

FALL 2024

Arkansas HIGHWAYS

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CONCEPT BECOMES A REALITY Fallen Workers Memorial Monument Plans Move Ahead

ARKANSAS, TENNESSEE
Receive \$394 Million
For I-55 Bridge

HIGHWAY PROFESSIONALS
Find Adventure
in Arkansas

HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP
Largest in
ARDOT History

Dear ARDOT Friends and Family,

SUMMER 2024 IS ONE I WILL NEVER FORGET. I can truly say it has been the highlight of my career. Two unique and significant events occurred, bringing one word to my mind – gratitude.

ARDOT Friends: Thank you for your generous support of both the ARDOT Worker Memorial fund raising effort and the Southern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (SASHTO) Annual Meeting held in Rogers, Arkansas. Both were a success because of you. ARDOT is so fortunate to have such a strong community of supporters. I'm so grateful for you!

ARDOT Family: Thank you for your generosity and creativity to raise funds for the ARDOT Worker Memorial. Thank you for your hard work that made ARDOT shine during the SASHTO Annual Meeting. I'm so grateful for you!

Now – we move on to the Fall and to my favorite holiday – Thanksgiving. I am so thankful for you all.

Blessings,

Lorie H. Tudor, P.E., Director



FRONT COVER:
Rendering of the Fallen Workers Memorial Monument.

BACK COVER:
Aerial view of State Highway 10.

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CONCEPT BECOMES A REALITY

Fallen Workers Memorial Monument Plans Move Ahead

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

IN APRIL, ARDOT, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ARKANSAS GOOD ROADS FOUNDATION, KICKED OFF A FUNDRAISING EFFORT FOR A PERMANENT ARDOT FALLEN WORKERS MEMORIAL MONUMENT DURING A SAFETY EVENT FOR NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK. The Monument will replace ARDOT's current temporary memorial of orange traffic cones, each with the name of a fallen worker.

"We are very fortunate that the Arkansas Good Roads Foundation volunteered to manage the fundraising effort for us," ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor said.

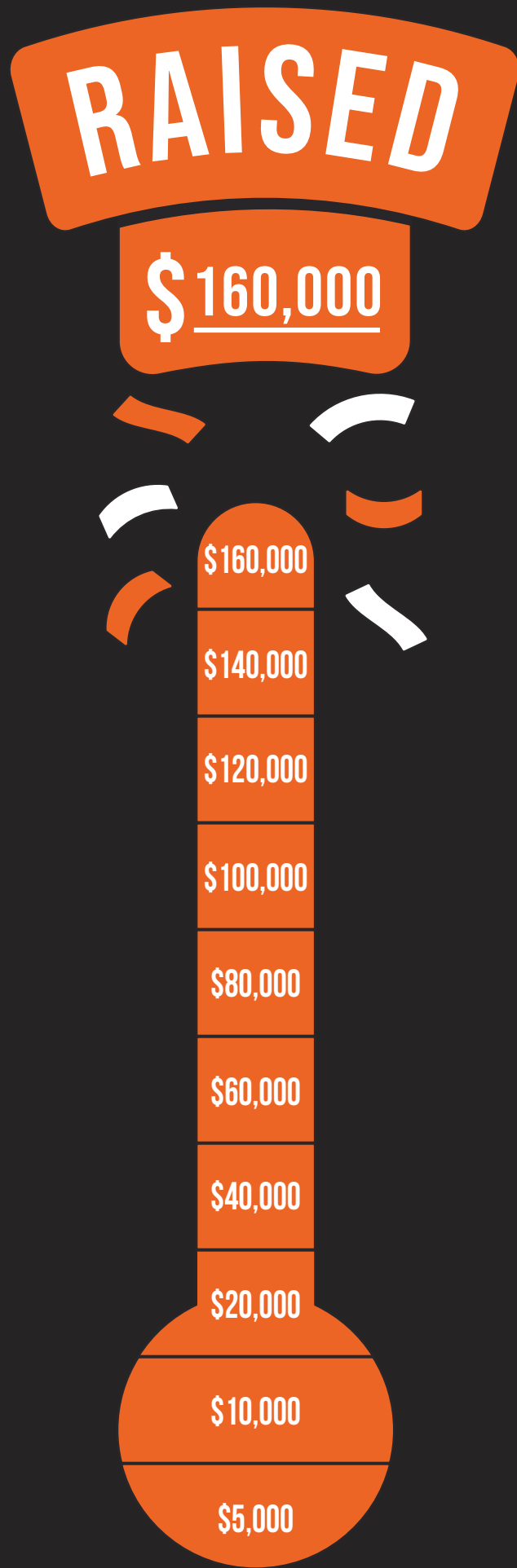
The Arkansas Good Roads Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt, and tax-deductible organization. Its purpose is to promote adequate funding and financing for the planning, development, construction, and maintenance of a safe and efficient highway, street, road, and bridge system, including transportation enhancements.

