

# Arkansas HIGHWAYS

2025 ISSUE 1

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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | MAGAZINE

## A Lasting Legacy

Bidding Farewell to Chairman  
Alec Farmer and Director Lorie Tudor

**ARKANSAS ADDS  
Another Interstate  
to its Roster**

**A PROJECT OF MAJOR  
PROPORTIONS  
30 Crossing Is a Wrap!**

**ARDOT RECEIVES  
\$1 Million  
U.S. DOT Grant**

# Dear ARDOT Family,

IT IS WITH MIXED EMOTIONS THAT I WRITE THIS LAST LETTER TO YOU ALL BEFORE I RETIRE. It has been an honor and privilege to serve the Commission, the Arkansas Department of Transportation and the State of Arkansas for 41 years. It has been a wonderful and fulfilling career.

The highlight of my career has been to serve as your Director for the last 5 years. I am grateful beyond measure to the Commission for giving me the opportunity of a lifetime and for supporting and encouraging me as I worked to achieve our goals.

But, I could not have had any measure of success without you all, the amazing ARDOT family, who have worked diligently alongside me to transform the agency culture to bring about change that has produced tangible results and improvements.

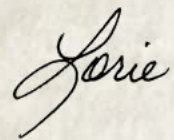
Wherever the next chapter in life takes me, I will always be a strong advocate for ARDOT – that you should have the resources you need to do your jobs well and keep you safe and that you should receive the respect you deserve as you serve the State of Arkansas.

I look forward to seeing the continued success of the Highway Commission and ARDOT under the skilled leadership of your next Director, Jared Wiley. I am leaving ARDOT in very good hands.

The Lord has blessed me beyond measure, and I thank Him for His guidance, strength and wisdom that has sustained me through the challenges and successes we have faced over the last 5 years.

May the Lord bless you and keep you and watch over you.

All my best,



Lorie H. Tudor, P.E., Director



**FRONT COVER:**  
Chairman Alec Farmer speaking at a ribbon cutting event for U.S. Highway 167 in 2016.

**BACK COVER:**  
A snowplow clears the roads.

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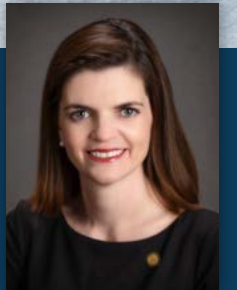
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# A LASTING LEGACY

Bidding Farewell to Chairman Alec Farmer

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

## A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN 10 YEARS. JUST ASK ARKANSAS HIGHWAY COMMISSION CHAIRMAN ALEC FARMER.

Last December, Alec Farmer completed his 10-year term on the Arkansas Highway Commission (AHC).

Farmer was appointed to the AHC in January 2015 by then Governor Asa Hutchinson. For the past two years, he has served as the Chairman.

When Farmer was first appointed, he quickly learned about the ins and outs of the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, the name that the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) was called at the time. But in his 10 years on the commission, Farmer has seen much more than a name change.

Soon after his appointment, Farmer met with then ARDOT Director Scott Bennett. "The exuberance and excitement of being a commissioner quickly faded," Farmer said. "When you realize that as he [Bennett] explained to me, we only had enough funding to maintain half the system."

Thus, Farmer received a quick education in the funding issues facing Arkansas' Highway System. Serving on the

Governor's Working Group for Highway Financing in 2015, Farmer learned that ARDOT highway construction was underfunded by a staggering \$400 million per year. Then, during the 2016 Special Legislative Session, ARDOT was faced with trying to get additional funds to match that year's federal funding. It would have been the first time in history that Arkansas couldn't meet its federal match.

Luckily that didn't happen, but the reality set in quickly. Farmer spent the next 5 years trying to find a path for the Department to receive more funding that was permanent and would continue to grow with the economy.

"I think my time on the Commission will be viewed as an impactful period not because of anything I did, but because of what occurred during my tenure," Farmer said. "It was a unique time when everyone got on the same page and pulled together for the betterment of the state with the passage of Act 416 in 2019 and Issue 1 in 2020."

For two years leading up to the Issue 1 vote, Farmer remembers he and former ARDOT Deputy Director Randy Ort regularly greeting each other by saying they were "cautiously optimistic."

(continued on page 6)



2015 Arkansas Highway Commission



2024 Arkansas Highway Commission

set to expire in 2023. The revenue generated by the amendment provides funds to be used for improvements to State highways, county roads, and city streets, with a program called “Renew Arkansas Highways.”

“I never would have dreamed we would have turned around as quickly and as well as we have,” Farmer said. “It was an amazing period because we were in the middle of a pandemic and a ‘no new tax’ political environment. It just shows the need and desire of the citizens to have a decent highway system. That we got 55% of the vote and 72 of 75 counties – it’s amazing.”

Farmer is also quick to credit the support that ARDOT received from Governor Hutchinson and the Arkansas Legislature.

“I can’t say how much we appreciated the support of the Governor – that would not have happened without his support,” Farmer said. “We also had support in the Legislature – over two thirds of the Legislature in both houses supported putting Issue 1 before the voters. A lot of times they don’t get enough credit, and they certainly deserve it.”

He is also sure to credit Arkansas cities and counties, as well as the contracting community and stakeholders like the Arkansas Good Roads Foundation, and ARDOT employees. “Everyone worked together and did their part to make a significant impact on our highway infrastructure for years to come,” Farmer said.



Alec Farmer's father, Dalton Farmer

#### AHC – A FAMILY AFFAIR

From 1985 to 1987, Chairman Farmer’s father, Dalton Farmer, also served on the AHC.

His father served during a different era when funding wasn’t as much of an issue. As he says, “Costs weren’t nearly as high, so a dollar went further back then.” He said he often traveled with his father to visit the ARDOT offices.

“You know, I learned from him the importance of public service and the importance of infrastructure,” Farmer said. “His term was shortened due to health reasons so it always kinda felt like there was unfinished business.”



You know, I learned from him the importance of public service and the importance of infrastructure. His term was shortened due to health reasons so it always kinda felt like there was unfinished business.”

- Chairman Farmer



Chairman Farmer celebrated the Interstate 555 designation with his mother.

#### ACT 416 AND ISSUE 1

The Governor’s Highway Bill, Act 416 of 2019 (also known as Senate Bill 336), provided additional ongoing funds to maintain and repair highways, streets, and bridges in the State through a wholesale sales tax on motor fuel. It also adds annual fees to hybrid and electric vehicle registration and transferred new revenues and casino tax revenues in excess of \$31,220,000 to the State Highway Fund. Act 416 is credited with bringing in an estimated \$95 million annually.

Issue 1 of 2020, amended the State Constitution to make a 0.5% sales tax permanent. The tax was originally authorized as a temporary tax by Issue 1 of 2012 and was

#### THE BEST AND WORST WEEK

While looking back on his tenure on the AHC, Farmer has seen many highs and some lows. He said his proudest moments happened in 2020. From March 13 through the summer months, ARDOT employees from Director Tudor down responded to the demands of keeping the supply chain moving through Arkansas during the COVID pandemic. He says he appreciated Director Tudor’s mantra of “everything’s going to be all right,” regardless of the situation.

He said he also saw the best and worst week of his tenure starting on May 11, 2021, when the Hernando de Soto Interstate 40 bridge across the Mississippi River was closed due to a fracture in the bridge.

“I found out [about the closure] driving to the baseball game between U of A and Arkansas State. I remember feeling shock[ed] that it had closed. The first few days it was just relief that the bridge didn’t collapse. And then, about the third or fourth day, it was a pit in your stomach when you realized that particular bridge inspection crew had not done the job they were supposed to do for some time,” Farmer said. “You know, one of my daughters lives in Memphis and drives across that bridge. I’d just been across that bridge about a week earlier. It was real – just a sick feeling.”

