

"Highway Commission Chairman Robert Moore has a vision and understands that tourism and recreational opportunities are a major catalyst in restoring the vitality in southeast Arkansas. He deserves a lot of the credit for the new opportunities coming to this area."

Moore, who calls Arkansas City home, recognized all of those involved in making the ramps and overlook a reality.

"This is a day of celebration for an area that provides spectacular

beauty and uniqueness for the people of Arkansas. The most important thing about being here today is that over the past 14 years, we've had two governors, a number of commissioners, numerous agencies including the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, ARDOT, Parks & Tourism, the Southeast Arkansas Levee Board and the Corp of Engineers working on this project. Without any of these, we wouldn't be here today."

The scenic overlook and boat ramps stand near the southern end of the Delta Heritage Trail, a rail-to-trail conversion that was acquired by Arkansas State Parks in 1993. The trail currently features 45 miles beginning at Lexa on the north end and, when completed, will continue south for 70 miles to Rowher. The trail then utilizes a 14-mile levee top shared-use roadway to connect to Arkansas City for a total trail length of 84.5 miles.

R.L. Persons Construction served as contractor on the boat ramp and scenic overlook project. ■

The background of the page features a large, semi-transparent seal of the Arkansas Highway Police. The seal is circular and contains a central figure of a woman holding a torch, surrounded by stars and a banner that reads "REGNAT POPULUS".

AHP LIEUTENANT FRALEY RECOGNIZED

BY DAVID NILLES

A **ARKANSAS HIGHWAY POLICE FIRST LIEUTENANT SCOTT FRALEY, WHO RETIRED IN JULY 2021, WAS RECENTLY RECOGNIZED AT THE 'OUTSTANDING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS' HELD AT THE BENTON EVENT CENTER.**

Fraley was recognized as a 2021 'Regional Officer of the Year' for the Northeast Region of Arkansas.

Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge hosted the event and shared her appreciation for all of Arkansas' first responders.

"Arkansas is fortunate to have officers who put their lives on the line to protect us," she shared. "It is an honor to recognize all of our regional and county winners and to thank the many brave men and women in blue who sacrifice so much to protect our communities."

First Lieutenant Fraley was one of the most active Highway

Police Officers in his 29 years of drug interdiction enforcement. From 1993 to 2000, Fraley was responsible for seizing over 14,000 pounds of illegal drugs. One seizure alone netted 2,660 pounds of marijuana and over 123 grams of cocaine and methamphetamines with a street value of over \$3 million. He led the agency in the highest number of felony and drug arrests on more than one occasion.

Because of his superb technical and professional knowledge in concealment techniques and diligence to detect illegal drugs, Fraley also received many AHP Certificates of Recognition for drug seizures and related arrests and has been nationally recognized for his outstanding contributions in the field of drug interdiction. In July 2021, Fraley was presented the Distinguished Service Award for his drug interdiction efforts in his career. He is one of only six officers to have received this

award from the Arkansas Highway Police.

"This is a great honor," Fraley shared. "In my entire career, it has to do with my team members and all of the officers that work around me. It's nice to be recognized individually, but I would have to share my award with my coworkers."

With 29 years of service to the AHP, Fraley was asked how law enforcement has changed over the years.

"I have seen things go from a great deal of respect to almost no respect for law enforcement officers, and the dangers are increasing every day. First responders have a target on their backs and are scrutinized in the public eye because of just a certain few. I'd say 99 percent of us are men and women willing to make that ultimate sacrifice to save a



(L. to R.) Attorney General Leslie Rutledge presents 1st Lt. Scott Fraley with an "Officer of the Year" award.

total stranger from danger and make a difference."

And when asked what the formula is for a successful career in law enforcement, Fraley replied, "For me... trust in God, family support and honesty."

Fraley shared the honor of receiving the Northeast Region Officer of the Year Award with Corporal Freddy Ware of the Arkansas State Police.

"Scott's outstanding service has brought great credit to the State of Arkansas, ARDOT and the Arkansas Highway Police," stated Highway Police Chief Jeff Holmes.

ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor added, "I congratulate First Lieutenant Fraley on receiving this very much deserved award that recognizes his integrity, bravery and hard work. I am very grateful for Scott's years of service to the Arkansas Highway Police." ■



Rolling through *River Towns*

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

HEBER SPRINGS, AR

IF YOU WERE TO DAYDREAM ABOUT A CLEAR, COLD-WATER TROUT STREAM TWISTING AND TURNING FOR 102 MILES THROUGH THE NATURAL STATE, DOES A PARTICULAR AREA COME TO MIND? Heber Springs is home to the Little Red River connecting Greer's Ferry Lake and the White River in eastern Arkansas. It happens to be famous for the world record largest brown trout weighing in at 40 pounds, four ounces.



Greer's Ferry Dam and Lake



Sandy Beach

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.



HEBER, A HISTORY

Settlers began calling Heber Springs home in the 1830s. The General Assembly of 1837 approved an act to incorporate the White Sulphur Springs Company "for the purpose of making it a healthy resort for the citizens of Arkansas." At the time, company owners hoped to create a place much like Eureka Springs or Hot Springs. After the land sold in 1881, the Sugar Loaf Springs Land Company emerged. When the town was incorporated, it was named Sugar Loaf Springs, but when the town applied for a post office, the U.S. Postal Service rejected the name. The town fathers then agreed on the name Heber, honoring Dr. Heber Jones of Memphis, Tennessee, son of Judge John T. Jones, early owner of the town site. From 1882 to 1910, the post office was called Heber and the town was called Sugar Loaf.

HIT THE LAKE

Heber Springs lies on the shores of beautiful Greers Ferry Lake. After Congress passed the Flood Control Act in 1938, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began building dams on free-flowing river systems. President John F. Kennedy came to Arkansas and dedicated the **GREER'S FERRY DAM AND**



Sugar Loaf Mountain

LAKE on October 3, 1963, in what would be one of his last major public appearances before his assassination.

Greer's Ferry Lake hosts tourists throughout the year. Outdoor enthusiasts visit for camping, hiking, water sports and fishing.

AROUND TOWN

Located in the heart of Heber Springs is **SPRING PARK**, known for its seven natural spring water wells. Similar to beliefs around Eureka Springs and Hot Springs, people traveled to experience the healing powers of the springs of Sugar Loaf. Spring Park offers a large playground, pavilion and picnic areas.

While in town, don't miss **BRIDAL VEIL FALLS**, a beautiful natural waterfall with hiking trails for any skill level. If you're visiting during the **WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CARDBOARD BOAT RACE** on the lake, make the scene at **SANDY BEACH** for a picnic, volleyball, and a little friendly floating competition.

After fun in the sun, head indoors to the **RULAND JUNCTION TOY TRAIN MUSEUM**. This two-story museum houses more than 90 years of toy trains, with ten operating train layouts. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. **■**



Ruland Junction Toy Train Museum

ARDOT RECOGNIZED WITH THREE PERPETUAL PAVEMENT AWARDS

BY DAVID NILLES



A section of Highway 9 in Stone County won ArDOT the Perpetual Pavement award for *Performance*.

THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED WITH THREE PERPETUAL PAVEMENT AWARDS FOR 2021 FROM THE ASPHALT PAVEMENT ALLIANCE (APA).

Though the APA has awarded Perpetual Pavement Awards (PPA) in the category of *Performance* in the past, this is the inaugural year for both the PPA: *By Design* and the PPA: *By Conversion* award categories.

In the category of *Performance*, ARDOT was recognized for a section of Highway 9 in Stone County. This award honors Perpetual Pavement projects that are at least 35 years old, have not suffered a structural failure and have an average interval between resurfacing of no less than 13 years.

For the category of *Design*, recognition was given to a section of Interstate 49 in Benton County. The award is presented for new roads that meet perpetual design requirements.

And in the category of *Conversion*, pavement rehabilitation efforts on Interstate 530 were recognized. This award goes to roads that have been converted to

meet perpetual pavement design criteria.

"We appreciate the Asphalt Pavement Alliance for recognizing ARDOT in these three important areas," said ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor. "It is an honor for our work to be acknowledged by our industry peers. I congratulate the crews that were involved in these pavement projects."

For all three prestigious awards, the project must meet strict Perpetual Pavement criteria and demonstrate the characteristics expected from long-life asphalt pavements: excellence in design, quality in construction and value for the traveling public.

