

A construction worker wearing an orange safety vest with reflective stripes, blue jeans, a yellow hard hat, and safety glasses is bent over, using a red and black circular saw to cut through a metal beam. The worker is wearing white work gloves and has a Milwaukee tool belt. The background shows a construction site with green grass and some debris.

Arkansas HIGHWAYS

SPRING 2023

A PUBLICATION OF THE
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | MAGAZINE

DEDICATED TO
Workplace Safety

DAVID HAAK NAMED
New Highway
Commissioner

MANAGED LANES
Are a First in Arkansas

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY
Program Going Strong!

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear ARDOT Family,

DURING THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 31 (FRIDAY), TORNADOES MOVED THROUGH ARKANSAS. The hardest hit areas included Little Rock, North Little Rock, Jacksonville, Sherwood and Wynne. Loss of life and injuries, loss of vehicles, loss of homes and businesses occurred. The word I heard the most was "devastating."

ARDOT had multiple employees that sustained major damage or completely lost their homes and vehicles. Others have extended family or friends that were severely impacted. I am so thankful that our employees and their immediate families escaped serious injury or worse.

As always, ARDOT crews and Arkansas Highway Police were among the first responders to assist in traffic control and clear the roads to get traffic moving. Our crews worked to remove debris and assist local power companies to clear downed power lines and utility poles. We had most of the state highways opened to traffic by early Saturday morning. Then we began helping in other ways...helping to clear county roads and city streets, transporting supplies (cots, blankets, water, etc.) to shelters, providing water and supplies to citizens and other first responders. ARDOT stayed in regular contact with the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management and the State Emergency Operations Center to monitor and facilitate requests for assistance.

I cannot begin to express my gratitude to our ARDOT first responders and the support staff. Your work ethic and volunteer spirit went above and beyond and helped our Arkansas communities greatly. We have received numerous calls and texts of appreciation from residents and businesses that were impacted from the tornadoes. The dedication and professionalism of our employees made an incredible difference in the aftermath of this disaster. I am so proud to be part of our amazing work family. You all are the absolute best!

Viva Esprit de Corp!

All my best,

Lorie H. Tudor, P.E., Director



FRONT COVER:
An ARDOT employee repairs a storm damaged sign.

BACK COVER:
Curves on State Highway 5.

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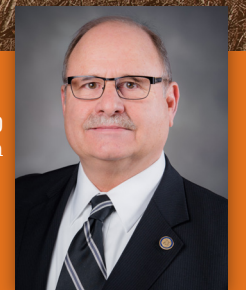


ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION

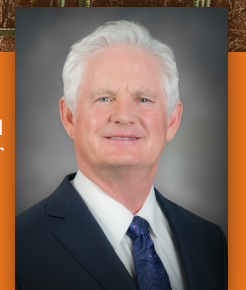
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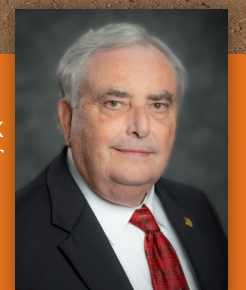
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SPRING 2023

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DEDICATED TO WORKPLACE SAFETY

BY DAVID NILLES

THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TAKES PRIDE IN MAKING SAFETY A TOP PRIORITY. Not just the safety of motorists traveling the state's highways, but also the safety of the Department's employees as they perform their job duties day in and day out. The ultimate goal is to make sure that every employee finishes the day and goes home safely. That is job number one.

The American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) says sound safety practices are both socially responsible and good business. Research and industry experience suggest organizations that invest in occupational safety experience a return on investment. Among the returns ASSP shares are:

- A positive public image.
- Compliance with regulations, laws and standards can prevent poor public perception and costly disasters.
- Cost savings – Occupational safety programs can reduce worker injuries and incidents.
- Increased operational efficiency – A focus on safety leads to higher worker productivity.
- Improved employee satisfaction – recruiting and training top talent is easier for organizations that provide a safe and comfortable workplace.

Eddie Tanner, Section Head of Workforce Development, Health & Safety for ARDOT, provided an insight into ARDOT's Safety Program.

"Our safety program applies to all employees throughout the Department. When it comes to the Department's core values, workplace safety is in the top tier. You need your employees to stay safe and able to perform their duties. Thus, you must ensure that the work environment you put them in is one that is safe enough for them to do their

(continued on page 6)





jobs well with the lowest levels of risk and highest levels of workplace safety. While no workplace is without risk, your ongoing challenge is to keep risk mitigated and keep workplace safety standards high – and constantly improving. That’s why the goal in workplace safety is to be improving safety standards constantly, as a work in progress, doing everything within your powers and within reasonable expectations to keep your employees safe."

SPREADING THE WORD

So how is ARDOT’s program delivered to employees across the state?

"We have recently installed video monitors in Districts and Divisions with messages about Health and Safety in the workplace. Our maintenance and field employees are required to participate in regularly scheduled meetings. We have recently added new Health and Safety Officers and each District has a dedicated Safety Officer that will be able to work closer with our employees and deliver safety meetings and training as needed," Tanner shared.

A CLOSER LOOK AT ARDOT’S SAFETY PROGRAM

There are several components to the Department’s program. It takes all of the components working well to maintain a successful program.

Management Leadership: Let employees know that top management is committed to eliminating hazards and to continuously improving workplace safety and health, and sets program expectations and responsibilities. Managers at all levels make safety and health a core organization value.