Farmer said that the worst part was finding out that the crack had been there for more than two years. “But the experience made our department stronger and our inspection program better,” Farmer said.

He said what made it the best week was that the bridge “miraculously didn’t suffer a catastrophic failure.”

#### OTHER HIGH POINTS

While visiting with Farmer, I asked him if he had a favorite Highway or bridge that he has traveled in Arkansas. He chose I-555.

“When I was appointed in 2015, the major issue for my home area was getting an interstate highway connection into northeast Arkansas and into Jonesboro. I assumed that would take me years, but because of working with Congressman Crawford, Governor Hutchinson, and the Legislature, we were able to get a waiver and get that highway designated,” Farmer said. “So, I gotta look at the first one there, but we’ve had so many impactful projects in my 10 years.”

Some of the projects that he mentioned as part of the high points include working with Senator John Boozman and Congressman Rick Crawford to get U.S. Highway 67

(continued on page 8)



Commissioners and Former Governor Asa Hutchinson celebrated the Bella Vista Bypass Ribbon Cutting.



Director Lorie Tudor and Chairman Alec Farmer celebrated the Interstate 49 completion.

designated as Future I-57, getting I-49 completed from I-40 to the Missouri State line, improvements to the U.S. Highway 10 interchange with I-430 in Little Rock, seeing the progress made on 30 Crossing, partnering with Garland County to build the Hot Springs Bypass, and the groundbreaking for the Springdale Bypass and XNA Connector, among many others. He remembers adding safety measures including signage, median cable barriers, and centerline rumble strips. He is also proud of improving worker safety and recognizing ARDOT employees with the progression of the Fallen Worker's Memorial Monument.

Another significant moment that occurred during his tenure, was the hiring of the Department's first female Director, Lorie Tudor.

"At the time, a 36-year employee of the department who

started work there when she was 18, rose as high as she could with her high school diploma, then went back to college to get her civil engineering degree, and coming back to the department and rising to director," Farmer said. "She earned her promotion, the fact that she was the first female made it historic."

**GRATITUDE**

Speaking with Chairman Farmer, you can tell that he is a humble person – a true public servant. He repeatedly gives credit to others who share his dedication to maintaining Arkansas' highway infrastructure and working for the benefit of our state.

"I was very fortunate to have served with eight individuals on the Commission who always put service above self, always acted with the highest degree of character and integrity, always treated each other with respect and always looked out for the best interest of the State Highway Commission, ARDOT, and the citizens of Arkansas," Farmer said.

When asked what he will miss most about being a Commissioner, he said "the people, the staff, the Commissioners, and the citizen's lives that we have impacted, hopefully in a positive way."

He also said that serving on the Commission was the "biggest honor and privilege" of his professional career.

Chairman Farmer, the honor and privilege was ours. ■



# ARKANSAS ADDS ANOTHER INTERSTATE TO ITS ROSTER

BY ELLEN COULTER



**ANYONE WORKING IN TRANSPORTATION WILL TELL YOU THAT CUTTING A RIBBON ON A NEW, FRESHLY PAVED HIGHWAY OR BREAKING GROUND ON A NEW PROJECT IS A GOOD DAY.**

There's a sense of accomplishment and plenty of excitement to go around.

But when Federal, State and Local officials all gathered to celebrate a new Interstate 57 in Arkansas, it was even bigger. It was a great day.

"Interstate highways are the highest order of highway in the country," Jared Wiley, Arkansas Department of Transportation's (ARDOT) Chief Engineer for Preconstruction said. "When President Eisenhower envisioned the interstate system in the 1950s, it was revolutionary – a new way to get from point A to point B without having to go through every small town, stop at red lights, yield to people making turns

off the highway. Interstates provide continuous, free-flow movement when they're operating properly and effectively. It's for that reason that industries and businesses want to locate along an interstate corridor."

The I-57 Designation event held on the campus of Arkansas State University in Beebe attracted over a hundred spectators, all eager to see the interstate shield unveiled and to hear about the economic opportunities having a new interstate could bring to the area.

But what is it about a new interstate that is so special?

The easy answer is without an interstate system able to accommodate high-speed, large volumes of travel across long distances, the movement of freight and goods would not be nearly as easy.

And that means you and I would not get our goods and products as quickly as we've grown accustomed to.

*(continued on page 10)*



President Dwight Eisenhower receiving a report on the nation's transportation needs in 1955. (Eisenhower Presidential Library)



U.S. Representative French Hill; Federal Highway Administration Arkansas Division Administrator, Vivien Hoang; U.S. Senator John Boozman; ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor, Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman, Alec Farmer; U.S. Representative Rick Crawford; and Arkansas State Representative, Brian Evans; spoke at the I-57 Designation Event.



Jared Wiley, ARDOT Chief Engineer for Preconstruction, speaking to a reporter about the importance of I-57.

Interstates are the backbone of our economy.

They take years to build, often decades of strategic planning.

They are precious commodity for a region. Arkansas may have over 16,400 miles of highways, but only around 800 miles of those are interstate highways.

"Interstate designation highlights you for economic growth, job creation, [and an] industry look," Arkansas Highway Commission (AHC) Chairman Alec Farmer, said. "That doesn't guarantee success, but you almost have no success if you don't have the interstate designation ... That's one of the arrows in the quiver for economic development."

The better interstate connectivity a state has, the more that state can be a national player in trade and commerce – promoting a better quality of life for its citizens.

"I visit with all kinds of companies that are going to move to different parts of Arkansas," U.S. Senator John Boozman, said. "The first box they want to check, and they've got a bunch of boxes they're checking, is, 'Is there interstate access?'"

It's for this reason that the successful conversion of Highway 67 to I-57 in Arkansas – a project lasting decades and finally coming to fruition in 2024 – was a highly anticipated and highly celebrated moment.

### OUT WITH THE OLD (DESIGNATION), IN WITH THE NEW (DESIGNATION)

It's not unheard of, but it's rather rare to be able to convert a highway such as Highway 67 into an interstate. Interstates are usually built from the ground up on new location due to

specific design requirements set by the federal government. For example, the curves can only be so sharp and the hills so steep to meet the higher design speeds of an interstate. Additionally, you can't have homes or businesses located directly along an interstate; there must be controlled points of access. Highway 67 is unique in that it was designed with interstate-type traffic in mind from the beginning – leaving the door open for a potential interstate designation one day.

"Our predecessors, generations ago, started building Highway 67 to Interstate standards, knowing that one day, hoping one day, this would happen," Wiley said.

Because of this forethought, converting Highway 67 to interstate standards was a realistic goal for ARDOT. But that doesn't mean it didn't take a significant investment of time and money, as well as buy-in at all levels.

ARDOT began converting Highway 67 to a freeway in the 1950s. In today's dollars, ARDOT has spent about \$5 billion total on interstate-level upgrades to Highway 67.

A significant milestone was reached in 2024 when the stretch of Highway 67 from North Little Rock to Walnut Ridge earned official interstate designation and could be signed as I-57.

"We have invested a tremendous amount of money and time in this roadway, but no matter how much money you throw at a road, you can't call it an interstate without an act of Congress," ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor, said with a laugh. "And that's the truth! To designate a route as an interstate, we had to get our congressional delegation behind us and advocate for that in Washington, D.C. And they did not let us down."

"We had support up and down the corridor from the cities, the Chambers of Commerce, and the counties," Farmer said. "We really had buy-in from the local level, the state level, and the federal level."

### A MOMENT TO CELEBRATE

The official designation of I-57 was marked by a celebration on Thursday, November 7, in the gymnasium on the campus of Arkansas State University (ASU) – Beebe.