"One key indicator of quality in construction is a smooth, long-life pavement," said Amy Miller, P.E., National Director of the APA. "Long-life asphalt pavements serve the community, reduce the money needed for maintenance, and conserve raw materials, ultimately leading to a truly sustainable structure that exemplifies the triple bottom line."

The APA is a coalition of the National Asphalt Pavement Association, the Asphalt Institute and the State Asphalt Pavement Associations. ■

Chairman John Edward Regenold

1932 – 2022



Chairman John Edward Regenold at his commission farewell party.

FORMER ARKANSAS HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER JOHN ED REGENOLD PASSED AWAY PEACEFULLY ON MAY 26; HE WAS 90 YEARS OLD.

Mr. Regenold served on the Highway Commission from 2005 to 2014, appointed by Governor Mike Huckabee, and served a two-year term as Chairman in 2013 and 2014. During his membership with ARDOT, he was instrumental in acquiring funds for a four-lane corridor from Highway 67 at Newport to Highway 49 in Jonesboro, and from Highway 18 in Jonesboro to Interstate 55 in Blytheville.

John Ed graduated from the Kentucky Military Institute in Louisville, Kentucky, and later attended the University of Arkansas where he was a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity.

He was a lifelong resident of Blytheville and was a member of the

First United Methodist Church.

He served on the Mississippi County Quorum Court and on many committees and boards, including the Blytheville Area Chamber of Commerce, First National Bank Board, Dell Compress Board, Regenold and Earls Real Estate Co. Board and Mississippi County Hospital Board, and was appointed Commissioner of the Drainage District 17 for Mississippi County. He was Chairman of the Mississippi County Hospital System during 2005-2006 and was a longtime member of the St. Francis Levee Board from 1998 to 2021.

Mr. Regenold received the Certificate of Merit for Outstanding Accomplishment from the Soil Conservation in 1968. In 1981, Governor Bill Clinton appointed him to serve on the Governor's Advisory Committee – Indigent Care; later, Governor Mike Huckabee appointed him to the Arkansas Turnpike

Authority and the AEDC from 2000 to 2005.

In 2005, the Blytheville Lions Club elected John Ed Citizen of the Year. In 2014, he was honored with the Lifetime Community Achievement Award by the Greater Blytheville Chamber of Commerce and received the Prestigious Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame Award in 2021.

He enjoyed being involved in all the many committees, but farming and ginning were his passion and livelihood.

He began his career in 1953 with Armored Planting Company, became Vice President of the Company in February of 1960, and in 2002 became president and Chief Executive Officer, where he held the position and title until his death.

He leaves his wife of three years, Mary Rose Regenold, four children, many grandchildren, extended family and close friends. ■

GET YOUR KICKS ON ROUTE 66

BY DAVID NILLES

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF *ARKANSAS HIGHWAYS*, READERS DISCOVERED SOME OF ARKANSAS' HISTORIC ROADWAYS. Highways that have an interesting history, or a story to tell. In this issue, we will broaden our horizons and explore the most historic highway in the country, U.S. Highway 66, or more commonly referred to as Route 66.

Drive onto any remaining section of Route 66 and you will be stepping back in time. It happened to me in Shamrock, Texas. A 10-second trip down an Interstate 40 exit ramp took me back 86 years to the 1930s as I immediately spotted the Tower Service Station and U-Drop Inn Cafe, one of many architectural icons on Route 66 as it stretches across the U.S.A.

A HIGHWAY FROM ANOTHER ERA

U.S. Highway 66 is known as "The Mother Road," and achieved legendary status when musician Bobby Troup wrote his song about "getting your kicks on Route 66" in 1946.

Today, the two-lane highway holds a special place in America's heart reminding us of simpler times, unique shops beckoning travelers to come inside and enormous automobiles of the 1950s with those stylish "fins."

The highway has become a symbol of our country's transportation history and our love affair with the automobile.

FROM HERE TO THERE

Route 66 was known as the "great road west" as it stretched across eight states from Chicago, Illinois, to Santa Monica, California. It was also one of the original highways on the U.S. Highway System.





Tower Service Station and U-Drop Inn Café in Shamrock, Texas

The 2,448-mile route traveled across Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California and was constructed in 1926 to meet the increasing demand for automobile transportation.