Worker participation: Employees are encouraged to participate in the program and feel comfortable providing input and reporting safety or health concerns.

Hazard Identification and Assessment: To identify and assess hazards, employers and workers collect and review information about the hazards present or likely to be present in the workplace. They conduct initial and periodic inspections of the workplace to identify new or recurring hazards and investigate injuries, illnesses, incidents and close calls/near misses to identify the underlying hazards, their causes, and safety and health program shortcomings.

Education and Training: All employees are trained to understand how the program works and how to carry out the responsibilities assigned to them under the program. Employers, managers and supervisors receive training on safety concepts and their responsibility for protecting workers’ rights and responding to workers’ reports and concerns. All employees are trained to recognize workplace hazards and to understand the control measures that have been implemented.

Program Evaluation and Improvement: Once a safety and health program is established, it should be evaluated initially to verify that it is being implemented as intended. Whenever a problem is identified in any part of the safety and health program, employers—in coordination with supervisors, managers and workers—need to take prompt action to correct the problem and prevent its recurrence.

Tanner has been pleased with the success of ARDOT’s program.

"Our Safety Program has become stronger with the addition of our new Health and Safety officers and an importance placed on work zone safety. Change in the workplace often comes from the top. For employees to take health and safety seriously, they need to see the managerial commitment to health and safety practices in the workplace. Our ARDOT administration has been very supportive with our recent safety initiatives as well as upgrading our safety personal protective equipment."

IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT

Like any workplace, accidents may happen. Employees must report any type of equipment/motor vehicle or injury accident to their supervisor and the proper accident report shall be completed and forwarded to our office within 10 days. If it is a serious accident, then it shall be reported to the Health and

Safety officer and safety section immediately. Each District has an Accident Review Committee (made up of District administration and a Safety Officer) that meets at least twice a year or as needed to review any Preventable/Lost Time accidents and what measures can be put in place to avoid reoccurrence.

MOVING FORWARD WITH MORE SUPPORT

In the coming months, ARDOT will be introducing District Safety Teams that will be a resource for employees to report and express any safety concerns to District management.

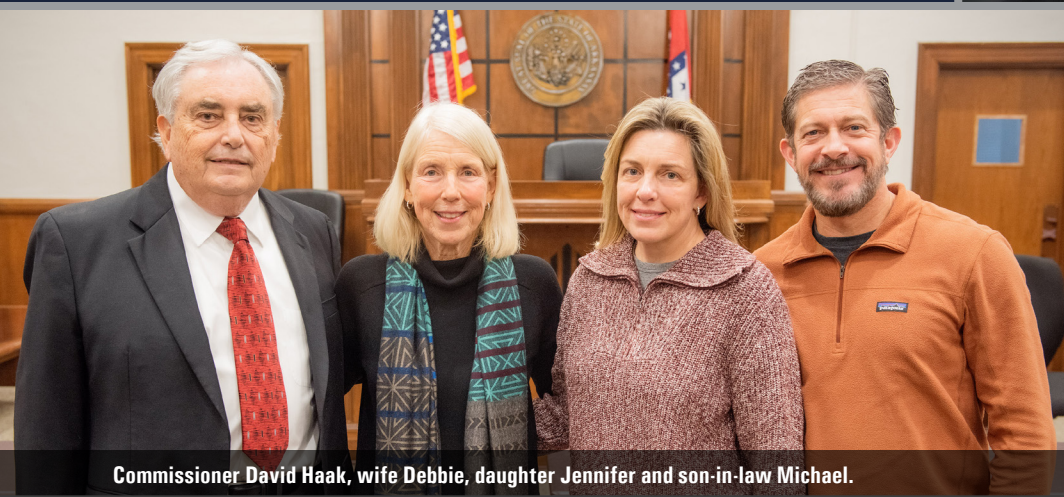
The Department will also introduce a Statewide Safety Team comprised of representatives from each District along with Division representatives to address safety related issues throughout the state.

"Overall, I think the Department works in a safe manner," Tanner stated. "When it comes to safety and health practices, there’s always room for improvement. Your program should constantly monitor workplace hazards and evaluate existing procedures for efficiency. Don’t aim for “best practices” when you consider health and safety. Instead, aim for “better practices.” No matter how efficient your current policies seem, always assume there is room for improvement." ▣

DAVID HAAK

Named New Highway Commissioner

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS



Commissioner David Haak, wife Debbie, daughter Jennifer and son-in-law Michael.

DAVID HAAK OF TEXARKANA HAS BEEN NAMED TO THE ARKANSAS HIGHWAY COMMISSION BY GOVERNOR SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS. He was sworn in on February 14 at the Miller County Courthouse by Judge Cathy Hardin Harrison with close family in attendance.

David's lifetime of public service, community involvement and strong leadership will make him an asset to the Commission," Governor Sanders shared.

Haak served as a state representative in the Arkansas House of Representatives from 1999-2004.

During that time, he served on numerous committees including the Joint Budget Committee, Revenue and Tax Committee, and State Agencies & Government Affairs Committee. He also served on the Arkansas Economic Development Commission from 2005-2008 and on the Arkansas Waterways Commission in 2021.

As a lifelong resident of Texarkana, Haak has always valued community involvement and civic engagement. He has served on the Texarkana Arkansas City Council, as a Texarkana Chamber of Commerce board member and on the Texarkana Arkansas School District "Distinguished Alumni" in 2006 and the Texas A&M Texarkana "Entrepreneur of the Year" in 1990.

Haak started and owns a label business in Texarkana, First Tape & Label.