"Our members have made it very clear that recognizing the people who have lost their life while working on Arkansas roads needs to be a priority," Good Roads Executive Board President Robert Moery said. "Other states have beautiful monuments where families can come and mourn their deceased friend



IN THE
NEXT issue

- Chairman Farmer's Farewell
- ARDOT Assists Air Force During Historic Training Exercise
- One Year of Ask ARDOT



If you would like to make a donation to help pay for the memorial, please scan the QR code below.



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www.argooodroads.com



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**FALLEN WORKERS
MEMORIAL T-SHIRT
FUNDRAISER**

or family member. It's past time that Arkansas offered grieving families the same type of place."

At the kick-off event, the Arkansas Asphalt Paving Association (AAPA), the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Arkansas, and the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA), Arkansas Chapter, presented the Arkansas Good Roads Foundation with \$25,000 in checks to help pay for the Fallen Workers Memorial Monument.

"We owe it to these families to give them more than these plastic cones," Arkansas Good Roads Foundation Executive Director, Joe Quinn said.

Since the event, \$90,000 total has been donated by industry.

"This is just about putting the resources and the finances together to allow us to do this right," Quinn said.

Earlier this year, ARDOT employees were asked to submit ideas for a permanent memorial. Based off those employee suggestions, a concept drawing of the monument was created by Edgar Ariza, ARDOT Advanced Public Involvement Specialist (now retired).

Employees have worked during non-work hours (before and after work, during lunch breaks, while on annual leave, etc.) this summer to raise funds for the monument.

"I sincerely appreciate everyone's support and help to make the ARDOT Fallen Worker Memorial Monument a success. We have made great progress," Tudor said. "I am so proud and

honored to be a part of the amazing ARDOT family."

Fundraising activities have included bake sales, a silent auction, a resale market, raffles, meals, t-shirts, and more. Employees were able to raise \$70,000 as of June 2024. With this amount, a total of approximately \$160,000 has been raised for the monument.

"The fundraising has brought a lot of camaraderie with employees pitching in for a common cause," ARDOT Chief Engineer for Preconstruction, Jared Wiley, said.

The design of one of the t-shirts (pictured above) incorporates a phrase that Director Tudor has used to describe this camaraderie, the "Esprit de Corps." The phrase refers to "a special team spirit that makes everyone feel connected and committed to the same goals." The design also honors the number of employees lost, 85.

Since the kick-off for the effort, Garver volunteered to create plans for the monument design. ARDOT staff have volunteered to create a site plan during non-work hours.

"We are still discussing how we want to construct it," Wiley said. "We have to keep to a budget, and the monument has to be easy to maintain. We will likely break ground this fall and we may add things later."

The monument plan created by Garver specifies a 26 ft. tall concrete monument. The monument will measure 10 ft. across at the base and 5 ft. across at the top. Columns will be connected by powder-coated metal rods that will create a

skip line. The skip line will appear to be floating between the columns and ascending into the sky. A powder-coated metal outline of Arkansas will anchor the base of the skip line.