The event drew a large crowd that included U.S. Congressmen and State and local officials. The ASU – Beebe orchestra played, the Arkansas Highway Police Color Guard were present, and the shiny, new, red, white, and blue I-57 shield was unveiled.

Senator Boozman rounded off the slate of speakers, highlighting the importance of investing in quality infrastructure.

"These aren't glamorous things, but this is the underpinning of our economy," Boozman said, in reference to good infrastructure. "The thing that makes this nation a great nation, the thing that allows us to take care of our families, all the things that are so very important."

### THE WORK DOESN'T STOP

With North Little Rock to Walnut Ridge officially signed as an interstate, this leaves a missing link of I-57 from Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, to Sikeston, Missouri – which the neighboring states are committed to completing.

When complete, I-57 will span more than 620 miles from North Little Rock to Chicago. This north-south interstate

connects to several east-west interstates across the United States, making travel more efficient.

"It's not so much where the highway goes from North Little Rock to Chicago, it's what it connects to," Farmer said. "It connects on the south end here in Little Rock to Interstate 30 and Interstate 40. As you go up across the river, it connects to I-70, I-80, and I-90. So it connects to most of your major east-west routes across the United States ... It provides another access point that better connects Arkansas to the rest of the country."

In 2023, the Federal Highway Administration selected the official route for the roughly 4-mile Future I-57 corridor between Walnut Ridge and the Missouri State Line. Having the selected route in hand has allowed ARDOT to move forward with preconstruction planning.

As with most large-scale improvements, the work will be broken up into several smaller projects.

The Corning to Missouri State Line stretch of the Future I-57 corridor will be the first portion to be addressed.

On Thursday, November 14, under clear skies, local and state officials and members of the community joined ARDOT officials in breaking ground on the Corning Bypass – the first phase of the Corning to Missouri State Line Future I-57 project.

"I know this has been a dream for many for a lifetime," Arkansas State Senator Blake Johnson, one of the speakers at the Corning Bypass groundbreaking event, said. "This is

*(continued on page 12)*

one of the legs of economic development that will give this part of the state a future and connect it with the rest of the world."

The next phase of the project will construct an interstate-grade facility from Corning to the Missouri State Line, with a bid letting anticipated in late 2026.

The remainder of Future I-57 in Arkansas from Corning to Walnut Ridge will be built in phases as funds become available.

"In our next funding program, we've allocated additional funding to continue project development from Corning down to Walnut Ridge," Wiley said. "So we're moving ahead as quickly as possible to try to close that gap."



Event attendees gathered to "break ground" at the Corning Bypass groundbreaking celebration.

### A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR ARKANSAS

I-57 in Arkansas is a project finally coming to fruition as Farmer rounds out his 10-year term on the Commission. Farmer said he considers this a "legacy project" that "he never dreamed" would move this quickly.

"This started out as an idea . . . kind of a joke, really," Farmer said. "We had just found out that we had gotten the Interstate 555 designation in Jonesboro. That was my project that I had to get done when I was appointed. And everyone anticipated it being a 10-year project. And we got I-555 done in a year and a half. And the joke was, 'What now?' And so we looked at Highway 67 and said, 'There's an interstate sitting over there, it just doesn't have the interstate name to it.'"

From there, Farmer, his fellow Commissioners, ARDOT staff, elected officials, and other stakeholders got to work – leading us to this point.

"Countless staff members here at ARDOT over the years have been putting in hard work surveying and doing environmental documentation, designing this road," Jared Wiley said, of the players that helped make this interstate designation happen. "We've worked with many consultants and numerous construction contractors over the years. I think the vision of the leadership that pre-dates all of us is big and we can't forget about that."

"This is because of so many people's hard work for so many years," Boozman said. "This didn't just happen. In Arkansas, we have everyone working together which really is the key."

"This is something that will impact generations to come," Farmer said. ■

“This is something that will impact generations to come.”

- Chairman Farmer



Chairman Farmer at the Corning Bypass groundbreaking event wearing a specially made I-57/Highway 67 tie.

# END OF AN ERA

BY DAVE PARKER

**A**SK THOSE WHO WORKED CLOSELY WITH LORIE TUDOR, AND IT'S A GOOD BET THEY'LL DESCRIBE HER AS A SMART, DEDICATED, DETAIL-ORIENTED PUBLIC SERVANT WHO IS ALWAYS THINKING AHEAD.

You could also add to that description the words "battle-tested."

Consider this. It was March of 2020 when Tudor was named Director of the Arkansas Department of Transportation. Like the rest of the world, ARDOT was facing COVID and all its unknowns. But there was no slowing down. The need for safe and efficient roads was as important as ever. While all that was happening, Arkansas voters were being asked to approve a permanent sales tax increase. The money generated would give ARDOT the consistent stream of revenue it very much needed to keep roads maintained at a high level and make future projects possible. And if that wasn't enough, in her first few months on the job, the Department went through a legislatively directed, comprehensive efficiency review.

In all three cases, Tudor and the Department were successful.

COVID thankfully subsided, Arkansas voters said yes to the tax increase and the efficiency review resulted in increasing the Legislature's trust in ARDOT and made us stronger.

"I look back on those first challenges with a deep sense of gratitude for ARDOT's amazing staff," Tudor said. "They worked tirelessly to give it their best during very uncertain and stressful circumstances."

But of course, the challenges didn't stop. In May 2021, a large fracture was discovered in the Hernando de Soto I-40 Mississippi River bridge that connects West Memphis to Memphis, forcing an emergency closure. ARDOT and Director Tudor had to launch an in-depth investigation to explain why that fracture hadn't been discovered and reported in previous inspections. The Department faced



the failure in the bridge inspection process head-on with courage and transparency, and the bridge reopened in less than three months.

"After discovery of the fracture, ARDOT understandably lost the trust and confidence of the public," Tudor said. "Our foremost thought as we navigated through the crisis was, 'How do we restore the public's trust?' The answer was to acknowledge the failure in our processes and do a full investigation on what needed to change. Then to report our findings to the public with transparency, and take decisive action to improve."

Tudor began with ARDOT in 1981 as a Clerk Typist. She had always wanted to go back to college and finish getting her degree. In 1995, after 14 years with ARDOT, she left her job and enrolled at the University of Memphis. Two years later, Tudor graduated and came back to ARDOT. She returned as an entry level Civil Engineer in January 1998 working in the Planning and Research Division.

In the years to follow, the hard work and dedication kept paying off. The promotions followed and, in 2014, Tudor was elevated to the position of Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer.

"The secret to my success was to work hard with a positive attitude," Tudor shared. "But I realized that I had reached a position that without good people around me – I would fail – no matter how hard I worked. During this period, I worked on becoming a better leader, mentor and team builder."

Six years later, Tudor was named as the Department's Director. It was the first time in ARDOT's history that a woman had held that position.

While the challenges as Director were many, the number of accomplishments were even greater.



For starters, Tudor helped guide the successful completion of the Connecting Arkansas Program which included 31 state highway construction projects.

“One of the wonderful aspects of being in the transportation industry is that you get to witness tangible benefits from hard work and wise taxpayer investment,” Tudor said. “From the smaller projects to the largest – all bring a deep sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Roadway and bridge projects increase safety, mobility and connectivity, which results in a better quality of life for Arkansans. Serving the public’s transportation needs has been a rewarding and fulfilling career.”

In the spring of 2023, she also launched the new ARDOT Strategic Plan, providing a clear vision and roadmap for the future of the Department.

Tudor worked to strengthen relationships outside of the Department with transportation industry stakeholders. She prioritized partnerships with contractors and communities, leading to enhanced efficiency, cohesion and innovation.

And Tudor has been a strong advocate for women in transportation, inspiring and empowering women to pursue careers in the transportation and engineering fields.

