

The background of the cover is a photograph of a man with white hair, wearing a blue blazer over a white shirt and blue trousers, standing on a grassy area. Behind him is a large brown highway sign that reads "Madison Murphy Highway". The sign is supported by two metal poles. In the background, there is a paved road, a grassy field, and some trees under a clear blue sky. A gas station is visible on the left side of the background.

# Arkansas HIGHWAYS

FALL 2023

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | MAGAZINE

Madison Murphy  
Highway

**HIGHWAY 167 DEDICATED TO  
Madison Murphy**

**HOT SPRINGS  
Bypass Extension  
Ribbon Cutting**

**ARDOT  
Receives  
RAISE Grant**

**A NEW BRIDGE  
Across the  
Spring River**



Dear ARDOT Family,

ON SEPTEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>, WE DEDICATED HIGHWAY 167 AS MADISON MURPHY HIGHWAY.

This event was unlike many others – it felt like a reunion. There were so many folks in attendance that day – community members, representatives from our Congressional Delegation, the State Legislature, and local elected officials. There were transportation stakeholders and leaders from around the State, retired ARDOT employees, past Commissioners, and all of our current Commissioners.

When Madison Murphy was appointed to the Commission in 2003, he emphasized the importance of a complete grid system of multi-lane or Interstate highways to move goods and people from one end of the State to the other efficiently. He mentioned several major arteries across the State that should be part of that grid system – one of which was Highway 167.

During his tenure on the Commission, Madison’s hard work led to voters approving the temporary half cent sales tax that was used to fund the Connecting Arkansas Program of 31 widening projects across the State. Those projects included Highway 167, which is now a 4-lane north-south connection from Interstate 20 in Louisiana through El Dorado to Little Rock.

We were able to thank Madison for his vision and leadership that has resulted in a much-improved transportation system that is benefitting Arkansas’ economy and quality of life.

It was a great day for ARDOT and the Highway Commission!

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



Former Director Dan Flowers, Current Director Lorie Tudor, Former Commissioner Madison Murphy, Former Director Scott Bennett and Former Chief Engineer Bob Walters



Former and Current Highway Commissioners: David Haak, Dick Trammel, Keith Gibson, Philip Taldo, Marie Holder, Madison Murphy, Jonathan Barnett, Prissy Hickerson, Alec Farmer, John Lipton and Herby Branscum

FRONT COVER:  
Madison Murphy,  
Former Highway Commissioner

BACK COVER:  
Fall colors on scenic Highway 27

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Member





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# HIGHWAY 167

## Dedicated to Former Arkansas Highway Commissioner

BY MARK WOODALL



Madison Murphy, drawing by Rick Raine - 2012

## ARKANSAS HIGHWAY COMMISSIONERS, ARDOT LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL DIGNITARIES GATHERED IN EL DORADO ON SEPTEMBER 19 TO DEDICATE A PORTION OF HIGHWAY 167 TO FORMER HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER MADISON MURPHY.

The honor was bestowed upon Murphy because of his 10-year service as a Highway Commissioner from 2003 to 2013. He was appointed by Governor Mike Huckabee and ended his term on the Commission as Chairman.

Murphy was instrumental in several advancements at ARDOT during his tenure at the Department.

"There were many people who played a role in getting the original Connecting Arkansas Program (CAP) developed and passed by the voters in 2012, but no one played a bigger role than Madison Murphy," said Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman Alec Farmer. "The dedication of Highway 167 in his name is well-deserved recognition for

his significant contributions to finding solutions for funding our system of Arkansas highways."

Murphy has been a tireless advocate for improvements to the Arkansas Highway System, not only for his home region of southern Arkansas but for all of Arkansas.

"We are thankful for Madison Murphy's vision, leadership and hard work that has resulted in a much-improved transportation system that is benefiting both Arkansas' economy and quality of life. Naming Highway 167 between El Dorado and Little Rock as the Madison Murphy Highway is an honor that could not be deserved more" said ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor.

Nearly 100 miles of Highway 167 from Saline County to Union County will be named the "Madison Murphy Highway."

Mr. Murphy has not only created opportunities around the state but also around the U.S. He currently serves as Chairman of the Board for Murphy USA, Inc. and is on the board of Murphy Oil Corporation, chairing its Finance Committee, and previously served on the board of Deltic Timber Corporation,

all NYSE Companies headquartered in El Dorado.

"For him to dedicate his time and talent to our state enables us to make valuable contacts across not only the state but the nation. We as citizens owe Madison Murphy a debt of gratitude and his dedication is tangible evidence of his positive influence on his native state," said Mark Lamberth, President of Atlas Asphalt, Inc.

Highway 167, the primary north-south route carrying traffic through the south-central portion of Arkansas, benefited from several widening projects funded by the CAP. Because of Murphy's support for Highway 167 and the CAP, Highway 167 is now a four-lane connection between South and Central Arkansas, which increases safety and mobility.

"I am honored that ARDOT has chosen to recognize me and my time on the Highway Commission in association with Highway 167," Murphy shared. "The widening of 167 had been a major goal of El Dorado and South Arkansas

(continued on page 6)





for decades. In fact, I joined a group in the late 1980s whose mission was to advocate and seek funding to achieve four-lane access for South Arkansas to Interstates 40 and 30. Little did I know at the time that engagement would lead to an appointment with the Highway Commission," said Murphy.

"I want to thank the Department and the Commission for the kind recognition and for the truly important and impactful work they do for the betterment of our region and our state. What they do touches all our lives in so many ways ranging from highway safety to economic development," he added.

The dedication event was held at the Arkansas Welcome Center in El Dorado. ■

**Top photo:** Commissioners gather to watch ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor and Madison Murphy unveil a collage presented to Murphy.

**Bottom photo:** The 50<sup>th</sup> Highway Commission included (L. to R.) John Burkhalter, Tom Schueck, Madison Murphy, Dick Trammel and John Ed Regenold.



## SPECIAL EVENTS AROUND THE STATE



### ARDOT BREAKS GROUND ON HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN MONTICELLO

ARDOT leadership gathered with state and local dignitaries to celebrate the groundbreaking of the Highway 83 extension and connector improvements in Monticello on July 28.