"I'm looking forward to the next 10 years," said Commissioner Haak. "I know there is going to be a lot of work, but this is going to be fun. I plan to visit each county in my region of responsibility and meet with mayors, judges and community members."

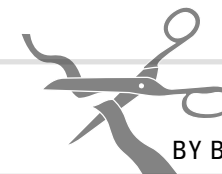
Haak replaces Robert S. Moore, Jr. of Arkansas City whose term on the Commission ended in January. Haak will serve on the Commission until January 2033. ■



"I'm looking forward to the next 10 years, I know there is going to be a lot of work, but this is going to be fun. I plan to visit each county in my region of responsibility and meet with mayors, judges, and community members."

DAVID HAAK

SPECIAL EVENTS AROUND THE STATE



BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

INTERSTATE 69 GROUNDBREAKING

Congressional representatives Bruce Westerman and Rick Crawford joined ARDOT staff and Highway Commissioners in McGehee for a ceremonial groundbreaking on the next phase of construction for the Interstate 69 Corridor.

The corridor spans more than 2,700 miles beginning in Laredo, Texas, through Arkansas, and up to Port Huron, Michigan. Designated by the United States Department of Transportation as a "Corridor of the Future", this federally recognized highway will be invaluable to future freight movement across the United States. This new Interstate means a tremendous economic boost for communities in southeast Arkansas.

Approximately 900 miles of four-lane and two-lane segments of the Interstate 69 corridor are open to traffic today. Forty-two miles of that corridor are presently open in Arkansas.

Three pieces of the Interstate 69 puzzle in Arkansas include the Pine Bluff to Highway 278 Connector, Arkansas' portion of the new Great River Bridge over the Mississippi River and the remainder of Interstate 69 as it makes its way across south

Arkansas before entering Louisiana, just south of Magnolia.

In 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) identified several high priority corridors of national significance where the nation needed interstates the most—I-69 included. When the I-69 Steering Committee formed in 1993, Arkansas became the lead state in developing the corridor.

"The project we celebrate today will construct just over eight miles of a two-lane highway beginning at Highway 293, just south of Selma, and continuing to the southwest where it will connect with the Monticello Bypass," said Robert S. Moore, Jr., then Chairman of the Highway Commission. "W. L. Bass Construction will construct the \$62 million project that will be known as Highway 569 or Future Interstate 69."

The total estimated cost for the corridor across the country is between \$35--\$40 billion; Arkansas' cost to construct 184 miles of Interstate 69 and the Interstate 69 Connector is \$3.5 billion. ■



Celebrating 70 Years of the Mack-Blackwell Amendment

BY DAVID NILLES

THE 21ST
STATE HIGHWAY
COMMISSION WAS
THE FIRST UNDER
MACK-BLACKWELL



THE YEAR WAS 1951. IN MARCH OF THAT YEAR, TWO STATE SENATORS, YOUNG MILTON MACK AND LAWRENCE BLACKWELL, SPONSORED AMENDMENT 42, KNOWN AS THE MACK-BLACKWELL AMENDMENT. Their amendment was filed in the office of the Secretary of State that year. The Mack-Blackwell Amendment was then proposed by the 58th General Assembly of the State of Arkansas and was voted upon in November 1952.

Final tally: For - 231,529 Against - 78,291.

The election results enabled Act 123 which became law in February 1953.

WHAT IS THE MACK-BLACKWELL AMENDMENT?

The amendment created the Arkansas Highway Commission as we know it today. Section One of the amendment spelled out the duties given to the Commission.

Section 1. Commission Created—Members—Powers. There is hereby created a State Highway Commission which shall be vested with all the powers and duties now or hereafter imposed

by law for the administration of the State Highway Department, together with all powers necessary or proper to enable the Commission or any of its officers or employees to carry out fully and effectively the regulations and laws relating to the State Highway Department.

Sections Two and Three of the amendment elaborated on the makeup of the Commission and spelled out how terms would be carried out.

Section 2. Qualifications and Appointment of Members—Terms of Office of First Commission. Within ten days after the convening of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas in the year 1953, the Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint five persons who are qualified electors of the State to constitute the State Highway Commission for terms of two, four, six, eight and ten years respectively. The terms of the persons so appointed shall be determined by lot. The Commissioners to be appointed from the State at large; provided, however, that no two Commissioners shall be appointed from any single Congressional District.



CURRENT
STATE HIGHWAY
COMMISSION

2023 State Highway Commission (1st row, L. to R.) Keith Gibson, Chairman Alec Farmer, Vice Chairman Philip Taldo. (2nd row, L. to R.) David Haak, ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor, Marie Holder.

Section 3. Terms of Office of Members. Upon the expiration of the foregoing terms of said Commissioners, a successor shall be appointed by the Governor in the manner provided for in Section 2 for a term of ten years, which term of ten years shall thereafter be for each member of the Commission.

A NEW WAY OF MANAGING ARKANSAS' HIGHWAYS

The passage of the Mack-Blackwell Amendment ushered in a new era. Highway Commissioners were no longer to be chosen from their respective highway Districts and from at large but rather from the state's Congressional districts. This was to ensure that the entire state was represented on the Commission.

Governor Francis Cherry began the era by appointing five new Highway Commissioners on January 1, 1953. His selections were: Ms. Willie Lawson of Little Rock, Cecil Lynch of Pine Bluff, Raymond Orr of Fort Smith, Dan Portis of Lepanto, and Glenn Wallace of Nashville. The first meeting of this Commission was held in the Governor's office on January 19, 1953, and the group selected Raymond Orr as Chairman.