After the new federal highway system was officially created, Cyrus Avery called for the establishment of the U.S. Highway 66 Association to promote the complete paving of the highway from end to end. That was achieved in 1938.

Not only did the highway become a primary highway for those who migrated west during the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, Route 66 allowed for the mobilization of military convoys during World War II. The highway also successfully connected large metropolitan cities with small, rural towns whose "Main Streets" were the highway itself. Along the way,

motorists could find mom-and-pop shops, gasoline stations, diners and motor courts as local communities took advantage of the increased travel the highway brought.

THIRTY YEARS OF PROSPERITY

Route 66 thrived from the 1940s through the 1960s. The Mother Road experienced many changes in routing over its nearly 60-year existence. There was one big change that the highway eventually could not overcome, the signing of the Interstate Highway Act by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956. Construction of Interstates meant faster, more direct routes and safer travel for motorists. Interstates were often constructed parallel to Route 66. Over time, motorists steered away from Highway 66 in favor of the faster Interstate routes. With decommissioning of the

highway by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in 1985, Route 66 "officially" ceased to exist.

THE MOTHER ROAD TODAY

With decommissioning of Route 66, sections of the highway began disappearing in one way or another. Some sections became business loops, others became state or local roads. Even other sections were totally abandoned.

As a result, today it is no longer possible to drive the nostalgic highway from beginning to end. Yet, some states have preserved the Highway 66 designation allowing motorists to travel remaining sections of the original route.

Along the way, motorists will still find gems like the Tower Service Station



and U-Drop Inn Café in Shamrock.

Travel the existing route today and you will discover old 1950s cars on display, retro gas stations, cafes and motels from the bygone era. Travel at night and you are certain to see old neon signs still glowing in the night sky.

Route 66 associations have been established for preservation, restoration and promotion of the historic route in all eight states the highway traversed. The state of Missouri even declared Highway 66 a "State Historic Route" and many states have followed with that designation.

In 1999, President Bill Clinton signed a *National Route 66 Preservation Bill* that provided for \$10 million in matching

fund grants for preserving and restoring the historic features along the route.

In 2008, the World Monuments Fund added U.S. Highway 66 to the *World Monuments Watch* because some sites along the route such as gas stations, motels, cafés, trading posts and drive-in movie theaters had become threatened by development, abandonment or decay. The Watch is a global program that seeks to discover, spotlight and take action on behalf of heritage places facing challenges or presenting opportunities of direct relevance to our society today.

It is all a part of saving a small piece of history from days gone by. For those interested in driving sections

of the highway today, the National Park Service has developed a *Route 66 Discover Our Shared Heritage* Travel Itinerary describing over one hundred individual historic sites still standing and welcoming visitors.

Without a doubt, these sections of Route 66 are still thrilling motorists. Museums and neon signs dot the original route awaiting those who have a sense of nostalgia and adventure. There are plenty of other Route 66 guidebooks available that pinpoint historic structures and attractions to be seen as motorists experience the mystique of the unique highway and attempt getting their kicks on Route 66. ■



The Blue Swallow Motel in Tucumcari, New Mexico

“



Route 66 harkens back to a time when 98% of lodging was privately owned and small businesses used slogans, signs, folk art, neon lights and gimmicks to stand out. Sections of the road appear to be frozen in time; travelers can still sleep in a wigwam, eat under a supersized milk bottle, swim in a spring-fed lake, catch a movie at a drive-in theatre, shop in a general store, pump gas at an old-fashioned filling station, and take in many other sites that have been enjoyed by generations. ”

- An excerpt from a National Parks Service publication

ARDOT Botanist Nicholas Dial inspects one of the many plants in the greenhouse garden.



IN FULL *Bloom*

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

AS A DEPARTMENT THAT IS KNOWN FOR BUILDING AND MAINTAINING MORE THAN 16,000 ROADWAY MILES, IT MAY COME AS A SURPRISE THAT ARDOT HAS A GREENHOUSE ON CAMPUS.

ARDOT Botanist Nicholas Dial works in the Natural Resources Section maintaining a small nursery property for the Department. You may ask what do construction and plants have in common? Sometimes highway projects can affect streams, wetlands or rare plant species.