"This is a game changer for south Arkansas," said Monticello Mayor Jason Akers. "This is our opportunity to expand our housing and our town, so it's super important."

Once complete, the improvements will provide a north-south connection between Highway 83 Spur and Highway 278.

The project will begin at the southern end at the intersection of Highway 83 and Jordan Drive and continue northward for 1.5 miles where it will connect with Highway 278.

Nita McDaniel, Economic Development Director for the City of Monticello said these improvements have been in the making for many years.

"This single project serves so many needs for our city. There is a railroad track that divides the city in half. We've never had a bridge to get around the trains, so this will give us access to the hospital, the university and both of our public school districts."

The improvements will also include two roundabouts. One will be located at the intersection of Highway 83 and Jordan Drive – the second will be built at Scogin Drive and Old Warren Road.

"Improvements like this can begin today because of the great partnerships we have for this job," said Arkansas Highway Commissioner Marie Holder. "We have seen so many improvements in other communities in Arkansas when we are able to provide overpasses to get people safely to work, school and medical care."

The project was made possible through a partnership with the City of Monticello and Drew County. The city contributed \$2.5 million, and Drew County provided \$505,000.

In addition to the financial contributions, portions of Highway 83 and the 83 Spur will be removed from the State Highway System and transferred to the City and County upon project completion.

Mobley Contractors, Incorporated, has been awarded the \$30 million project. ■



# ARDOT CELEBRATES THE OPENING OF THE SCENIC HOT SPRINGS BYPASS EXTENSION

BY MARK WOODALL

**T**HE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, LOCAL DIGNITARIES AND MEMBERS OF THE STATE LEGISLATURE CELEBRATED THE RECENT OPENING OF THE HOT SPRINGS BYPASS EXTENSION ON OCTOBER 24 AT CROSSGATE CHURCH IN GARLAND COUNTY.

The ceremony marks the completion of 5.8 miles of roadway on new location that connects Highways 70 East and 7 North and will be dual signed as Highways 5 and 270.

"This has been 20 years in the making and a lot of people had their fingerprints on this, and we've been blessed here in Hot Springs and Garland County with the amount of roadwork done," said Hot Springs Mayor Pat McCabe. "We fully recognize there are unlimited needs and wants for communities and counties across our great state and there are limited resources, so we're appreciative of these major projects."

The new bypass greatly reduces travel time to and from Hot Springs Village, Fountain Lake and other areas north of Hot Springs. It also improves safety and response times for emergency personnel. The extension is also expected to increase commerce, which provides a boost to the local economy.

"There is also the beauty of it. I think it is the prettiest highway we have in Garland County and one of the prettiest in the state of Arkansas. It is absolutely gorgeous through there," said Richard McGrew, State Representative for District 85.

The Arkansas State Legislature designated the bypass as a scenic highway due to its majestic, steep, tree-lined views through the Ouachita Mountains.



There were a number of challenges during its construction because of the difficulties faced when constructing on new locations in the middle of the Ouachita Mountains.

Before construction began there was an environmental testing element to this that began in the early 2000s. The route crosses a portion of the Hot Springs water recharge area. It is a place where rainwater seeps into the ground and provides the natural resources necessary for the famous hot springs. ARDOT and other stakeholders, such as the National Park Service, had to be sure that construction would not affect the recharge area. An extensive study was done with the United States Geographical Survey (USGS) and, in 2005, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) determined that the project would have no significant impact on the human environment.

Patrick Schueck, President & CEO of Lexicon, Inc., and the son of the late Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman Thomas B. Schueck said his father would be so proud of this achievement.

"He never dreamed that you'd be able to raise \$30 million.

When Garland County voted for a tax to provide the \$30 million towards the project cost – he was amazed. . . I think the comment at the time was 'What are we going to do now?'"

"I am so excited and so happy that my dad was a part of this, and I really appreciate everyone for coming out to celebrate this today," added Schueck.

ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor credits Garland County, the USDOT, local lawmakers and the Pave it Forward Foundation for the success of the project.

"Former County Judge Rick Davis and current Garland County Judge Darryl Mahoney put together a \$30 million partnering grant to make this bypass a reality," Tudor shared.

"If it wasn't for that, we wouldn't be standing here today. We also had help from the USDOT. They stepped up with a \$20 million grant that helped us with what is now an \$87 million project, so we thank you all for that help."

The project was awarded to McGeorge Contracting Co., Inc. Work began in December 2019. The Hot Springs Bypass officially opened to traffic in September 2023. ■





# That's A Wrap!

## CELEBRATING A JOB WELL DONE

BY DAVID NILLES

**WITH ARDOT'S CONNECTING ARKANSAS PROGRAM (CAP) COMING VERY CLOSE TO COMPLETION, IT WAS ONLY FITTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT HELD ONE LAST "HURRAH" TO CELEBRATE "31 PROJECTS PROMISED, AND 31 PROJECTS COMPLETED."**

ARDOT Commissioners, staff, city officials, contractors and many more gathered at 42 Bar and Table at the William J. Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock on July 25 to celebrate the completion of one of the largest highway construction programs ever undertaken by ARDOT.

With four-lane road improvement projects constructed across the state, this event was the fourth and final salute to everyone involved in construction of the projects. Other CAP celebrations had been held previously in El Dorado, Jonesboro and Bentonville.

"The CAP program represents 200 miles of improvements on our Arkansas highways," ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor shared with the standing-room-only crowd. "This has been a \$2 billion investment and it is phenomenal that we were able to do this within a 10-year span. There are a lot of people to thank for getting us to this point."

Tudor then recognized the ARDOT staff, CAP Administrator Keli Wylie, all of the

consultants involved in the program and Garver, who served as CAP manager.

"I also want to thank our contractors," Lorie added. "You can do all the planning in the world, you can design the projects and get funding into place, but if you don't have quality contractors to deliver the work, where would we be? Arkansas is so blessed to have a wonderful contracting industry that has delivered these projects in such a great manner, and I want to recognize the success that you have brought to this program."

The 31 projects making up the program were made possible by a 2012 voter-approved half-cent sales tax with revenue dedicated to road and bridge projects. Officials held public meetings across the

state to introduce voters to the CAP program and answer questions local residents had about area projects.