Brick pavers will line a pathway that flows under the monument. Each paver will bear the name of a fallen worker. Landscaped greenery will surround the monument's footprint and benches will be available for resting and reflecting.

"This monument emphasizes how thankful we are for ARDOT workers and Arkansas Highway Police (AHP) officers and that we acknowledge that their jobs can be dangerous," Tudor said. "They keep the roads safe for all of Arkansas' road users. Those who have lost their lives doing so deserve to be honored and remembered with dignity."

The monument will be placed near the walking trail on the east side of ARDOT's Little Rock campus, near the Planning Annex.

A contractor for the monument has not been selected yet. It is estimated that the project may be completed by the end of 2024.

Once the monument is installed, a ribbon cutting event will be held and families of fallen workers will be invited to come visit the monument.

"These employees made the ultimate sacrifice while performing their job duties to keep the roads safe for the people of Arkansas," ARDOT Commissioner Marie Holder said. "We are committed to continually strive to make our roads, work zones, and employees safer." □



ARKANSAS, TENNESSEE RECEIVE \$394 MILLION FOR I-55 BRIDGE

Largest Infrastructure Project in Arkansas History

BY ELLEN COULTER

THE LARGEST INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT EVER TO TOUCH ARKANSAS – THE REPLACEMENT OF THE 75-YEAR-OLD INTERSTATE 55 (I-55) BRIDGE OVER THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, ALSO CALLED “AMERICA’S RIVER CROSSING” – OFFICIALLY HAS THE GREEN LIGHT TO PROCEED.

A grant totaling almost \$400 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to replace the bridge between West Memphis, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee, was the final puzzle piece the Arkansas and Tennessee Departments of Transportation (ARDOT and TDOT) needed to proceed with the project.

The I-55 bridge replacement project is estimated to cost \$800 million to \$1 billion. The cost will be split between ARDOT, TDOT, and the USDOT grant:

- \$393,750,000 grant funded through the Bridge Investment Program under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
- \$250,000,000 from ARDOT
- \$250,000,000 from TDOT

AN IDEA ‘RATTLING AROUND’ FOR 20 YEARS

To understand why this project is happening, it’s important to understand how we got here.

Opened to traffic in 1949, the I-55 bridge is the oldest bridge on the Interstate Highway System in Arkansas.

The bridge was built before the introduction of the Interstate Highway System (formed in 1956), so it was not built to Interstate Highway System standards.

It was simply known as the “Memphis and Arkansas Bridge” before a second river crossing was built upstream on Interstate 40 (I-40) in 1973, known as the “Hernando de Soto Bridge.” At that point, the I-55 bridge became known as the “old bridge” and the I-40 bridge became known as the “new bridge.”

And so it went with our two Mississippi River crossings between West Memphis and Memphis until the “old bridge” started to show its age. Talk of a potential replacement began.

“This idea has been rattling around for at least the last 20 years,” Lee Harris, Mayor of Shelby County, Tennessee said.

In the early 2000s, as the I-55 bridge surpassed 50 years

“Our infrastructure system is something that truly binds our nation together.”

– Shailen Bhatt, FHWA Administrator

old, it was time to examine its health. Commerce and growth across the region were not slowing down, and the need for safe, reliable river crossings was as pertinent as ever.

The debate: do we work on modernizing our existing river crossings or consider adding a third crossing?

Studies were conducted to investigate both ideas. The Highway 79 Mississippi River Crossing Study of 2003 acknowledged the benefits of a third river crossing near Memphis. In 2006, a location study identified four areas for a potential third crossing. The Southern Gateway Study of 2014 provided a cost-benefit analysis of a third river crossing.

In 2021, the West Memphis-Memphis river crossing issue was thrust into the spotlight when the I-40 Hernando De Soto Bridge was shut down due to a large fracture. The influx of traffic, including heavy truck traffic, was an added strain on the already aging I-55 bridge.