But while her recognition, accomplishments and awards are many, Tudor always brought the focus back to the workers and their well-being. That’s why she made worker safety a top priority – helping to create a culture of safety first, safety always.

“The most important thing we do is to do all we can to ensure the safety of our brave men and women that work every day on the roads in sometimes dangerous conditions,” Tudor said. “They are on the front lines of ARDOT’s service to the public.”

Her respect for the men and women of ARDOT includes those who paid the ultimate price. In 2023, Tudor decided that ARDOT could do better than offering a makeshift memorial for those who have fallen. She promised the Department would one day soon break ground on a memorial for fallen workers.

“The memorial will honor those that have fallen in the line of duty, as well as show respect to our employees that risk their lives daily in keeping the public safe,” Tudor explained.

The current plans call for that memorial groundbreaking to occur in early 2025.

It’s easy to see how Tudor has tirelessly worked to make ARDOT better during her time as Director. But she won’t take credit for the Department’s improved status or the list of accomplishments during her tenure. She praises those around her and gives credit to her strong faith, determination and belief that the people of Arkansas deserve the very best.

The definition of “battle-tested” is someone or something that has been proven reliable and effective through rigorous or challenging experiences.

It’s a phrase that well suits Lorie H. Tudor. ■

“

The most important thing we do is to do all we can to ensure the safety of our brave men and women that work every day on the roads in sometimes dangerous conditions. They are on the front lines of ARDOT’s service to the public.”

- Lorie Tudor, ARDOT Director



# ARDOT Receives \$1 MILLION U.S. DOT Grant

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

**T**HE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ARDOT) WAS RECENTLY AWARDED A \$1 MILLION GRANT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION’S (DOT) ACCELERATED INNOVATION DEPLOYMENT DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM. The grant funds will be used to purchase additional Lane Blade devices for ARDOT vehicles.

Lane Blade devices are truck attachments that allow crews to safely remove debris from live travel lanes, eliminating the need for maintenance personnel to step into traffic on foot. In addition to enhancing safety, Lane Blades also result in more efficient debris removal, clearing roadways quicker.

The grant will enable ARDOT to purchase 20 to 25 new Lane Blade attachments, which will equip the Department with the largest fleet of these devices in the country.

To date, ARDOT has purchased 18 Lane Blade attachments. The new additions will allow ARDOT to expand its capabilities across every district in the state.

Each year, ARDOT picks up millions of pieces of trash and debris from state highways and interstates. Items such as furniture, mattresses, tire treads, and other debris can create major safety hazards.

“By removing debris swiftly and safely, we not only protect our workers and motorists but also reduce the risk of crashes,” Steve Frisbee, ARDOT Assistant Chief Engineer for Maintenance, said. “This grant is a significant step forward in our commitment to public safety and effective traffic incident management.” ■



For more information on the U.S. DOT’s Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration Program scan here.



**LANEBLADE**





# A PROJECT OF MAJOR PROPORTIONS 30 CROSSING IS A WRAP!

• BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL •



ARDOT staff and Arkansas Highway Commission members at the 30 Crossing Ribbon Cutting event.

**T**HE COMPLETION OF THE 30 CROSSING PROJECT WAS CELEBRATED WITH MUCH FANFARE ON DECEMBER 3, 2024, WITH A RIBBON-CUTTING EVENT AT THE SOUTHWEST PARKING LOT OF THE WILLIAM J. CLINTON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM IN LITTLE ROCK. THIS LOCATION HAS A FRONT-ROW SEAT TO THE 30 CROSSING CORRIDOR.

### WHAT IS 30 CROSSING?

The 30 Crossing project reconstructed and provided operational improvements to Interstate 30 (I-30) in downtown Little Rock and North Little Rock. The project came to be known as 30 Crossing because it crosses the Arkansas River between Little Rock and North Little Rock.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT

I-30 is the backbone of the central Arkansas regional freeway network. In addition to connecting several interstates and freeways, it supports regional travel and is one of the most traveled highways in Arkansas.

When construction began in fall of 2020, this stretch of I-30 carried around 120,000 vehicles per day. When planning for future growth, 20-year traffic projections estimated that the 30 Crossing corridor would carry around 143,000 vehicles per day by 2045. This statistic helped underscore the importance of updating the corridor.

“You just don’t go out and say, you know what, I think I’ll replace a bridge over a major river in the middle of a dense urban area and widen the interstate,” Lorie Tudor, Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) Director, said.

“That’s just not done without a lot of coordination, a lot of

planning, a lot of everything you can think of. It takes years to get to the point until you first break ground.”

Known studies of the I-30 corridor go back as far as 2003, when ARDOT and Metroplan commissioned the Central Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (CARTS) to conduct two Areawide Freeway studies to analyze the Arkansas River crossings and the regional freeway network. The study found that I-30 would warrant 10 lanes by 2025, and that a new river bridge crossing west of the Broadway Bridge would also be needed.

ARDOT had decided to specifically study the I-30 corridor between Little Rock and North Little Rock because that portion of the interstate historically carried the highest volume of traffic within the state. This portion of I-30 had issues with congestion, mobility, and high crash rates. In addition to these concerns, the bridge across the Arkansas River was aging and needed to be replaced.

### NEXT STEPS

ARDOT worked to develop a traffic model to address these issues. We conducted studies to investigate impacts to the environment as part of the National Environmental Policy Act.

At this point, early plans for the roadway had begun, but funding was still an obstacle. In November 2012, Arkansas voters approved a funding bill to provide a 10-year temporary half-cent tax to improve highway and infrastructure projects. That funding allowed ARDOT to create the Connecting Arkansas Program (CAP), which included 31 projects to widen and improve approximately 170 miles of highways and interstates. 30 Crossing was one of the original proposed CAP projects and is the biggest.

### COLLABORATION

Little Rock, North Little Rock, Pulaski County, contractors, and stakeholders all came together to create a plan for 30 Crossing that met the transportation needs of the corridor as well as the needs of the community.

Beginning in 2012, ARDOT hosted several public meetings to discuss the upcoming project. Community members provided feedback, concerns, and ideas that aided in the 30 Crossing route decision process.

30 Crossing was the first project conducted by ARDOT that used the Design-Build method. In a Design-Build Project, the Owner manages only one contract with a single point of responsibility. The designer and contractor work together from the beginning as a team, providing unified project recommendations to fit the Owner’s schedule and budget. Any changes are addressed by the entire team, which leads to collaborative problem-solving and innovation.

Another benefit of using the Design-Build method is that you can have a final design on one piece of the project, build that piece, and still be designing other aspects of the project. This speeds up the building process, allowing projects to finish much earlier than they would with a traditional method.

Garver, LLC. joined the project when it was first planned as one of the original CAP projects. Garver and subcontractor HNTB Corporation served as the program manager of CAP projects for ARDOT. They were able to help develop the 30 Crossing project and establish the framework for ARDOT’s Design-Build Program going forward.

“I’m proud to be a part of such an impactful and

extraordinary project that will increase safety and improve mobility in this critical corridor,” Vivien Hoang, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, said. “I commend ARDOT and KMC (Kiewit Massman Construction) for their work to get us here today and for a project that is the model on partnership and collaboration.”

The 30 Crossing project is one of the largest scale projects, by size, ever undertaken by ARDOT. ARDOT, and its contractors, reconstructed the existing six-lane (three in each direction) roadway, reconfigured and demolished the Highway 10 interchange, widened and improved the Arkansas River Bridge, and enhanced connectivity in the downtown area.

The project also created almost 16 acres of green space between Cumberland and Mahlon Martin Streets, which improves connectivity and continuity between the east and west sides of I-30. The City of Little Rock currently has plans to develop this green space into a city park.