THE MACK-BLACKWELL AMENDMENT TODAY

In 2022, we continue to celebrate the significance of the Mack-Blackwell Amendment.

"For 70 years now, the Mack-Blackwell Amendment -- Amendment 42 to the Arkansas Constitution -- has worked as designed and given a level of independence to the Highway Commission and the Arkansas Department of Transportation, so that highway funds are managed independently and distributed equitably based on the state's needs," then Governor Asa Hutchinson shared in a speech to the Arkansas Good Roads Foundation*.

The enactment of the Mack-Blackwell Amendment in 1953 has allowed road construction in Arkansas to progress unimpeded and in an effective manner. Commissioners of the Arkansas Highway Commission carrying out that work have been selected under the direction of the Mack-Blackwell Amendment ever since. ■

*Democrat Gazette article by Michael R. Wickline, November 2, 2021

MANAGED LANES ARE A FIRST IN ARKANSAS

BY DAVID NILLES

PERHAPS YOU'VE BEEN IN THIS SCENARIO...IT'S 5:15 IN THE AFTERNOON AND YOU'RE HEADING HOME TAKING THE INTERSTATE 430 BRIDGE INTO NORTH LITTLE ROCK, OR, IT'S 7:40 IN THE MORNING AND YOU'RE TAKING THE BRIDGE HEADED INTO LITTLE ROCK. Whether it's the morning or the afternoon, you just might run into the same situation, a traffic back up in the travel lanes as you approach the bridge.

ARDOT's staff of engineers have been hard at work formulating a solution. Replacing the I-430 Bridge to expand capacity was out of the question. The solution ARDOT arrived at to alleviate the congestion is what is called a Managed Lane System. The I-430 Managed Lane System has been implemented to open the shoulders of the bridge during peak hours of congestion to add additional capacity in between Highway 10 (Cantrell Road) and Highway 100 (Maumelle Boulevard).

The usage of shoulders as travel lanes for variable hours of the day began in Germany in 1996 and was next implemented in the Netherlands in 1999. The overall success of international implementations prompted their introduction in the United States in 2009. Their first use was on Interstate 35W in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Here in Arkansas, ARDOT and Metroplan worked in partnership to explore the feasibility of managed lanes for use in Central Arkansas. That led the Department to where we are today.



Opening the shoulders to traffic required an adjustment to the existing traffic lanes. Previously, there were three 12-foot travel lanes in each direction with a variable inside shoulder of 5.5 feet and a 10-foot outside shoulder. With the new lane design, there are now three 11-foot lanes and a 13-foot outside shoulder for part time travel on the shoulders. Traffic is allowed to use the outside shoulders as lanes during peak hours featuring specific times. ARDOT has determined the hours of operation for the managed lanes to be:

Southbound lanes: 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Northbound lanes: 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

There will also be time dedicated to "Special Event" operation of the lanes. For example, if the 30 Crossing construction project causes heavy traffic to reroute to I-430, or if there is a major accident on one of the area's bridges. Lighted green arrows and red X's above the managed lanes will indicate to motorists if the lanes are open. When not needed as an additional travel lane, the shoulder will be restored to its original purpose as a "shoulder".

For ARDOT and for Arkansas motorists, the managed lanes will be a new driving experience.

"This is the first managed lane system in Arkansas," stated Joe Hawkins, State ITS Engineer in the Maintenance Division. "While the Bobby Hopper tunnel has X's and Arrows, those are

for maintenance purposes only. The I-430 system is the first corridor with active management."

Active Management in this case means the lanes will be actively monitored by ARDOT's Traffic Management Center (TMC) using Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) cameras. Using cameras, the TMC can monitor traffic flow and can also monitor the managed lanes for stalled vehicles, debris (such as blown tires), etc.

"District 6 will be providing sweeping services for the route," Hawkins added. "If the TMC spots something that would prevent turning on of the system, they will call District to the bridge to sweep or pick up the debris."

The managed lane system will alleviate traffic backups by improving traffic flow in the managed and general-purpose lanes, improve travel time through the area, provide flexible use in emergencies and make the I-430 Bridge a safer roadway. In addition, the system will also do more.

"The managed lane system also uses two Roadside Weather Information Systems (RWIS) to detect road surface conditions," Hawkins added. "RWIS will detect water, ice, snow, fog, rain amounts and air/surface temperatures. These will be calibrated and used by the TMC to decide whether to open when it is snowy or foggy, for example."

Roadway lighting was also included in the project to ensure

that TMC staff can clearly see managed lane areas.

"The lighting will also help drivers," Hawkins shared.

With the system now open, Hawkins wanted to share that it took the entire Department pulling together to make this project happen.

"The Transportation Planning and Policy Division conducted the early studies that indicated managed lanes would provide benefits to the corridor, the Roadway Design Division provided the geometric design for the route and obtained the design exception from FHWA that made the project possible, the Construction Division RE Office has done outstanding work dealing with an immensely difficult and challenging project, the Maintenance Division ITS Management Section provided design of ITS elements, roadway lighting and river navigation systems, IT Division provided network design, hardware and support, and the Bridge Division was critical in the design to attach new signal poles onto the bridge deck. Lastly, I want to recognize the Highway Commission and executive leadership who entrusted us with making the first Managed Lane project in Arkansas happen."