"Voters' approval of the temporary half-cent sales tax provided a green light for alleviating congestion on our highways, increasing traveler safety and improving Arkansas' economy," Highway Commissioner Marie Holder told attendees.

"The vital health of our infrastructure is the vitality of our community," Pulaski County Judge Barry Hyde shared. "Investing in infrastructure is essential in expanding economic opportunities and improving the quality of life for all of our citizens. Pulaski County has certainly benefitted from the Connecting Arkansas Program."

Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott shared his eagerness in seeing the benefits the CAP program will bring to Arkansas.

"We still can't fathom the impact this program is going to have on this state. This program is changing lives. It has happened because of each of you here today and I say thank you to all of you."

Mark Lamberth, who served as a member of the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Highway Finance, reflected on attending groundbreakings for individual highway projects and being involved in ribbon cuttings for other individual projects.

"I have to say that I have never been involved in an event like this where we are literally celebrating an entire

package of specific projects all across the state."

He emphasized that these are projects funded by the people at the ballot box.

"This is a program that yielded tangible results. The citizens of Arkansas can actually see their hard-earned taxpayer dollars going toward improved roads and bridges that create better mobility and more safety.

"Today, we are celebrating because 31 projects were promised and all 31 projects are completed or underway well within the time frame that was promised, and I think that deserves a round of applause. I tip my cap to the citizens of Arkansas. Thank you for the trust you placed in ARDOT and the highway construction industry." ■





# ARDOT Receives \$25 MILLION RAISE Grant

BY DAVID NILLES

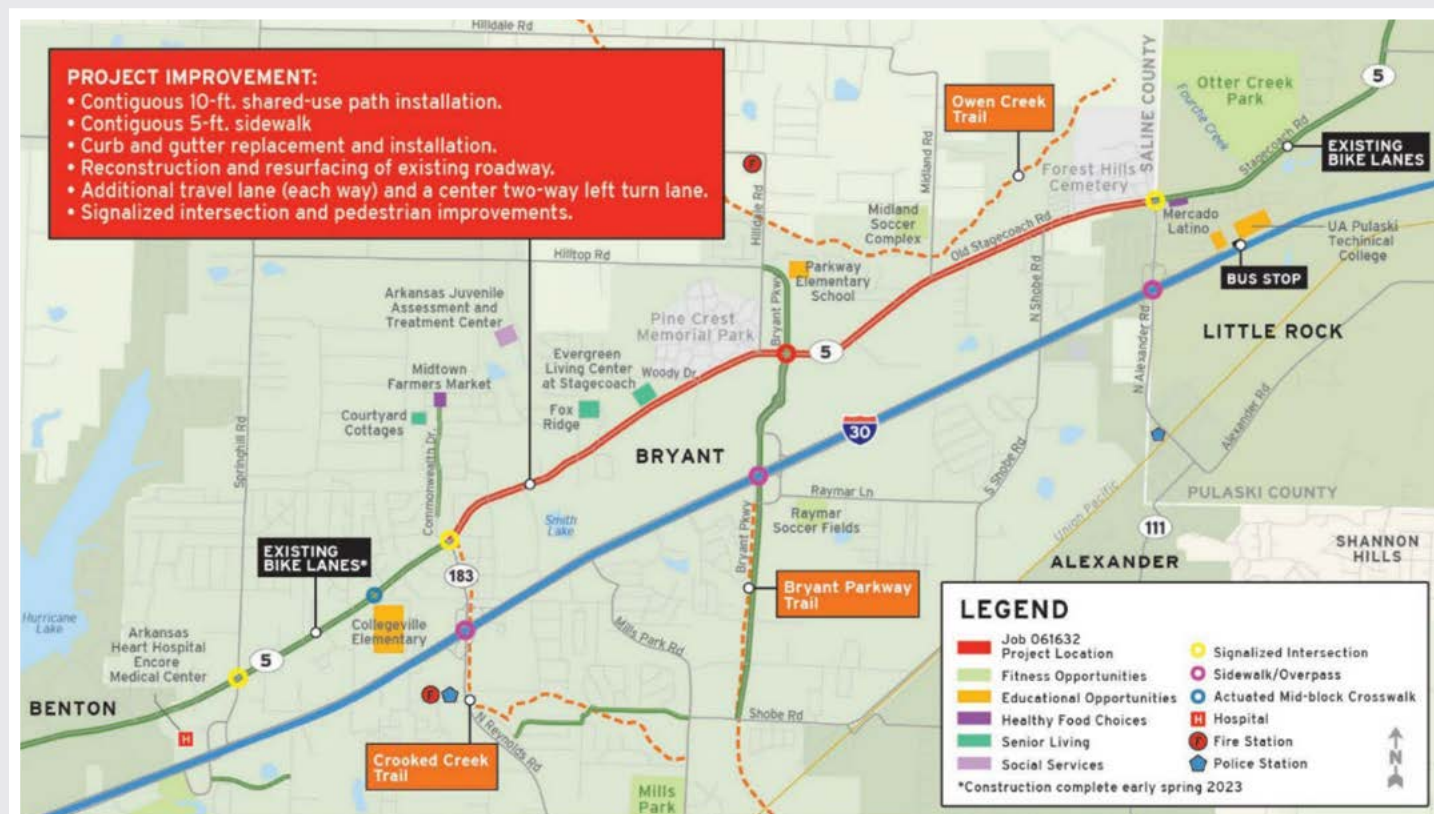
**T**HE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HAS RECEIVED A \$25 MILLION GRANT FROM THE REBUILDING AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE WITH SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUITY (RAISE) PROGRAM OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION. The program was created for trail and road improvements throughout the United States.

ARDOT will utilize the RAISE grant to widen 3.6 miles of Highway 5, also known as Old Stagecoach Road, to five lanes in Bryant. Also included in the project will be a 10-foot shared use path, a 5-foot sidewalk as well as curb and gutter installation.

"We are excited about the improvements this RAISE grant will provide" ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor shared. "These improvements are going to make this section of Highway 5 much safer for motorists once we widen it to five lanes. The shared use path and sidewalk included in this project will provide residents with transportation options for traveling through this area of Highway 5."

"Looking at the bigger picture, these improvements complete the widening of Highway 5 between Little Rock and Benton."