In 2023, a report titled Targeted Approach for Crossing the Mississippi River was published. It was at this pivotal point that the idea to replace the I-55 bridge rather than construct a third crossing was brought to the table. With the recently

passed Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), grant funds were available for certain bridge replacement projects. The study included information that supported submitting the I-55 bridge replacement project for the grant program. This potential funding source was a significant incentive to replace the existing I-55 bridge.

“Think of it like your house,” said Brandon Akins, TDOT Director, Project Management – Region 4 and one of the project managers over the I-55 bridge replacement project. “If you want to put in a pool but you need a new roof, you’re going to fix the roof before you put in a pool. That’s the fiscally responsible thing to do.”

WHAT NOW?

Now that the project is funded, preconstruction work continues.

- 2024 – Technical studies and environmental analyses are underway, expected to be complete by the end of 2024.
- 2025 – The design is expected to be finalized.
- 2026 – Funding must be obligated by 2026.
- 2027 – Construction is likely to begin.
- Beyond – There are no estimates yet on how long the project will take.

TDOT will take the lead on construction of the bridge and continued maintenance on the bridge once it’s built. ARDOT will take the lead on bridge inspections. Construction, maintenance, and inspection costs will be split equally between TDOT and ARDOT.

The existing I-55 bridge will remain in operation until the new bridge is ready for traffic, which should minimize impacts to traffic during construction.

“There may still be minor impacts to traffic as supplies are delivered or during the final traffic pattern switches,” Akins said. “But because the new bridge is being built alongside the old bridge, we expect travel impacts to be drastically reduced.”

On Thursday, July 18, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) hosted an event in Memphis with ARDOT, TDOT, and other dignitaries to celebrate the grant of historic proportions for both Arkansas and Tennessee.

“I want to thank the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law,” FHWA Administrator Shailen Bhatt said at the July 18 event. “That means Republicans and Democrats coming together. Our infrastructure system is something that truly binds our nation together.”

“The biggest thank you of all to the citizens of Arkansas and Tennessee for your support of highways and highway funding,” said Alec Farmer, Chairman of the Arkansas Highway Commission, at the July 18 event. “Without your support providing state funds to match federal dollars, projects such as this would not be possible.”

ARDOT AWARDED \$25 MILLION IN RAISE FUNDS

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

ARDOT HAS BEEN AWARDED A \$25 MILLION REBUILDING AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE WITH SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUITY (RAISE) GRANT BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO HELP CONSTRUCT A 14-MILE EXTENSION OF INTERSTATE 49 (I-49) BETWEEN CRAWFORD AND SEBASTIAN COUNTIES. The new extension will be constructed between Highway 22 in Barling and Interstate 40 in Alma.

"The I-49 extension will provide improved regional mobility that will converge with the Arkansas River and several Class 1 Railroads," ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor said. "I want to express my sincere thanks to the USDOT for recognizing the value of this project, as well as Arkansas' Congressional Delegation for their support and advocacy in acquiring this very important funding."

The extension, a four-lane interstate highway, will include a bridge over the Arkansas River and interchanges at Highway 22, Gun Club Road, Clear Creek Road, and Interstate 40. The I-49 extension will connect to previously constructed sections of I-49, advancing the completion of a National Highway System Congressionally Delegated High Priority Corridor. Work on the project is expected to begin in December 2024.

"I-49 is a critical artery to our state and nation. Investments in this corridor will help ensure we are more connected while strengthening economic growth and development,"

U.S. Senator John Boozman said. "I'm pleased to support the RAISE grant and advocate for infrastructure improvements in Arkansas communities."

The RAISE Discretionary Grant program provides funding for road, rail, transit, and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives.

"This funding will go to infrastructure projects that are critical to maintaining roads, trails, and railways in Arkansas. I'm pleased Senator Boozman, Congressman Womack, and I were able to secure the grants for these projects," U.S. Senator Tom Cotton said.