With a current traffic count on the I-430 Bridge of 96,000 vehicles per day and a projection for the year 2040 indicating 112,000 vehicles per day, this managed lane project will help ARDOT provide a better traffic experience in the years to come. ■



FORTUITOUS FRUITION MARK HEADLEY

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

ALL OF US HAVE A STORY. I THINK IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT ALL OF OUR STORIES ARE VASTLY DIFFERENT FROM ONE ANOTHER. Inevitably, we still manage to find common ground, even in the most unexpected places. "It's a small world" is a phrase that falls out of my mouth more often than not. Maybe we members of humankind have more in common than we realize. . .

Mark Headley, ARDOT's Division Head for System Information and Research, has his own unique origin story. Headley was born in England—not England, Arkansas, but in fact, the United Kingdom—to parents that were native to Barbados, the Eastern-most island in the Caribbean Chain.

"There was a nursing shortage in the 70s and 80s," Headley explained.

“

THE WORLD ONLY EXISTS IN YOUR EYES. YOU CAN MAKE IT AS BIG OR AS SMALL AS YOU WANT.”

– F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Class of 1917*

"Hospitals were recruiting in the British Isles, Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales. A nurse that worked at Baptist in Little Rock recruited my mom (a nurse) to go work there."

Headley was 10 years old when he and his family moved from England to New York City.

"My uncle sponsored us so we could come to the U.S. We stayed in New York for about six months, and then we moved down to Arkansas in November 1979. My mom started working at Baptist Hospital and then later moved to the Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital in Little Rock."

After eight years in the Natural State, Headley was graduating from Parkview High School and was preparing for college. He received acceptance letters to both the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Rice University before finally deciding that Princeton University in New Jersey was the right fit.

"My teachers in high school and at Arkansas Governor's School always encouraged me to seek opportunities outside of the state. I felt like Princeton offered that and they had an engineering program," Headley reflected.



Headley has two daughters; one is also a Princeton Graduate (pictured), and the other attends Hendrix College in Conway.

Headley didn't know it at the time, but he would leave Princeton with more than a bachelor's degree.

"I actually met my wife there," he recalled. "She was attending Westminster Choir College, which is also in Princeton, New Jersey, where she studied music education."

The small town of Princeton, New Jersey, wasn't all they had in common.

"My parents were born and raised in Barbados, the West Indies. My wife was born in Antigua (also in the West Indies). She also lived in the Toronto area in Canada, but moved to New York City when she was 14. She attended Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts...Jennifer Aniston was actually in her graduating class."

After completing his baccalaureate program, Headley moved back to Arkansas in 1991. His career with ARDOT began in 1991 as a Civil Engineer and then advanced to Assistant Resident Engineer in 2000, Quality Assurance

Engineer in the Materials Division in 2001, Section Head of Facilities Management in 2006, and Staff Construction Engineer in 2007. Before promoting to his current position of Division Head for the Systems Information and Research Division, he also held all three District Engineer positions for District Six—Construction Engineer (2010), Maintenance Engineer (2010), and District Engineer (2014).

Headley has two daughters; one is also a Princeton Graduate—Class of 2021—and the other attends Hendrix College in Conway (former long-time location of Arkansas Governor's School).

So, how does a boy of Caribbean lineage, born in the United Kingdom, make an engineering career and establish roots in Arkansas? The answer is simple: it's a small world where anything is possible. Trust the process. Take risks. Go, learn, and do everything you can while you can. ■



ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM GOING STRONG!

BY VALERIE WILLIAMS

WITH MORE THAN 16,000 MILES OF ROADWAY TO MAINTAIN AND KEEP CLEAN ON ARKANSAS' HIGHWAY SYSTEM, THERE IS A CONSTANT NEED TO TRY AND COMBAT LITTER. Roadside trash is a growing issue, and the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) is continuing to partner with local communities to try to solve this problem.

In 1987, the Arkansas Highway Commission signed into action the Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) program. The program allows individuals, groups, businesses, etc., to serve as volunteers in order to help keep Arkansas' roadways clean. Since the Adopt-A-Highway program began, more than 2,500 organizations have participated in the program.

There are currently more than 800 volunteer groups statewide that are enrolled in the AAH program.

HERE ARE THE FACTS

In 2022, more than 3,000 AAH volunteers spent roughly 2,700 hours collecting over 4,500 bags of trash.

It is imperative that the Adopt-A-Highway program continues to grow to meet the rising need for litter clean up across the state, and through continued efforts, new volunteers are signing up each day!

However, the program cannot continue to grow without the participation of Arkansans like you. If you or an organization you are involved with are interested in adopting a section of highway, ARDOT will help by:

- Coordinating litter pick-up activities with your organization and monitoring for safety.
- Furnishing safety vests, advance warning signs and trash bags.
- Disposing of filled trash bags after your cleanup.
- Installing roadside signs with your organization's name to provide public recognition of the community service you are providing.

To receive more information about adopting a section of highway, please complete the form by scanning the QR code. ■

2022

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY FACTS

March and November were the months that saw the most trash cleaned up: **594 and 591 bags respectively.**

Number of Adopt-A-Highway groups per ARDOT District:

District 1: 22	District 6: 96
District 2: 40	District 7: 52
District 3: 59	District 8: 200
District 4: 85	District 9: 159
District 5: 51	District 10: 84

Total: 848 groups



Learn more about adopting a section of highway!