At a final estimated cost of \$634 million, 30 Crossing is also by far the most expensive project that ARDOT has completed to date. The project was funded by a mix of ARDOT’s Federal-aid funds and State funds. The contract for construction of the project was awarded to Kiewit Massman Construction in January of 2019.

All these pieces have come together to create the 30 Crossing project, which has increased capacity, improved traveler safety, and prepared for future growth of the metropolitan area. ■



## PARTNERSHIP RESULTS IN CREATIVE SOLUTION: Lanes Open During Emergencies

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

**INDEPENDENCE COUNTY, THE CITY OF BATESVILLE, THE CITY OF SOUTHSIDE, AND THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ARDOT) HAVE COME TOGETHER IN A PROJECT THAT OFFERS A CREATIVE APPROACH TO A LOCAL PROBLEM.**

In the past, when a major wreck occurred on Highway 167 on Ramsey Mountain in Batesville, the roadway would be completely blocked to traffic, sometimes for hours. The only way around the blockage involved a roughly hour-long detour.

Although a major inconvenience to the traveling public, the blockage and detour also hindered emergency vehicles needing to quickly get through the area. The partnership found a creative solution to this problem – they would construct emergency lanes that can be activated when other lanes are blocked.

According to Alex Roofe, ARDOT District 5 Engineer, he believes this project is the first of its kind in Arkansas.

The emergency lanes are adjacent to the current lanes but separated by a concrete barrier with locked gates on either end. In the event of an emergency, the gates will be opened by local authorities, allowing local traffic to be redirected to the bypass lanes.

As part of an Agreement of Understanding, Independence County, the City of Batesville, and the City of Southside purchased property adjacent to Highway 167 at Ramsey Mountain, providing right of way for ARDOT to construct the improvements. Independence County also donated material and labor for the construction of the parallel emergency lanes. ARDOT was responsible for environmental studies, utility relocation, and construction/inspection of the project. ■

# NAVIGATING WINTER:

## How ARDOT is Keeping Arkansas Roads Safe This Season

BY COURTNEY STARLARD

**A**S WINTER SETTLES OVER ARKANSAS, ICY ROADS PRESENT A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE FOR DRIVERS. AT THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ARDOT), OUR UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO SAFETY DRIVES US TO ADAPT AND ENHANCE OUR WINTER WEATHER STRATEGIES. From securing vital salt supplies to leveraging advanced technology for road monitoring, we are prepared to meet the demands of the season and ensure that Arkansas roads remain safe for all.

Acquiring salt is a vital part of our strategy. ARDOT stores approximately 75,000 cubic yards of salt across the state, equivalent to 81,000 tons. The salt is stored in 119 salt storage facilities throughout the state and 49 of those can produce salt brine for pretreatment activities. Our dedicated teams monitor these stockpiles closely. According to Deric Wyatt, State Maintenance Engineer, ARDOT issues bids at the beginning of the summer to ensure facilities are fully stocked at the beginning of winter. This proactive approach keeps our roads safe for drivers.

ARDOT has approximately 600 snowplows that are located at our county maintenance headquarters and district offices. Nine months out of the year, they are stored on the maintenance yard. In the fall, they are installed on ARDOT trucks, the electrical connections, hydraulics, and lights are tested, and the remaining blade life is checked. At the end of the winter season, they are cleaned to remove any residual salt, painted if needed to minimize rust, lubricated, and stored until they are readied for the next winter season.

Another key strategy is ARDOT's subscription to the Road Weather Information System (RWIS). This forecasting service provides customized road forecasts through 20 stationary weather sensor stations and 10 mobile weather sensors, all operated by local districts.



RWIS reports air temperature, pavement temperature, and moisture presence—whether liquid or frozen—on bridge decks and road surfaces.

Unfortunately, winter weather is unpredictable. “The length and severity of a winter weather event is typically one of our biggest challenges,” Wyatt said.

So how can Arkansas drivers stay updated on the latest winter weather and road conditions? That’s where IDriveArkansas comes in.

For 11 years, IDriveArkansas has provided crucial information about the state’s roads. Every year on November 1, the winter weather filter is activated, helping drivers access the most recent road reports. We have 400 live traffic cameras across the state that allow the public to view current road conditions. The IDriveArkansas app features integrated weather radar to track active winter storms. Updates are provided by ARDOT’s district personnel in the field, who can report conditions directly from their trucks.

Real-time updates are sent to the IDriveArkansas website. “We update the site at least every two hours until the route is reported as being clear,” Denise Powell, Digital Content Coordinator, said.

In the face of unpredictable winter weather, ARDOT remains vigilant and proactive. Our strategies—from stockpiling salt to utilizing cutting-edge forecasting technology—play a crucial role in safeguarding drivers. With tools like IDriveArkansas providing real-time updates, we empower the public to make informed decisions on the road. Together, we navigate winter's challenges, ensuring that safety remains our top priority as we protect Arkansas travelers throughout the season. ■



**ASK ARDOT**  
**TURNS ONE**

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

**OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED IN OCTOBER 2023, ASK ARDOT HAS PROVIDED A STREAMLINED WAY FOR THE PUBLIC TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS TO ARDOT ABOUT TOPICS PERTAINING TO ARKANSAS' HIGHWAYS AND INTERSTATES.**

The online customer service platform was implemented to ensure that the public would feel valued and empowered, and that their voice would be heard. Since its public launch, Ask ARDOT has received more than 15,000 inquiries.

"I remember in October 2023, being excited and anxious about how the public would use the system and the feedback we would receive. Seeing the results has been very rewarding," Holly Butler, Communications Coordinator in the Communications Division, said. "We've received positive feedback that lets us know our staff is doing a great job, and we've received constructive feedback that has identified areas of improvement. We look forward to seeing how the system grows over time."

Prior to its launch, the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) received questions from the public via phone call, email, or regular mail. Most inquiries were directed to one section, the Communications Division. Staff were responsible for then routing the inquiry to the appropriate personnel. Now, Ask ARDOT automatically routes the inquiry to the appropriate personnel based on the topic that is selected when the inquiry is first created. This process is more efficient, allowing for a faster response time and gives ARDOT the ability to track and address road issues more quickly. Ask ARDOT is just another tool that can be

used to reach us, in addition to phone calls and regular mail.

Ask ARDOT has been especially helpful during times of high-volume inquiries, such as during the January 2024 winter weather event, when Ask ARDOT saw a record high of 1,055 inquiries. In the last six months, the platform has averaged almost 800 inquiries per month.

The platform can be accessed by visiting [www.ARDOT.gov](http://www.ARDOT.gov), clicking the "Contact Us" tab at the top, and clicking the link for Ask ARDOT. The system will then prompt you to create an account.

Once logged in, users can choose from a variety of different categories under which to submit an inquiry. They can also access Frequently Asked Questions and quick links. Once an inquiry is submitted, users can log back into their account at any time to view the status of their inquiry, check updates, and communicate with ARDOT.

After an inquiry is closed, a survey is sent via email giving users the opportunity to submit feedback about Ask ARDOT. One of the questions specifically asks: "Based on this experience, would you consider making this method your preferred form of communication with ARDOT?" Thus far, 63 percent of respondents have replied yes.

As with all systems, ARDOT knows that there is always room for improvement. However, we have received positive feedback directly related to the work ARDOT has performed and praise for our hardworking staff. One user wrote "In my 50 years this was the fastest response and completed result by any State DOT where I've lived (5). Well done." ■

# Local Programs

BY MARK WOODALL

**L**ET'S FACE FACTS: THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ARDOT) IS A LARGE ENTITY WITH A MASSIVE PRESENCE ACROSS THE ENTIRE STATE. Its mission is vital to the traveling public and anyone passing through. With any large organization, it can be somewhat confusing to navigate the various departments. A quick glance at our internal phone directory shows just how large our footprint is. There are currently 84 pages listing each department and division personnel.