"I'm thrilled that \$25 million in federal funding will go directly to Arkansas' Third District to complete the vital I-49 expansion," U.S. Representative Steve Womack said. "Thank you to the Arkansas Department of Transportation for their tireless work on this project, which will increase travel efficiency and safety while having long-term economic benefits for Arkansans. It's an honor to have been a resource in this process along with Senators Boozman and Cotton."

During this funding cycle, \$1.8 billion in RAISE grant funding was awarded for more than 148 projects across the country. RAISE funding is split equally between urban and rural areas.

Two Arkansas cities also received RAISE grants during this funding cycle. The City of Searcy received a \$4.2 million grant for an expansion of the existing 5.5-mile Searcy Bike Trail. The City of Siloam Springs received an \$11.5 million grant for the restoration of Sager Creek Bridge and the revitalization of East Main Street. ■

HIGHWAY PROFESSIONALS FIND *Adventure in Arkansas*

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

ARDOT HOSTED THIS YEAR'S SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS (SASHTO) CONFERENCE FROM AUGUST 17 TO 20 AT THE EMBASSY SUITES NORTHWEST IN ROGERS. This year's theme was "Adventure Arkansas." Nearly 1,345 delegates, guests, vendors, and workers attended the 2024 event.

An annual event, the SASHTO conference brings together professionals from member states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. The member states rotate hosting the event.

ARDOT previously hosted SASHTO conferences in Hot Springs in 1973 and 1985, and Little Rock in 1961, 1997, and 2010. Next year's conference will be held in Kentucky.

SASHTO has a cooperative relationship with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and was created to encourage a balanced transportation system across the southern United States.

The annual event brings professionals together, giving them the opportunity to learn from each other and to challenge each other in a way that isn't always possible during a normal workday. Members benefited from being able to exchange ideas, discuss challenges, share best practices, participate in technical sessions on highway and transportation matters, and network with industry representatives.

Author, aviator, and speaker Carey Lohrenz gave the keynote speech for the Opening Session. As the first female F-14 Tomcat fighter pilot in the U.S. Navy, Lohrenz has experience operating in one of the world's most challenging environments – an aircraft carrier. She spoke about how the

skills she used to be successful in this fast-moving, dynamic environment can also be applied to the business world.

"These three things: purpose, focus, and discipline, are what I think really allowed the Navy to take what I would say are pretty common people like myself and get us executing at a really high level very, very quickly," Lohrenz said.

Technical sessions were held throughout the conference, as well as an exhibit hall and hospitality rooms. Sessions and panel discussions were offered on topics such as: design/planning innovations, social media, traffic safety, future of transportation funding, intercity passenger rail, alternative delivery projects, data governance, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Highway Construction Workforce Partnership, bridge design and preservation, future mobility, safety of vulnerable road users, employee safety, construction industry partnering, public engagement and transparency, DOT involvement in creating a national transportation vision, and employee career development.

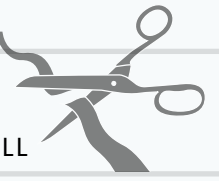
A closing session was held Tuesday afternoon with guest speakers and Arkansans, Dave and Jenny Marrs, hosts of HGTV's "Fixer to Fabulous." The conference closed Tuesday evening with a reception at the Momentary in Bentonville, a satellite to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

"I have been attending SASHTO conferences since 1996. The SASHTO conference in Rogers, AR put on by ARDOT exceeded all my expectations. Hearing the comments of how impressed the out-of-state visitors were with ARDOT's delivery of every step of the conference made me proud to be a native Arkansan, well done ARDOT," Jerry Holder, P.E., Garver Director of Enterprise Solutions, said.



2024
SASHTO
ADVENTURE ARKANSAS





Highway 113 Groundbreaking

Historic Partnership Largest in ARDOT History

In a partnership historic to Arkansas, six counties, one city, one business, and one state agency have partnered with the Arkansas Department of Transportation on a project that will benefit the residents of Conway County and the surrounding areas.