Please complete the form by scanning the QR Code below:



TOP 3 DISTRICTS

Number of people involved with clean ups:

1. District 6: 917 people
2. District 9: 599 people
3. District 4: 541 people

Bags of trash collected:

1. District 6: 1,282 bags
2. District 8: 863 bags
3. District 9: 694.5 bags

Number of hours cleaning:

1. District 8: 1,194 hours
2. District 4: 366 hours
3. District 2: 285 hours

Rolling through River Towns

BY DAVID NILLES

Helena-West Helena, AR

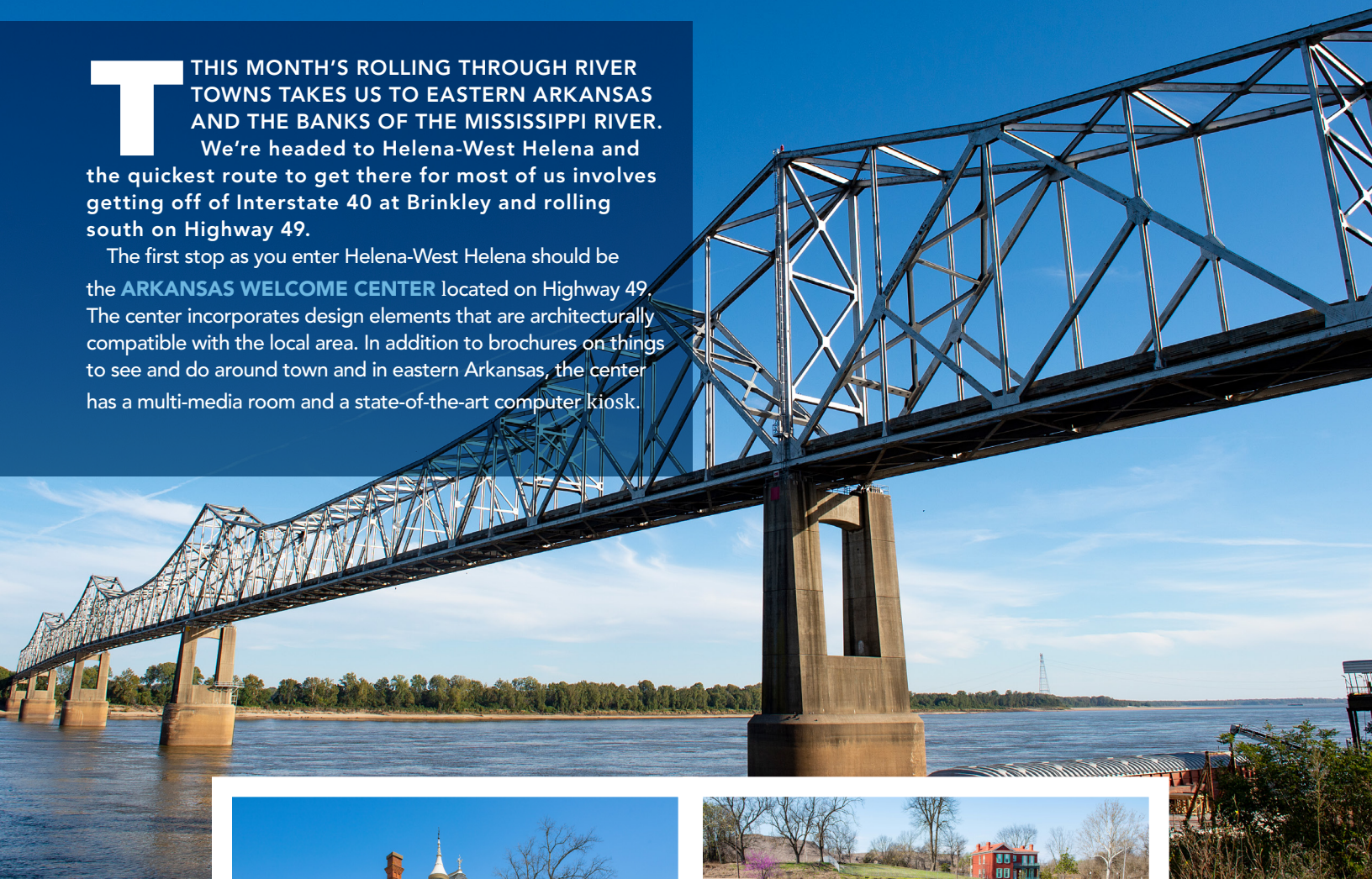
U.S. Highway 49 Bridge

Photo courtesy of Arkansas Parks & Tourism

T HIS MONTH'S ROLLING THROUGH RIVER TOWNS TAKES US TO EASTERN ARKANSAS AND THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

We're headed to Helena-West Helena and the quickest route to get there for most of us involves getting off of Interstate 40 at Brinkley and rolling south on Highway 49.

The first stop as you enter Helena-West Helena should be the **ARKANSAS WELCOME CENTER** located on Highway 49. The center incorporates design elements that are architecturally compatible with the local area. In addition to brochures on things to see and do around town and in eastern Arkansas, the center has a multi-media room and a state-of-the-art computer kiosk.



Pillow Thompson House



Fort Curtis

Helena-West Helena, AR

As you step out the door of the center, look straight across the street to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. A short quarter mile drive down that road takes you to the **HIGHWAY 49 BRIDGE** crossing the Mississippi River into

Mississippi. It is one of four bridges crossing the Mississippi River in Arkansas. The continuous steel truss bridge was built in 1961, has five spans and carries motorists 120 feet above the water.

From the bridge, Highway 49B takes travelers into the historic downtown area of Helena-West Helena. It's in the historic district that the **PILLOW THOMPSON HOUSE** can be found. Located at 718 Perry Street, the house was built in 1896 by Jerome B. Pillow. The home is one of the finest examples of Queen Anne architecture to be found in the south and is open to the public for tours.