Buried within those pages is the Local Programs Division. Its mission is to provide a "one-stop shop" for local public agencies to seamlessly engage with the Department. The Division administers the Department's various competitive grant programs, collaborates with Arkansas' metropolitan planning organizations, coordinates bicycle/pedestrian activities, delivers local technical assistance and training, and provides oversight and coordination for public transportation programs.

We sat down with Division Head David Siskowski to talk about Local Programs, its impact, and what he sees as the future of Local Programs.



David Siskowski

*(continued on page 22)*



**Q:** What is the most important role of Local Programs for the Department?

**A:** The Local Programs Division was envisioned to be a one-stop-shop for local public agencies when interacting with the Department. Our most important role is to effectively communicate with those agencies and make sure that they know they are important to us.

**Q:** How does the Division assist cities and counties with project funding?

**A:** One of the many responsibilities that the Local Programs Division handles are the application cycles for the Department's various Federal-aid funding programs like the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), the Intersection Improvement Program (IIP), and the Local Bridge Program. The Division's level of interaction and guidance varies per program. For TAP and RTP, Division staff remains in continuous communication with sponsors throughout the life of the projects, making sure they follow all the requirements that come along with Federal-aid funding. Certain missteps can jeopardize the funding, so staff makes sure they follow all of the right steps in the correct order.

**Q:** Can you explain the importance of the Local Bridge Program?

**A:** The Local Bridge Program allows local public agencies to replace bridges that are located off the Federal-aid Highway System, which means they are located on roads that serve a more local purpose and do not qualify for certain other Federal-aid funding. The program utilizes set-aside funding specifically for "Off-System" bridges. The Local Bridge Program requires only a 10% local match for the Federal-aid funding, which is below the standard 20% of many other Federal-aid funds. The Department will be handling project development for the Local Bridge Program projects, which

means the sponsors will not need to worry about following the correct process or cash-flowing project development and construction. Additionally, all potential projects in the Local Bridge Program start with a feasibility study to help determine if the project is financially feasible for both the Department and the sponsors.

**Q:** Why are the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and Transportation Alternatives Programs (TAP) important?

**A:** TAP and RTP are important because they allow local public agencies to make improvements that accommodate other modes of transportation beyond motorized vehicles. Both TAP and RTP utilize Federal-aid funding that is set-aside specifically for these purposes and cannot be transferred or used on any other types of projects. These are often smaller projects like building or improving sidewalks or building a walking trail and can be handled by some of the smaller local public agencies. While the project scope and funding may be small compared to highway projects, these types of projects can have meaningful impacts on the people that live in these communities.

**Q:** What do you see as an important area for the future of the Local Programs Division?

**A:** It is essential that the Local Programs Division keeps staffing up with additional exceptional employees and improving our efficiencies as we never know what types of new programs will be coming our way with future transportation funding legislation. As an example, the current legislation added the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program. The Local Programs Division is responsible for handling the application/procurement process and working with the sponsors through project development, construction, and ongoing maintenance activities of the NEVI program. ■



# ROCKIN' OUT WITH JAMES PATRICK

BY MARK WOODALL



**M**OST LEGAL PROFESSIONALS CAN BE SEEN WALKING

AROUND WITH A BRIEFCASE. But that's not the situation for Legislative Specialist James Patrick, who can be seen walking into work with his guitar case. Although he does this to protect his guitar from the heat, having it with him has been useful for recent lunchtime fundraising events for the Fallen Worker's Memorial Monument Fund.

Even though Patrick works in the Legal Division by day, if presented with the right opportunity, he said he would probably pursue a career in songwriting. I was fortunate to sit down with Patrick to discuss what motivates him to perform for others.

*(continued on page 24)*



One of them plugged his electric guitar into a stereo, and he played a Metallica song, and that was it for me! **The world shifted on its axis. I knew all the chords, and I could play some scales. I just didn't realize I could play cool songs.**"



**Q:** When did you first pick up the guitar, and at what age did you decide that this is something you love to do?

**A:** I guess I was about 11 when I started playing. Guitar teachers start you off with the basics of learning how to play, but I put in Van Halen's "1984" and said, "This is what I want to do." They told me I was not ready for that. I was a bit downhearted about it. I had taken lessons for a few years after that, but then I quit playing. A few years later, I was in the 7th grade. Some guys brought a guitar to school for a science project. One of them plugged his electric guitar into a stereo, and he played a Metallica song, and that was it for me! The world shifted on its axis. I knew all the chords, and I could play some scales. I just didn't realize I could play cool songs.

**Q:** I know this question is somewhat cliché, but what were some of your other musical influences?

**A:** My dad really wanted me to learn Willie Nelson and similar music, which I wasn't into at the time – but I now love. But early on, it was also a way to make friends. If anyone had a guitar, I would show up at their house to play. My parents found out that a kid who was two years older than me could

play and taught guitar lessons. He gave me a book by Huey Lewis and the News and said, "If you'll learn this, there is a lot of good stuff in here about playing the guitar. And don't tell anyone I gave you this book because I want it back!" He started playing some James Taylor, and I thought, "I am not ready for this."

**Q:** What is your favorite part about performing music?

**A:** My favorite thing is when I get together with my band [The Nightliners], and we collaborate. Someone will say, "Hey, I've got this new song," and we'll play it. Someone will say "we should pause right there and play it this way" or make other suggestions. Everyone is really open-minded. It's just so much fun to play.

**Q:** I heard that you've been playing music at some of the fundraising events during lunch breaks for the Fallen Worker's Memorial Monument Fund. Did you write new music for those events? What motivated you to rock out for the cause?

**A:** I don't remember specifically, but last year, Sharon Hawkins encouraged me to play at an ice cream social. I've known her since college, and she has always advocated for my

music. When we heard about these events, someone brought up the idea of me playing. I thought, well, if I can do that, I can write a few theme songs. So, I came up with "Mouth Full of BBQ," "Smoked Bologna," and "Burgers and Dogs." It's not the first time I've written a song about the Department. I used to watch people racing to get inside the building at 8 a.m., so I wrote a song called "Time Clock Shuffle." Human Resources even put it on our internal website. It's a regular song our band does because racing to punch the time clock is something everyone has done.

**Q:** I understand your day job is in Legal, but what would be your dream scenario? Would you retire from here and then become a rock star?

**A:** Being a rock star would mean traveling and playing all the time, dealing with late nights and all that. If you're a people person, like me, you enjoy performing in front of others. But there is a songwriter named Dean Dillon. He has written many hit songs for artists like George Strait and Chris Stapleton. He has never had any big hits of his own, but he has written many songs for other people, which would be great! I'd love to

have a big star sing one of my songs. Dolly Parton said it best, "I love my version of 'I Will Always Love You,' but Whitney Houston's version of my song pays the bills." It's such a fitting tribute for someone else to think your songs are good.

Despite the local notoriety, Patrick promises to keep on playing because he loves the instant feedback and good vibes from the crowds. He is humble about his accomplishments in his professional life and on stage. Be sure to check out some of his tunes by scanning the QR code below. ■

(L. to R.) Marile Adams, James Patrick, Ashley Morris, Scott Southern



CHECK OUT JAMES' MUSIC!



# ARDOT ASSISTS AIR FORCE DURING HISTORIC TRAINING EXERCISE

BY MARK WOODALL



**I**N THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, HIGHWAY 63 NEAR BONO BECAME A MAKESHIFT AIRSTRIP FOR THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AND THE ARKANSAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD.

The operation was part of a broad training exercise for the military to hone landing and takeoff procedures in unconventional areas.

According to the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), the operation was designed to enhance the military's "operational flexibility" by establishing a secure landing zone for a C-146A Wolfhound and an MC-130 Commando II aircraft to land on the five-lane highway.