“This project is a great example of what can happen when people work together. This public and private partnership is possible because the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, ARDOT, the City of Morrilton, Green Bay Packaging, and six counties agreed to work to make it happen,” ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor said.

In April 2024, Conway, Faulkner, Johnson, Pope, Saline, and White counties, as well as the City of Morrilton, Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC), Green Bay Packaging, and ARDOT signed a Memorandum of Agreement to work together to relocate 2.4 miles of Highway 113 in Conway County. The project came about when the AEDC, Conway County officials, and other local

stakeholders approached ARDOT about the idea for the relocation.

“Everything I’ve ever experienced working here in Arkansas has been really built on solid partnerships with our local communities and with our local governments,” Green Bay Packaging Vice President, Mill Operations, Matt Szymanski said. “You guys have something special here in Arkansas. And I would tell you we don’t see that everywhere that we have our businesses.”

Currently, this section of Highway 113 has two 11-ft. travel lanes with 6-ft. paved shoulders. The relocated highway will have two 12-ft. travel lanes with 6-ft. paved shoulders and portions of the roadway will have a 12-ft. turning lane. The project includes cross drains, erosion control, earthwork, and asphalt concrete hot mix (ACHM) pavement.

When the work is complete, travel in the area will be enhanced because of the widened highway lanes, added shoulders, and added turning lanes.



“All of these improvements make it easier for large trucks to travel through the area, delivering and transporting goods,” Arkansas Highway Commissioner Marie Holder said. “We will see improved safety and traffic flow along this stretch of highway, making this region more attractive to both potential employers and to people looking to move into the area.”

The relocation will allow Green Bay Packaging, an employer of 400 jobs in the area, to strengthen its operations. Green Bay Packaging has agreed to donate right of way for the project.

Upon completion of the project, the City of Morrilton and Conway, Faulkner, Johnson, Pope, Saline, and White counties will take ownership of portions of State Highways 154, 113, 980, 132, 310, 103, 164, 190, and 13.

The project is funded with a combination of Federal Highway funds and State funds, including \$2 million set aside in 2019 for economic development from funding made available in Act 1 of 2016. The contract to construct



the project has been awarded to McGeorge Contracting Company of Pine Bluff for \$9.7 million.

A groundbreaking event was held for the project on August 12 in Morrilton. Speakers included ARDOT Director, Lorie Tudor; Arkansas Highway Commissioner, Marie Holder; Morrilton Mayor, Allen Lipsmeyer; Arkansas Economic Development Commission Executive Director, Clint O’Neal; Green Bay Packaging Vice President - Mill Operations, Matt Szymanski; and Conway County Judge, Jimmie Hart. ■

NOWHERE TO REST

Truckers Face Nationwide Parking Shortage

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

YOU'VE BEEN DRIVING FOR 10 HOURS AND JUST WANT TO PULL OVER FOR THE NIGHT AND REST. But an hour later, you still can't find a safe place to park your truck for the night. That's the plight that many commercial truck drivers face at the end of every work day.

According to the latest transportation statistics, there are more than 4 million Class 8 trucks traveling across the U.S. on any given day.¹ Yet, there are only about 300,000 parking spaces available, which equals roughly one spot for every 11 drivers.²

To keep commercial drivers and the traveling public safe, there are federal hours-of-service regulations that require truckers to take mandatory rest breaks. When drivers are faced with nowhere to park and rest, they must choose between parking at an unsafe location, like vacant lots, exit ramps, or shoulders of the road, or continue driving longer than what is considered a safe length of time, putting themselves and other motorists at risk.

"I've driven most of the United States, and the difficult thing is you have regulations telling you how many hours you can drive and how many hours you can actually be in service. And when you can, you plan your day the best you want to, but you're going to run into traffic conditions, bad roads, accidents, storms," Thadd Wilson, former truck driver, said.