RAISE grant funding prioritizes projects that improve safety, quality of life, mobility, community connectivity and economic activity. ■



## MEMORIAL

BY DAVID NILLES

# Chairman Ron Harrod

1947 – 2023

**R**ON HARROD, WHO SERVED A TEN-YEAR TERM ON THE ARKANSAS HIGHWAY COMMISSION, PASSED AWAY ON JUNE 8, 2023.

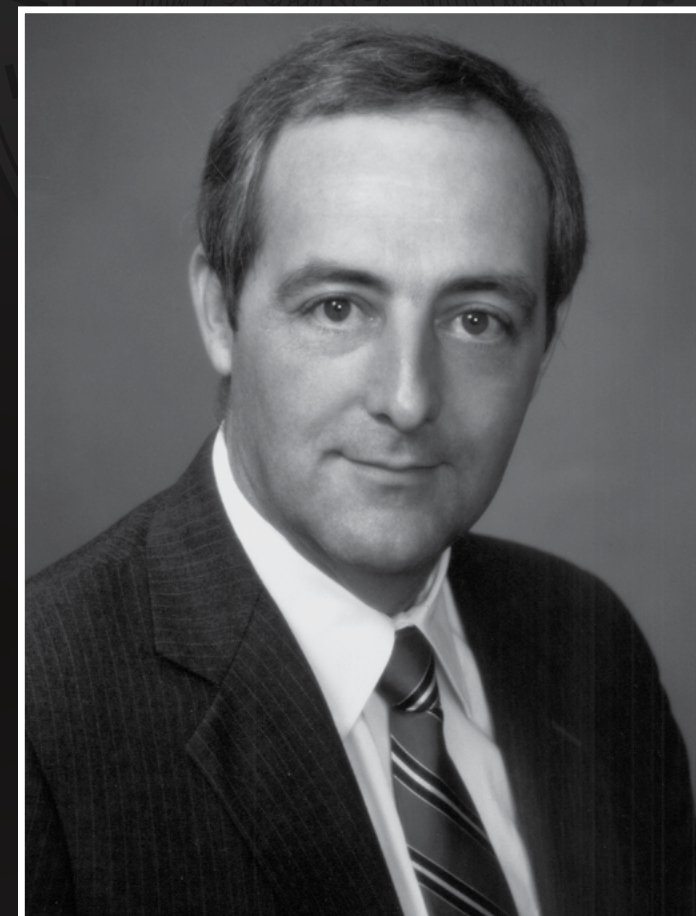
He was appointed to the Commission by Governor Bill Clinton and served from 1983 to 1993. Throughout his term, more than 3,200 highway projects were undertaken at a cost of more than \$2 billion, creating jobs and bolstering Arkansas' economy. More than 9,000 miles of roads and more than 900 bridges were constructed, replaced or improved during Harrod's tenure.

Harrod served as president of his own public affairs firm. He became a contract lobbyist beginning in 1993 and continued in that role until 2019. As a people person, he enjoyed his work. He enjoyed giving tours of the State Capitol, sharing the history of the state's politics and explaining various political events that took place.

Born in Warren, Harrod attended Dumas High School. Upon graduation, he attended Ouachita Baptist University where he studied political science. It is here that his love of politics was enhanced.

Harrod was appointed to various boards and commissions by then Governor Bill Clinton. He served four years on the state Alcohol Beverage Control Board. He also served as an Arkansas Insurance Commissioners Licensing Advisory Board member, was a member of the State Insurance Advisory Examining Board as well as the Southwest Arkansas Compact. He also served as vice president of the Arkansas Jaycees.

As a Highway Commissioner, Harrod worked diligently for ten years. During that time, he became proud of the professionalism of those that worked for ARDOT. ■



Chairman Ron Harrod served on the commission from 1983-1993.





# ARDOT ARCHAEOLOGIST FINDS ANCIENT ARTIFACTS AT FUTURE CONSTRUCTION SITE

BY MARK WOODALL

**A**RKANSAS HIGHWAY 112 WAS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL STATE HIGHWAYS IN ARKANSAS. The unpaved stretch of highway was constructed in 1926 and ran from Fayetteville north to an area south of Johnson for just over two miles.

The area may seem remote but so much history can be found there. The route is listed as part of the Arkansas Trail of Tears northern route, and it closely follows the path taken during the Civil War.

The highway was paved in 1948 and was extended to Bentonville in 1951.

As Northwest Arkansas expanded, so did the need to widen Highway 112. It is estimated that the populations in Benton and Washington Counties will double by 2045.

Before new construction or widening projects could take place on the highway, an environmental study was required. While identifying a location for a new roundabout at Greathouse Spring, an area located just west of Johnson, ARDOT Lead Cultural Resource Specialist Jason Eads found artifacts that date back thousands of years.

"I knew we were near an archaeological site, because in the late 1970s the Arkansas Archaeological Survey had recorded the spring near Clear Creek," said Eads.

The Commonwealth Heritage Group consulting firm was brought in to conduct additional testing for Phase Two and Phase Three of the project because additional manpower was needed to excavate the site.

"I found over a thousand artifacts, so I knew this was significant," Eads added.

"An artifact is anything that has been manipulated by humans. I found stone chips that were used to make tools and projectile fragments that I could date back to the Archaic Period, which is anywhere from 1,500 to 3,000 years ago."

The prehistoric period was before Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto crossed the Mississippi River and before Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas'.

Phase Two testing featured more digging until the crew reached sterile soil. The findings yielded even more artifacts that date back to 6,000 years ago.

"They found stone features, a fire-cracked rock used for cooking, and charcoal, which is a good indicator that this was a large open-air cookhouse."

During that period of time, humans were more evolved here in Arkansas and around the world. Metals were used in Asia, the Bronze Age was underway and the Egyptian Pyramids were being built, so these were not prehistoric cavemen.

Travel was likely not as important during that era, but humans were largely hunters and gatherers. They likely returned to the



same stream for many generations. The climate was dry, so the cool water was a welcome sight to both animals and humans.

Additional testing showed evidence of white oak, red oak, hickory, acorn shells and stones used to crush nuts.

Similar widening projects have offered us a window into the past.

"This doesn't happen often. With big projects such as the Springdale Bypass, Interstate 57 construction, and Interstate 69 down south, we tend to find artifacts," said Eads.