Another fine example of Queen Anne architecture can be found at an old southern home just down the street at 608 Perry Street. This is home to the **MAGNOLIA HILL BED & BREAKFAST**. Like the Pillow Thompson House, Magnolia Hill was designed by George Barber and was completed in 1900.

For history buffs, the historic district includes a reproduction of **FORT CURTIS**, a fort built by Union soldiers during the Civil War. It is one of five fortified positions which enable Union soldiers to repulse a Confederate attack on July 4, 1863. The fort is located at the corner of York and Columbia Streets.

A "must see" in the downtown area is the **DELTA CULTURAL CENTER** at 141 Cherry Street. Housed in a railroad depot built in 1912, the center is dedicated to the history of the Arkansas Delta. It interprets that history through exhibits, educational programs, annual events and guided tours. From its blues music to the mighty river that runs through town, the Delta story unfolds within this Helena landmark. The permanent exhibit, "A Heritage of Determination" highlights Native American life, early exploration and settlement, historic Mississippi River floods, native flora and fauna, rail and river transportation, the diverse immigrant populations, and the economic contributions of timber and agriculture. The exhibit tells the Arkansas Delta story through words, photographs, artifacts, and an activity for children of all ages.



Helena Levee Walk

The Cultural Center opened in 1990 with a single building – The Depot. It has grown over the past twenty-five years to include multiple properties.

Just outside the front door of the Depot is the **HELENA LEVEE WALK**, a scenic three-mile paved path that proceeds along the river. The Levee Walk was funded, in part, by the Arkansas Transportation Enhancement Program of ARDOT.

Just one block from The Depot Museum, the **DELTA CULTURAL CENTER VISITORS CENTER** is home to Delta Sounds, a state-of-the-art music area dedicated to the music of the Arkansas Delta. Visitors will enjoy "Delta Sounds Bites" listening stations, which tell the stories of this rich musical heritage. The area includes exhibits featuring the gospel, rockabilly and blues legends that have had a major impact on music in the Arkansas Delta throughout the last century. While inside, experience an operating radio studio within the museum. A section of the Delta Sounds Exhibit is dedicated to presenting King Biscuit Time and Delta Sounds radio broadcasts. Guests may view the live broadcasts or be invited to join on-air personalities behind the mic. Musicians frequently stop by this legendary studio to be a part of the fun.

And speaking of music, each year, Helena-West Helena hosts the nation's foremost showcase of blues music as it presents the **KING BISCUIT BLUES FESTIVAL**.

Also in the historic district is the **HELENA MUSEUM OF PHILLIPS COUNTY** located in an historic building on the National Register of Historic Places at 623 Pecan Street. Inside visitors can see exhibits about local history, military history, decorative arts as well as river and rail transportation in the area.

There's more to see and do in this grand old east Arkansas river town, so plan to make a day of it! ■

CATEGORY: COLLABORATION

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

A LITTLE-KNOWN FACT ABOUT THE DESIGN OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IS THAT ARDOT ENGINEERS COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS THAT WILL BE AFFECTED BY UPCOMING INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS. The process begins with an idea and ends with reality; in between, lies a phase where ARDOT presents the project design to the public through open meetings and welcomes feedback from the very people that will benefit from the improvements during their daily commute.

Twenty-four Divisions and 10 Districts make up the Arkansas Department of Transportation. Each section plays an integral role in ARDOT's day-to-day functions, all moving toward the same common goal: to provide safe and efficient transportation solutions to support Arkansas' economy and enhance the quality of life for generations to come.

The 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. To accomplish this mission and to be consistent with the Federal Highway Administration's policy, the Environmental Division evaluates, documents, and monitors the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of ARDOT's construction and maintenance activities.

"It's important that we seek public input not only because it's required and regulated by the federal government, but because we're passionate about serving our fellow Arkansans," said Jared Wiley, Assistant Chief Engineer – Planning. "They are people just like us that are advocating for their communities, businesses and themselves. When we design a project, we want to do it right and do right by our neighbors."

Environmental's Public Involvement Section, one of the five sections in the Environmental Division, coordinates public meetings, gathers public comments, and visits with local Arkansans located near or impacted by an upcoming project.

"We host meetings where we present the proposed project design collected about the project, complete with visualization, renderings, project maps, comment forms and even scale

“It's important that we seek public input not only because it's required and regulated by the federal government, but because we're passionate about serving our fellow Arkansans. . .

- Jared Wiley,
Assistant Chief Engineer - Planning

models, and answer questions the community may have," explained Ruby Jordan-Johnson, Public Involvement Section Head. "We're there to have an open, ongoing two-way conversation with them and learn from the community about how we can work together to achieve roadway improvements that will effectively benefit those that travel, live or work in the area surrounding the project, but also achieve ARDOT's mission."

Once the project is finished and realized, the community can see how their input was implemented, motorists benefit from a safer, improved roadway system, and ARDOT fulfills its mission with a public service focused workforce. ■

TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE HEART SUN

BY BRITNI PADILLA-DUMAS

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE—2024, TO BE EXACT—TWO-THIRDS OF ARKANSAS WILL BE IN THE PATH OF TOTALITY OF A TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE.

A solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes between Earth and the Sun, blocking the sun's light. During a partial solar eclipse, the moon only blocks some of the sun's light; but during a total solar eclipse, all of the sun's light disappears in the moon's shadow. Those in the path of totality—those located in the exact path of the eclipse—will experience several minutes of nighttime-like darkness in the middle of the day, approximately 2:30 in the afternoon to be exact.