The military worked jointly with the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) and the Arkansas Highway Police to close Highway 63 near Bono, northwest of Jonesboro. Before the exercise could take place, military experts conducted a complex analysis of the pavement to test the strength of the landing zone.

"We assisted the Air Force with flagging operations while testing was done on the asphalt surface," Shane Wood, District 10 Engineer, said. "They had to be sure the aircraft could land and take off safely."

Extensive testing was performed on the roadway by AFSOC and presented to ARDOT for review. The roadway surface far exceeded the requirements for the operation.

The exercise simulated a humanitarian aid and disaster relief operation in a remote location during an earthquake or a natural disaster. The scenario is based on the possibility of a shift in the New Madrid fault line, which could cause an earthquake in eastern Arkansas. According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), a map of earthquake epicenters could impact areas in Arkansas, Kentucky, southeastern Missouri, and northwestern Tennessee.

"This exercise serves as a significant milestone for AFSOC, demonstrating our ability to operate in diverse and austere environments," Tech. Sgt. Robert Gallagher said. Gallagher is the lead planner for the highway landings, assigned to the AFSOC Air Commando Development Center.

Another concern for the Air Force and ARDOT officials was the possibility of local onlookers expecting to see an air show. "We had to be prepared for the public wanting to get close to the operation, which could cause problems with congestion along the detour route," Wood said.

The training exercise, which was conducted overnight and concluded at 10:30 a.m. on August 4, allowed the Air Force to evaluate its capabilities. Highway 230 from County Road 137 to Highway 63 Business was closed at the same time.

Advance planning with the Arkansas Highway Police, the City of Bono, and Craighead County had been underway since March 2024 to develop a safe plan for the operation. ■

# GOOD ROADS WORKS TOWARD GOOD FUTURES



BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

**T**HE ARKANSAS GOOD ROADS FOUNDATION/TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL WAS FOUNDED IN 1975 AS A 501(c)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION, BUT ITS BEGINNINGS IN ARKANSAS CAN BE TRACED BACK TO 1896 WHEN THEN GOVERNOR JAMES P. CLARKE ORGANIZED A GOOD ROADS CONVENTION IN LITTLE ROCK. The convention hosted over 200 delegates from 44 counties who appointed a committee that founded "The Good Roads League of the State of Arkansas."

In 2015, the council was reestablished as a foundation, to promote funding and financing for the planning, development, construction, and maintenance of a safe and efficient highway, street, road, and bridge system, including transportation enhancements.

The foundation's main objectives fall into three major categories: public research, information and communication, and education. Their work strives to increase statewide economic growth, private sector job creation and retention, and improve the quality of life in all Arkansas counties, municipalities, and communities.

When speaking about Arkansas Good Roads Foundation, Joe Quinn, Executive Director, said "We have about 100 members. My members, they build roads, they design roads, they finance roads."

Quinn added that all of the Arkansas Good Roads Foundation members have something to do with infrastructure in one way or another. For example, members also include companies that make products and ship products directly to homes, like Tyson Foods and Walmart, Inc.

"We are in the business of telling the story of why roads and bridges matter, why infrastructure matters, why quality roads mean jobs, economic development, and safer driving," Quinn said.

The Arkansas Good Roads Foundation has provided Arkansas strong support and partnership to Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) and the Highway Commission (AHC)

over the years. In 2020, they helped educate Arkansans about the need for a more permanent infrastructure funding source for highway planning, maintenance, and construction, which resulted in the passage of Constitutional Amendment 101. The Amendment created a permanent half-cent sales tax to be used for highways and is expected to bring in about \$275 million annually.

"I think it is important that Arkansas be paying attention to infrastructure and transportation issues, especially in the post-COVID world," Quinn said. "COVID was a reminder that everybody expects their paper towels and toothpaste and hand sanitizer to be delivered to their doorstep in two hours. And that's been a reminder, I think, that to the trucking fleet that delivers, be they large interstate trucks or smaller trucks that pull into your driveway, the quality of local roads matters more than ever."

Most recently, the Foundation has been elemental to ARDOT's Fallen Worker's Memorial fundraising efforts, from handling funds to Foundation members donating to the effort. To Quinn, it was just a matter of showing respect to the fallen workers and giving their families a place to go to think about and grieve their loved ones.

"It was very simply a matter that Good Roads members felt 'this is the right thing to do.'"

The Arkansas Good Roads Foundation's Board of Directors is made up of representatives from each of the 10 ARDOT districts. The Executive Committee includes the foundation's executive director, and several Board members, three of whom are elected annually to serve as executive officers.

Board members include Robert Moery, President; Lance Lamberth, Vice-President; D.B. Hill, III, Secretary/Treasurer; Alec Farmer, AHC Chair; Mark Hayes, Arkansas Municipal League Chair; Chris Villines, Association of Arkansas Counties Chair; Harold Beaver, Graycen Bigger, JoAnne Bush, Bob Crafton, Curt Green, Jerry Holder, Shannon Newton, and Arkansas State Representative Jim Wooten.

Visit [argoodroads.com](http://argoodroads.com) to learn more about the Arkansas Good Roads Foundation. ■

# UNDERSTANDING CRASH DATA

BY ARDOT STAFF



**T**HE DEPARTMENT'S STRATEGIC PLAN PUTS THE HIGHEST EMPHASIS ON SAFETY. THIS INCLUDES THE SAFETY OF THOSE USING ARKANSAS' ROADS TO TRAVERSE THE STATE OR TO SIMPLY DRIVE BACK AND FORTH TO SCHOOL, WORK, OR EVEN JUST THE GROCERY STORE EACH DAY. Unfortunately, crashes occur daily. With the aid of the Arkansas Crash Analytics Tool (ACAT), the Department is ensuring that tools are in place for staff, law enforcement, and the public to easily see where crashes have occurred and work together to improve safety on the road.

ARDOT compiles crash records for safety analysis, planning, and reporting. That crash information is collected by law enforcement officers when they prepare crash reports, which are stored in the Arkansas State Police (ASP) eCrash database. While the ASP is the clearinghouse for the crash data, ARDOT is able to access the data through interagency agreements. ARDOT receives crash information from that database and performs routine quality control checks to ensure the data is complete and does not include any obvious coding errors.

ARDOT developed the ACAT to provide a convenient but powerful tool for visualizing crash data. The ACAT is a publicly accessible platform that visually represents where crashes have occurred across the state over a 5-year period. For each crash, ACAT provides information such as when the crash occurred, possible contributing factors, the types

of vehicles involved, and severity. However, ACAT does not provide all the detail found in a crash report, such as the crash narrative or the parties involved.

While ACAT provides a starting point for identifying safety challenges, the purpose of ACAT is to improve the availability of crash information, not to be the authoritative source of crash information. ARDOT's Traffic Safety Section uses ACAT to perform quick safety assessments, but for safety studies, relevant crash records are reviewed in detail to ensure the information is correct and up-to-date.

Maintaining current crash data is an intensive, complex, and collective effort between ARDOT, ASP and their Highway Safety Office (HSO), and local law enforcement. In addition, crash data is living in the sense that it gets updated as crash investigations are completed. At ARDOT, the labor-intensive process of compiling and enriching crash data is accomplished by a team of analysts in the Traffic Safety Section. Their efforts to develop and maintain ACAT and the statewide crash database highlights ARDOT's commitment to safety as the agency's first core value. ■



Check out the ACAT!  
Scan here!



## Dear ARDOT

### SPEEDY RESPONSE

I wanted to thank y'all for a speedy response on the deer signs, fire station signs, and stop sign at Mountain Fork, AR. Thank you a lot!