ARDOT places an emphasis on reaching out to Native American tribes when historical archaeological sites are located.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to consult with tribes where projects could affect tribal areas with historical or cultural significance.

During the scoping process, the FHWA initiated tribal coordination with the tribes that have an active cultural interest in the area.

The Tribal Historic Preservation Officers were given the opportunity to comment on the proposed project. The Caddo Nation was the only tribe to respond, and they had no concerns regarding the proposed project.

The stream can still be found along Highway 112, but construction on the roundabout will likely not begin until 2025. ■







# A BETTER WAY ACROSS THE RIVER

BY DAVID NILLES

**C**OUNTY ROAD 42  
MAKES ITS WAY  
ACROSS FULTON  
COUNTY JUST NORTH  
OF THE TOWN OF HARDY. On  
any sunny day, it is a convenient  
way for local residents to make the  
drive into town. The highlight of  
the trip is probably the crossing of  
the Spring River using the existing  
low-water bridge.

On days when heavy rains make their way across the county, that same route into town can become an impossibility as the low-water bridge and the immediate area become flooded. On those occasions, residents on the west side of the river have to go significantly out of their way to get to Hardy.

For the safety and convenience of residents throughout the area, a better way across the Spring River is now under construction. Crews with West Plains Bridge & Grading, LLC, are at work on a new bridge just to the west of the existing low-water bridge.:

The \$3.5 million county road project has been in the works for many years. Prior to on-site work, ARDOT staff were busy acquiring right of way and securing environmental regulatory approvals.

"There were some ownership issues on some of the tracts of property that had to be resolved before construction could begin," said District 5 Engineer Bruce Street.

Measures had to be taken to safeguard certain wildlife in the area as well.

"This project had some environmental considerations due to the presence of the Indiana and Northern Long-Eared bats which are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act," Bruce added. "The bats encountered are native to the area, so it was not unexpected. Trees on-site and off-site could only be cut during certain times of the year."

The Department also worked with the Corps of Engineers to get temporary work roads approved to be constructed out into the river so the contractor could get piers installed and reach areas otherwise inaccessible.

"Almost all bridge projects require temporary work roads of some fashion which have to generally be approved by the Corps of Engineer."

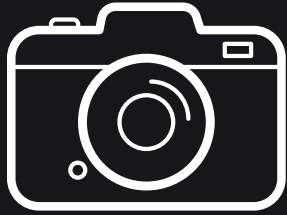
Crews also have been dealing with rainy weather.

"The major challenge on this project, like many river bridge projects, has been high water due to flooding during the fall and spring months," Street shared.

West Plains Bridge & Grading hope to have construction completed in November of this year.

"This is the biggest improvement I have witnessed in my DOT career," Street commented. "Going from a low water bridge to the impressive structure being built now will have a big impact on the communities to the west that depend on crossing the Spring River to get to Hardy." ■