"We don't want our highway projects to change the habitat from a pristine environment to a monoculture of grass," Dial explained. "We need good habitats for pollinators, insects and a stable ecosystem. The nursery



is a way to achieve that goal so that our projects have less of an impact on the environment.”

ARDOT’s Environmental Division is primarily responsible for ensuring that the Department adequately addresses and documents the impacts of highway projects on the natural and social environment in compliance with the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA), as well as other state and federal laws pertaining to environmental protection.

One of the sections under the Environmental umbrella is Natural Resources. The Natural Resources Section ensures the Department’s construction and maintenance projects meet requirements within the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act.

The nursery is currently abuzz with eight raised plant

beds full of wildflowers, 500 native trees, several plant rescues and a few hundred small pots of wildflowers.

“If we find that a project could destroy a population of a rare plant species, we will actually dig up the plants, bring them to the nursery, pot and take care of them, and return them to the site once the job is complete,” Dial stated.

A recently completed sprinkler system upgrade allows Dial to program each zone of the nursery to be watered correctly, depending on the plant species.

“Having ways to offset environmental impacts is important for more reasons than regulation compliance. This nursery increases our overall capability to create infrastructure that helps people while also making sure we aren’t harming the ecosystem.” ■



Women in STEM CONFERENCE

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS



Dr. Hermanie Pierre-Guererro, ARDOT Engineer

“Don’t let anyone rob you of your imagination, your creativity, or your curiosity. It’s your place in the world; it’s your life. Go on and do all you can with it, and make it the life you want to live.”

– Mae Jemison, first Black woman astronaut in space

THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ARDOT) AND ITS ARKANSAS ON-THE-JOB TRAINING AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAMS HOSTED THE FIRST WOMEN IN STEM CONFERENCE ON APRIL 15. STEM refers to career fields within Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

A data comparison by the U.S. Census Bureau confirms that women made up only 27% of the STEM careers in 2019 while representing 48% of all workers¹. The Department’s Women in STEM Conference Committee organized the event to remind high school-aged girls that they are capable excellence in STEM professions.

Industry exhibitors Time Striping, Harbor Environmental Safety and Engineering, Women in Transportation, the National Association of Women in Transportation, Rogers Group and Arkansas Schools for Math and Sciences joined ARDOT in welcoming 79 young women from several high schools across the state.

“Figure out what you want to do, put on blinders, and just go for it,” encouraged ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor, P.E., in her welcome address. “Don’t hold back or worry about what other people are doing; surround

yourself with people that will encourage you. Don’t allow anyone to drag you down. Sometimes the worst discouragement can come from the people closest to you—don’t let that happen. You don’t have to accept that.”

STEM keynote speakers included Dr. Hermanie Pierre-Guererro, ARDOT Engineer (who also found time in her career to serve as Miss Haiti International 2012), ARDOT’s Alternative Project Delivery Administrator Keli Wylie, P.E., and NASA rocket scientist Dr. Constance Meadors.

Dr. Pierre-Guererro filled the morning with inspiration by telling the story of her childhood in Haiti; Keli Wylie offered a look into the Connecting Arkansas Program and Dr. Meadors shared her path to success. Sponsors provided a box lunch and students ended the conference with a Q & A panel discussion.

“This was an incredibly successful event,” shared Joanna McFadden, ARDOT’s EEO/DBE Officer and member of the Conference Committee. “We had an amazing turn out; we actually had to limit attendance due to COVID concerns, but we are already looking ahead to next year’s conference.” ■

¹ Martinez, Anthony, and Cheridan Christnacht, “Women Are Nearly Half of U.S. Workforce but Only 27% of STEM Workers.” United States Census Bureau

DISTRICT 8

CONSTRUCTION

CORNER

EMERY SAPP & SONS, INC., IS MID-WAY THROUGH CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HIGHWAY 89 OVERPASS AND REALIGNING OF TWO MILES OF THE HIGHWAY IN MAYFLOWER. The overpass will cross over Interstate 40, Highway 365 and the BNSF railroad tracks when completed. The \$29.3 million contract was awarded in late 2020 and work began in February of 2021.

The improvements will eliminate daily delays motorists experience waiting for trains to clear the present at-grade crossing.

Estimated completion of the new overpass is set for the spring of 2023. ■





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