— *Latecia Glover*

## MESSAGES FROM ASK ARDOT

### FAST RESPONSE

It was easier for me than I thought it would be to get this taken care of as I did not even know where to start. There was a very nice young man who we dealt with, and both my Uncle and I were very impressed.

— *Jill Samuelson*

### SIGN REPAIR

The response time for my request of a sign repair was fantastic. A special thank you to that supervisor and his crew.

— *Chuck Stanfield*

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## ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

**A**RDOT'S ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM WAS CREATED IN 1987 TO SOLICIT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN CONTROLLING LITTER ALONG SELECTED SECTIONS OF STATE HIGHWAYS. Since that time, more than 4,500 organizations have adopted stretches of Arkansas highways. The program has the impact that it does because of its exceptional volunteers.

In each edition of Arkansas Highways we spotlight an Adopt-A-Highway volunteer. This edition's volunteer spotlight features the **University of Arkansas at Fayetteville's Alumni and Iota Tau Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated**. The fraternity has been part of the Adopt-A-Highway program since 1996, adopting a section of Highway 180 in Washington County.

A warm thank you to the Alumni and Iota Tau Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated for their dedication and service to the Adopt-A-Highway program.

Learn more about Adopt-A-Highway

Scan here!





# OUT & ABOUT

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS AROUND THE STATE

World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade

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://www.arkansas.com/events)

- \* **FIRST EVER 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL WORLD'S SHORTEST ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE:** March 98 feet and join Liz Robbins and Mark Fleischer at the World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade. This annual event is on Bridge Street in Hot Springs and, if you aren't up for joining in, you can observe the festivities with the vendors on Central Avenue or Malvern Avenue. Don't forget to wear green! • March 17
- \* **SAUSAGE SERIES – MASTERING THE BASICS:** Feast on both breakfast and classic Italian sausages at this beginner class, hosted by the Pulaski Tech Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Institute. Jules Carney of The Leaping Pig Charcuterie will guide attendees through all the essentials of sausage making and pairing, using locally sourced meat from farmers in Arkansas. • April 1
- \* **ARKANSAS ROOTS MUSIC FESTIVAL:** Hosted at the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home, you can enjoy an afternoon of live music from several Arkansas artists including Erin Enderlin, Cliff & Susan, Adam Hambrick, and Sofie Smithson. There will be food trucks on site and performers to enjoy. Bring out your lawn chairs and relax. • April 12

### MARCH 17

FIRST EVER 22ND ANNUAL WORLD'S SHORTEST ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE  
Bridge Street  
Hot Springs, AR

### APRIL 1

SAUSAGE SERIES – MASTERING THE BASICS  
13000 I-30 Frontage Rd  
Little Rock, AR

### APRIL 12

ARKANSAS ROOTS MUSIC FESTIVAL  
4791 West County Road 924  
Dyess, AR

Sausage Series - Mastering the Basics



## DISTRICT 8

# CONSTRUCTION

## CORNER



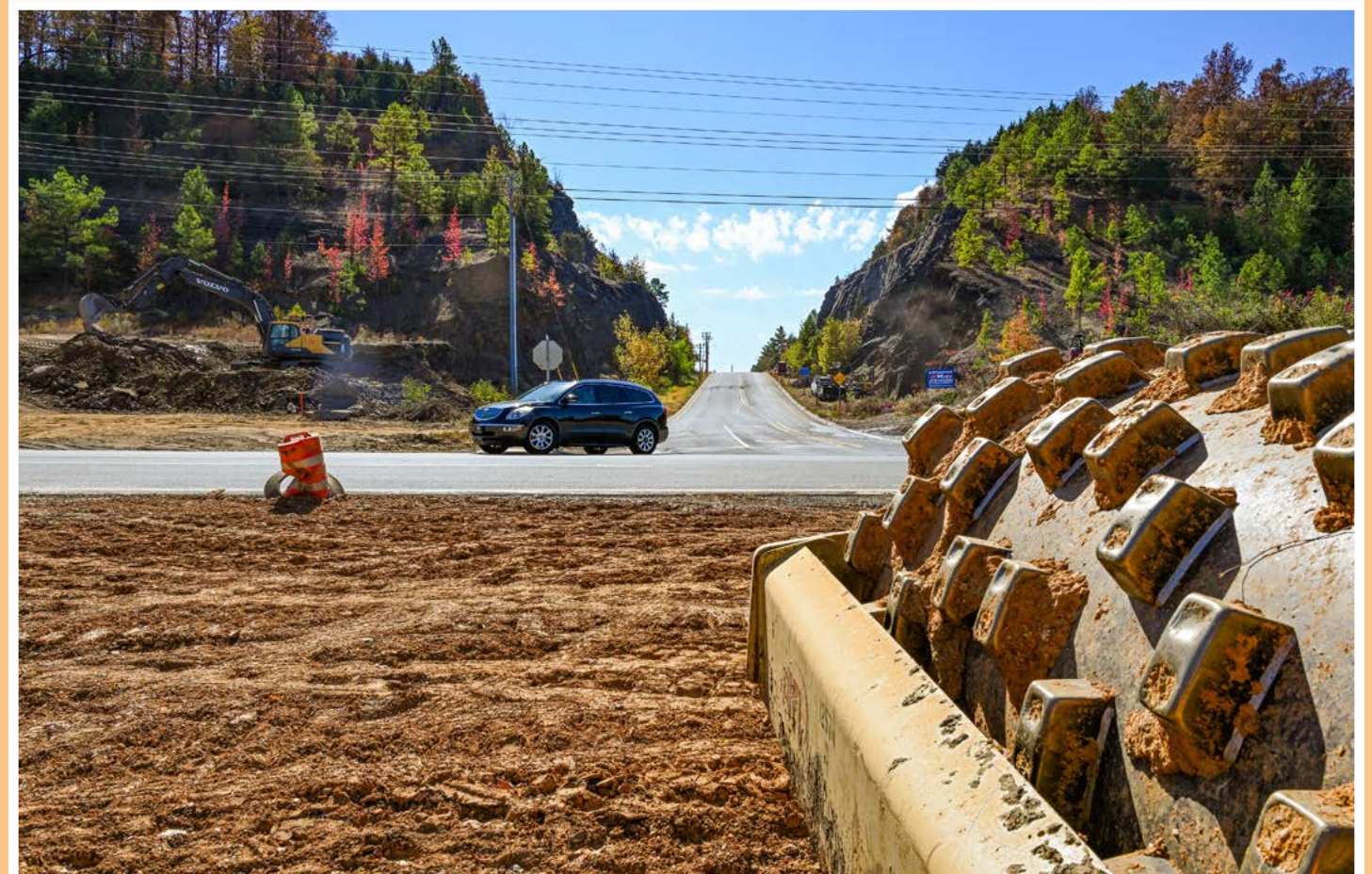
**WORK IS UNDERWAY TO BUILD A ROUNDABOUT AT THE INTERSECTION OF HIGHWAY 64 AND HOGAN LANE IN CONWAY. The Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) HAS PARTNERED WITH THE CITY OF CONWAY FOR THE PROJECT, A FEDERAL-AID INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (IIP) PROJECT. ARDOT AND THE CITY WILL EACH PROVIDE A 10 PERCENT DOLLAR MATCH.**

Intersections are a critical component of highways, providing connections to different routes and facilities and access to local development. When traffic volumes increase or land development occurs, the need for additional traffic

control measures at intersections may arise. Created in 2005, the IIP funds improvements that facilitate access between a highway and a local street.

Under the IIP, one of the options for improvements at intersections includes the use of roundabouts. Due to the continuous movement of traffic, roundabouts are known to reduce travel time and improve gas mileage.

The bid for the project was awarded to Rogers Group, Inc. of Nashville, Tennessee in August 2024 for a little more than \$3.6 million. The project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2025. ■





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