Since Arkansas' existence after the Louisiana Purchase, the Natural State has only experienced two total eclipses—one in 1834 and the other in 1918. The most recent total solar eclipse in North America happened in 2017 and spanned the entire country from the Pacific Northwest to the East Coast; but Arkansas only caught a glimpse.

On April 8, 2024, two-thirds of the Natural State will be in the path of totality which runs through the center of Arkansas from southwest (Texarkana) to northeast (Jonesboro). Four hundred and forty-four communities, State Parks and other public lands located within the path will have amazing views of this historic eclipse.

State agencies and local leadership are already planning to host droves of tourists and space aficionados next year.

"ARDOT has been in planning meetings since late 2022 to prepare for the influx of motorists coming to Arkansas to experience the event," stated Dave Parker, Public Information Officer for ARDOT.

In the excitement of the event, don't forget to NEVER look at the sun (even during an eclipse) without certified eye protection!

Check out the designated website and map to see prime viewing locations, keep in sync with the official countdown and read fun facts about eclipses at <https://ar-eclipse.info/>. ■





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)

✱ **TAB BENOIT WITH MATT ANDERSEN:** Enjoy an evening of music with Tab Benoit and his special guest Matt Andersen. Benoit is a Grammy nominated singer, songwriter and guitarist who is known for his gritty & soulful Delta swamp blues. **MAY 19**

✱ **PULASKI COUNTY FAIR:** North Little Rock Parks & Recreation is thrilled to announce the return of the Pulaski County Fair for its 3rd annual event at the NLR Riverfront Park, situated along the picturesque banks of the Arkansas River. Nine days of fun, food and entertainment for the entire family • **MAY 19 - 29**

✱ **WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUNNING OF THE TUBS:** Keep on Tubbin' at The World Championship Running of the Tubs in Hot Springs National Park. Watch as costumed teams push customized bathtubs on wheels down Historic Bathhouse Row in hopes of winning the coveted prize - The Stuart Pennington Cup! • **JUNE 2 & 3**

✱ **65TH ANNUAL PETIT JEAN ANTIQUE AUTO SHOW & SWAP MEET:** If you love antique automobiles, you'll find them everywhere on top of Petit Jean mountain this week. There will be an open car show, hundreds of collectable cars for sale, antique auto restoration supplies and much more. • **JUNE 14 - 17**

✱ **INSPECT AN INSECT WEEKEND:** Did you know that 95% of all living creatures on earth are insects! Spend the weekend with park interpreters learning about the different types of insects in the park. You even have a chance to eat one if you like. There will be guided hikes, crafts and plenty of bugs available. • **JULY 22 & 23**

World Championship Running of the Tubs (2022)

MAY 19 ✱
TAB BENOIT WITH MATT ANDERSEN
First Financial Music Hall
El Dorado, AR

MAY 19 - 29 ✱
PULASKI COUNTY FAIR
North Little Rock Riverfront Park
North Little Rock, AR

JUNE 2 & 3 ✱
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
RUNNING OF THE TUBS
Bathhouse Row
Hot Springs, AR

JUNE 14 - 17 ✱
65TH ANNUAL PETIT JEAN ANTIQUE
AUTO SHOW & SWAP MEET
The Museum of Automobiles
Petit Jean Mountain
Morrilton, AR

JUNE 21 - 24
RODEO OF THE OZARKS
Parsons Stadium
Springdale, AR

JULY 22 & 23 ✱
INSPECT AN INSECT WEEKEND
Pinnacle Mountain State Park
Roland, AR

Pulaski County Fair



Petit Jean Antique Auto Show & Swap Meet



Inspect an Insect Weekend



Photos courtesy of Arkansas Parks & Tourism

DISTRICT 6

CONSTRUCTION

CORNER



CREWS IN GARLAND COUNTY CONTINUE TO WORK ON THE EXTENSION OF THE MARTIN LUTHER KING EXPRESSWAY/HOT SPRINGS BYPASS ON NEW LOCATION ON THE EAST SIDE OF HOT SPRINGS.

The improvements measure approximately six miles in length and extend from Highway 70 East northward to Highway 7 near the community of Fountain Lake, where it will connect to a newly constructed roundabout at the intersection of Highway 7 and Highway 5.

The project was awarded to McGeorge Contracting Company, Inc. in November 2019 for \$75.1 million. Garland County partially funded the project, contributing \$30 million from the \$54.7 million bond issue voters approved in a 2016 special election.

Work began in March 2020. The bypass extension features controlled access with entrance and exit ramps and multiple bridges including construction of three box culverts, two W-Beam span bridges and three plate girder unit bridges.

District Six Engineer Tony Evans said one of the biggest challenges for workers has been the excavation through high points in the project.

"The geology of the area is very diverse with extremely hard rock, which had to be negotiated. Explosives were used on some points to break free the rock to construct the roadway."*

Highway 7 currently travels through Hot Springs National Park, passing historic bathhouse row and the downtown shopping area. The new bypass will reduce traffic congestion through the downtown area and cut travel time between Hot Springs Village and the city of Hot Springs by more than half.

Construction of the bypass extension is expected to be completed mid-summer of this year. 📍

*Quote from Southeast Edition #17 of [ConstructionEquipmentGuide.com.](https://www.constructionequipmentguide.com/), Cindy Riley correspondent.





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