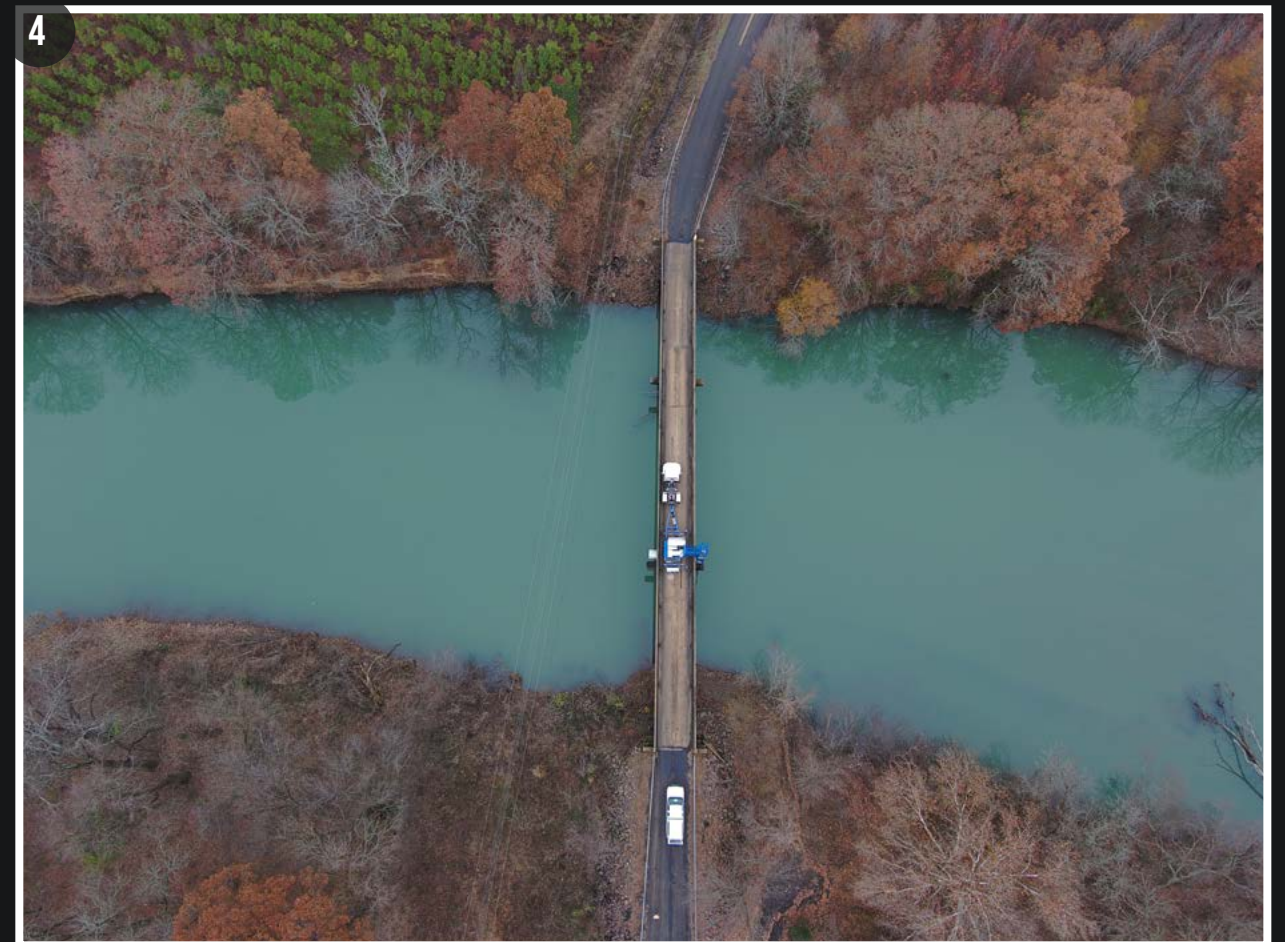
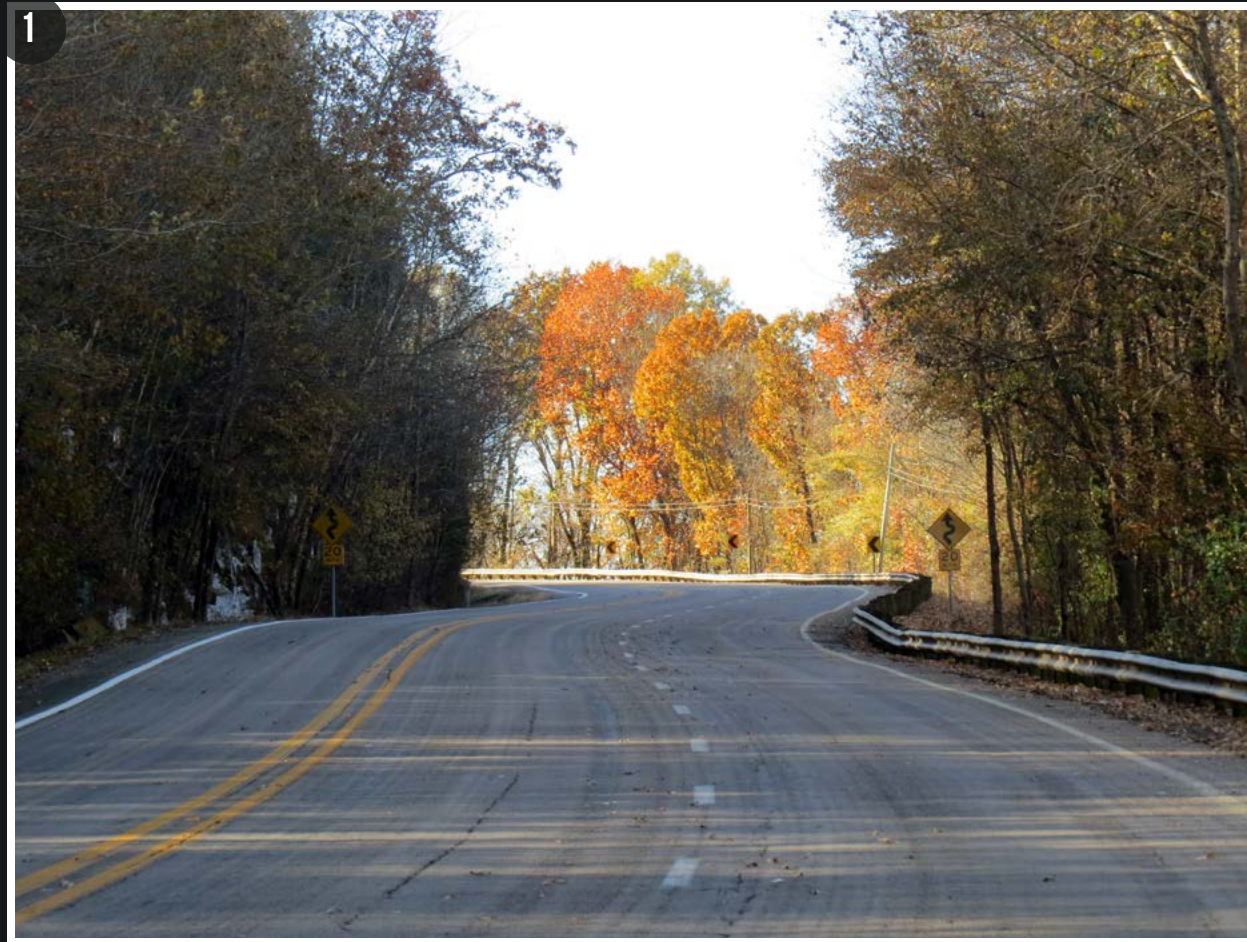




# ARKANSAS' GREAT OUTDOORS

From the Delta in eastern Arkansas to the Boston Mountains in northwest Arkansas and everywhere in between, the Natural State has a myriad of beautiful places to explore.

We thank our ARDOT employees for sharing photographs of their adventures outdoors.



1. Highway 71 South just south of Mountainburg.  
*Timothy Gushing, Arkansas Highway Police*

2. New Hot Springs Bypass bridge.  
*Jake Norris, Heavy Bridge Maintenance*

3. Cove Lake - State Highway 309, at the base of Mount Magazine.  
*Nan Billing, District 4*

4. Big Piney Creek on Rushing Road in Pope County.  
*Mark McClanaha, District 8*



# SCARY PLACES & HAUNTED HIGHWAYS

BY MARK WOODALL

**T**HE MONTH OF OCTOBER IS A PLEASANT TIME OF THE YEAR. As we welcome cooler temperatures following the brutal summer months, we also enjoy the colorful landscape the season provides and for many, the celebration of Halloween.

Haunted houses are abundant this time of year, new scary movies hit the silver screen and children get ready for candy overload as they go from door to door chanting the familiar phrase “trick or treat.”

But there are many people who really love to explore ghostly folklore, and Arkansas has plenty of legendary “haunted” places to check out.

## ARKANSAS HIGHWAY 365

According to Arkansas.com urban legends, Highway 365 is haunted by a young hitchhiker. The story was told by a young man who was traveling south on Arkansas 365 when he saw a young woman walking along the roadside. He offered her a ride because of the cold and rain. She gave him directions to her house. Once he arrived, he walked around to let her out of the car only to discover she had vanished. As the legend goes, the young man knocked on the door only to be told by her mother that her daughter was killed years ago, but she returns home once a year.



Old Fort Smith Courthouse

## OLD FORT SMITH COURTHOUSE

For twenty-one years, Judge Isaac C. Parker held the bench of the U.S. Court for the Western District of Arkansas. Parker was notoriously known as “The Hanging Judge.” During his time on the bench, he condemned 160 people to hang from the gallows. The executions were conducted right outside of the courtroom while the next man awaited his fate. According to folklore, the men who were hanged are believed to still roam the property where they spent their remaining time on earth. The gallows have since been reconstructed. Read more about the Old Fort Smith Courthouse by checking out the National Park Service website.

## THE ALLEN HOUSE

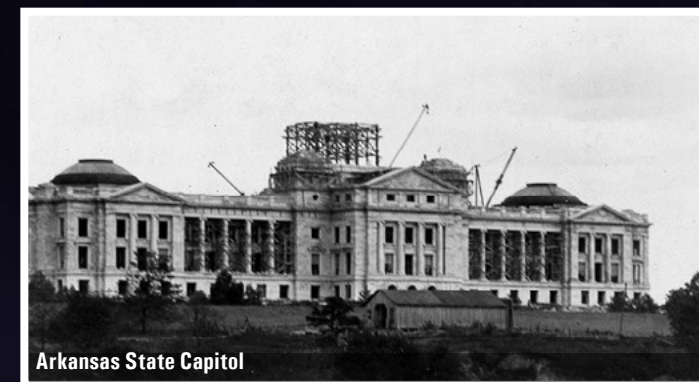
Built in 1906, the Victorian mansion, located in Monticello, is rumored to be haunted following the death of Ladell Allen, who committed suicide in the main bedroom. The room where Ladell died was sealed off by her mother and was not reopened for several decades. When it was reopened the new owners found a bottle of poison and numerous love letters, which revealed a secret relationship. The house was eventually renovated and converted into apartments. Soon after, visitors claimed to see paranormal activity and a woman standing in the window of Ladell’s closed bedroom. The home has gained national notoriety among ghost hunters. Today, tours are given by appointment only. Additional information can be found at [Allenhousemonticello.com](http://Allenhousemonticello.com).

## COTTER BRIDGE

Cotter Bridge is located near Cotter in Baxter County on the business route of U.S. Highway 62 and crosses the White River between Baxter and Marion Counties. Numerous strange events have been reported since its construction in 1930. Walkers have reported being struck by random rocks, a ghostly woman known as “the laughing lady” has reportedly been seen and the sounds of babies crying have been heard. Prior to its construction travelers through northern Arkansas used ferries to cross the river. Flooding often hindered travel for several days. In 1990, the bridge was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## THE OLD ARSENAL

The Old Arsenal is located in MacArthur Park in Little Rock. It is now known as the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History. According to legend, many sightings of ghosts have been reported, including a duel between two unexplained shadows, and a man who melted into thin air once when an employee tried to make contact with the apparition. The location is the birthplace of General Douglas MacArthur in 1880. The building now houses exhibits from Arkansas’ Territorial days to the present. There are over 400 photos and an exhibit that pays tribute to David O. Dodd, a boy martyr of the Confederacy.



Arkansas State Capitol

## THE ARKANSAS STATE CAPITOL

The Arkansas State Capitol was built on the grounds of the old Arkansas State Penitentiary. During the excavation, several wooden coffins were found along with the remains of the state’s past criminals. Tragedy struck years later when Representative Ira Gurley was crushed to death at the Capitol’s south elevator. The elevator is rumored to act on its own at times, and haunting voices have been heard in the basement. Visitors and state employees have reported seeing a woman dressed in period clothing floating down the marble staircases. ■

**Photo 1:** Photo of Parker’s courtroom reconstructed at the Fort Smith National Historic Site, taken in 1966 (Jerrye & Roy Klotz MD)

**Photo 2:** Arkansas State Capitol under construction in October of 1910.





# TJ BROWN

## WOODWORKING SKILLS RECEIVING STATEWIDE RECOGNITION

BY DAVID NILLES

**T**J BROWN IS A DISTRICT 4 AREA MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR IN SEBASTIAN COUNTY. In his off time from work, chances are good you will find him involved in creating works of art in his workshop.

Not the type of works of art that require a paint brush, his medium of choice is wood carving.

"I work with all kinds of native and imported hardwoods," Brown shares. "Most often, I use walnut, cherry and maple."

TJ recalls a story about his early experiences working with wood when he was very young.

◀ There are nine types of wood in the Palms & Sailboat work.



Brown uses a "color fill" technique on some pieces. ▶



"When I was around six, Dad had to go to the Veterans hospital to have surgery. He was gone a few days and I missed him more than anything in the world. It just wasn't right without him at home, and I begged to go see him. Back then, they wouldn't let a kid in to visit a patient and since I couldn't go see Dad, I wanted to show him how much I missed him and loved him, so I decided to make something for him.

"We had a farm and had just about every kind of animal you can think of. Of all things, Dad had a pet goose named Harvey that would follow him all over the place when he was feeding and watering the animals. I thought Dad might be missing his pet, so I looked around and found some old copper wire and made a little wire stick man and goose. I nailed them on a flat piece of wood and wrote 'Fred and Harvey' on it. Mom took it to him the next day and when she came back, she said his roommate took one look at it and said, 'that kid is going to be an artist.'"

Brown has been utilizing various woods in his works of art ever since.

"Believe it or not, I've never been able to draw pictures or paint one either," he admits.

"I don't know why, but I've always been able to shape wood into forms I want."

Brown creates his many designs utilizing a scroll saw on the woods he selects.

"I've been using a scroll saw for around 38 years now," Brown shared. "The real advantage for me is the precise cuts that you can make with one. When I was 19, I started with an old used saw that I bought from a retired gentleman. My father bought me a new saw for my 20th birthday, and I started doing more detailed work.

"In the mid-1990s, I met the best scroll saw artist I had seen at the time. His name is Bernie Mazu and he did the most amazing woodwork ever with a scroll saw. He was kind enough to share some of his knowledge with me over the next few years and that's when I started

discovering some of the amazing things that could be done with one.

"In 1997, I bought the best scroll saw made and used it every way I could think of over the next 10 years or so. I thought I had done just about everything that could be done with a scroll saw. Then I discovered something new to me called Intarsia. I wanted to learn how to do this, so in 2007, I went to Roberts Studio in east Tennessee and was taught how by a true master scroller and craftsman named Jerry Booher and the world's best known Intarsia artist Judy Gale Roberts, who is credited with bringing this art form back from the past. I enjoyed the class so much I took another one in 2008, and a third one in 2010.

Brown has gained valuable experience

(continued on page 24)





with the scroll saw along the way and that experience shows in his works and the interest they have received.

"Over the years I have sent my woodwork all over the United States and few places around the world. I've sent it everywhere from Miami, Florida, to Beverly Hills, California, up to Alaska and Canada and as far away as New Zealand, Australia and Greece."

Brown is now using a technique he calls "color fill" on some of his works. It is a process that involves placing cuts into the wood design and filling in those cuts with a mixture of water and aluminite dyes or powders. After the colored resin hardens, he then sands it down and puts a finish of polyurethane on the work. The process can take anywhere from eight to ten hours to complete.

Brown's woodworking skills have gained him statewide recognition. He has been nominated several times for the Arkansas Living Treasure program presented by the Arkansas Arts Council. The award recognizes, honors and celebrates masters of traditional crafts and/or folk arts in Arkansas with the goal of highlighting and preserving Arkansas' unique heritage, identity, culture and history. The award recognizes the lifetime achievements and contributions to heritage arts and crafts of Arkansas. The chosen individual is worthy of statewide recognition because of their mastery and dedication to perpetuating their chosen traditional craft or folk art.

More of Brown's works can be seen on his Facebook page. Examining his works, it is obvious he has successfully mastered his craft. ■

 [facebook.com/tjswoodshop](https://facebook.com/tjswoodshop)

# Dear ARDOT

## Dear Director Tudor,

ARDOT has added several safety improvements to the curve south of the intersection of Highway 265 and Hyland Park Road in Fayetteville. Thank you for your personal involvement with this issue.

We want to call your attention to the very special help given to the matter by Assistant Chief Engineer Steve Frisbee. He kept us informed and his professional explanations were of great value. He was a delight. Thank you for having such a professional on the ARDOT staff.

Additional measures would help remedy the problem, but we understand the ARDOT guidelines and cannot disagree with them.

*Sincerely,*  
**Bob Harriell**  
Fayetteville, AR

### MESSAGES FROM FACEBOOK

"Thank you (all) for the great job on the 540 bridge project. All was handled very efficiently, with little disruption and (as far as I know) no incidents. You do a great service for us."

— Bob Collins

"Just a shout out to Kenny Howard and crew at Perryville! Always keeping the roads safe, grass down and area looking good!"

— Allen and Cassie Nelson



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**IDRIVEARKANSAS.COM**







Listening Forest in Crystal Bridges

# OUT & ABOUT

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS AROUND THE STATE

As you travel Arkansas over the next few months, consider checking out some of these listed events. Our state is full of interesting things to do, no matter what highway you take. For additional event listings, check out [Arkansas.com/events](https://arkansas.com/events)

- \* **DIAMOND MINING:** Meet a park interpreter in the Diamond Discovery Center to learn the tricks of the trade at this demonstration of diamond searching methods! **NOVEMBER 18**
- \* **25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MOUNTAIN RENDEZVOUS:** Experience a working primitive camp, as well as some of the survival skills used by Arkansas pioneers. Watch a variety of demonstrations including muzzleloading rifles, tomahawk throwing and more! **NOVEMBER 24 & 25**
- \* **UGLY SWEATER RACE:** Dig through your drawers and closets and find the ugliest sweater you own. You'll want to wear it in all its glory for the Ugly Sweater Race 5K at Two Rivers Park in Little Rock. There will also be an Elf Dash for kids 10 and under. Register at [uglysweaterrace.com](https://uglysweaterrace.com). • **DECEMBER 16**
- \* **CORDUROY:** Don Freeman's beloved picture book comes to vibrant life on stage in this fun and highly physical adaptation that's sure to delight all audiences. With universal themes of friendship, belonging and acceptance, Corduroy's timeless tale transcends barriers and reveals a heartwarming innocence at its center. **NOVEMBER 25 – DECEMBER 23**
- \* **LISTENING FOREST:** *Listening Forest* returns to Crystal Bridges. Created by artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, the North Forest experience uses light, sound and projections to create an interactive walk through the woods. This site-specific exhibition brings together eight immersive installations, each one activated by you: your heart rate, your body, your voice, and your movements to direct the forest's response. This project brings together art and technology in a natural setting to create poetic, shared experiences and features a soundtrack composed by electronic musician Scanner (Robin Rimbaud). **NOVEMBER 25 – DECEMBER 31**

- NOVEMBER 18** \*  
DIAMOND MINING 101  
Crater of Diamonds State Park  
*Murfreesboro, AR*
- NOVEMBER 24 & 25** \*  
25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MOUNTAIN RENDEZVOUS  
Petit Jean State Park  
*Morrilton, AR*
- NOVEMBER 25 - DECEMBER 23** \*  
CORDUROY  
Children's Theatre of the Arkansas  
Fine Arts Museum  
*Little Rock, AR*
- DECEMBER 16** \*  
UGLY SWEATER RACE  
Two Rivers Park  
*Little Rock, AR*
- THROUGH DECEMBER 31**  
GARVAN WOODLAND GARDENS  
HOLIDAY LIGHTS  
550 Arkridge Road  
*Hot Springs, AR*
- THROUGH DECEMBER 31** \*  
LISTENING FOREST BY RAFAEL LOZANO-HEMMER  
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art  
*Bentonville, AR*



25<sup>th</sup> Annual Mountain Rendezvous



Ugly Sweater Race

## DISTRICT 7

# CONSTRUCTION

## CORNER



**W**ORK IS UNDERWAY IN DREW COUNTY ON A HIGHWAY ON NEW LOCATION THAT WILL BECOME THE ARKADELPHIA BYPASS.

Crews with McGeorge Contracting Company, Inc. are constructing 4.3 miles of Highways 67 and 51 on the south side of Arkadelphia that will connect to create the bypass. McGeorge was awarded the contract in August 2022 for \$56 million.

The last several months have been focused on clearing and grubbing, earthwork and installation of RC box culverts and RC pipe culverts.

Improvements are expected to be completed in the summer of 2027. ■







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