Another option that drivers may choose is to stop driving early into the day, cutting into the amount of income that they are able to earn. It is estimated that this can cost drivers more than \$6,800 annually in lost pay.³ This can also result in interruptions to the supply chain, as trucks transport more than 73% of the nation's goods by value (67% by weight).⁴ The problem isn't expected to go away any time soon – the volume of freight moved by trucks is expected to increase by more than 21% over the next decade.⁵

"You end up running into getting close to that 11-hour end of your drive time, and so you don't want to get stuck out on the road not being able to find a place to park," Mike Turkaly, truck driver, said. "If you still have 2 or 3 hours on your drive time, you're stuck with not using that because if you try and use it, then you end up down the road with 10 minutes to go of driving time, and you're 25 or 30 minutes away from a rest area, and you can't do it. You have to pull over and stop."

However, the shortage isn't unique to Arkansas. In a Federal Highway Administration survey of more than 11,000 drivers, 98% said that they had problems finding safe parking, with nearly 75% reporting it is a regular problem that happens once or more a week.⁶

"Every day that we're out here, it's getting a lot worse," Bill Smith, truck driver, said. "You're out in the cold. You've got to find a spot, or you're in trouble. And, if you go past 4 o'clock, 4:30 in the evening, good luck finding a



parking spot."

Smith told us that due to the shortage, he's often seen trucks at rest areas parking along the road. "They're probably a mile and a half down the road," Smith said. "Everybody's double parked. Everybody's parked on the ramp. The entrance ramp and the exit ramp. There ain't nowhere to go. Nowhere."

In 2023, to help remedy the situation, ARDOT converted the former site of a welcome center in West Memphis into a new truck parking lot, adding 85 additional spaces.

At the groundbreaking ceremony, ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor said, "The need for facilities like this is tremendous. This lot will provide safer travel on our interstates in the future as more truckers find a safe place to park and get the rest they need."

The parking shortage has come to the attention of Arkansas U.S. Representative Steve Womack, who is Chairman of the House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee. In July 2024, the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee approved a spending bill that includes \$200 million set aside to expand truck parking capacity in the U.S.⁷ In his June remarks to the House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee, Womack said "These targeted investments will enhance safety and improve the flow of commerce on our Interstate Highway System."

In addition to Womack's support, Arkansas U.S. Representative Rick Crawford is backing the House resolution. The nationwide truck parking shortage has also gotten the attention and support of Arkansas U.S. Senator John Boozman.

When asked specifically about Arkansas's situation, Boozman said, "Arkansas truckers have shared with me

the difficulties they frequently experience in finding a safe location to park as they transport goods and products across the country. I have raised this concern directly with the Secretary of Transportation."

According to Arkansas Trucking Association President Shannon Newton, the availability of safe commercial truck parking is important for our economy and our transportation system. "In Arkansas, the availability of commercial truck parking is crucial for maintaining safe and efficient highways. It supports the well-being of our drivers—who are vital to the state's economy—by reducing the risk of fatigue-related accidents and congestion. Investing in adequate truck parking not only enhances safety but also strengthens the reliability of our freight system, ensuring that goods move smoothly across the state," Shannon Newton, Arkansas Trucking Association President, said. "Recognizing the importance of commercial truck parking, non-commercial traffic can contribute to a safer, more efficient transportation system for everyone." ■

¹ <https://www.nextbigfuture.com/2023/01/summarizing-us-trucking-statistics.html#:~:text=4.06%20million%20Class%20%20trucks,%2C%20up%202.3%25%20from%202020.>

² <https://www.tnnews.com/articles/truck-parking-top-issue-drivers>

³ <https://www.trucking.org/news-insights/ata-hails-200-million-truck-parking-house-appropriations-bill>

⁴ https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/infrastructure/truck_parking/

⁵ <https://www.trucking.org/news-insights/national-truck-parking-shortage-growing-safety-concern-all-motorists>

⁶ <https://highways.dot.gov/public-roads/winter-2023/05>

⁷ <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2024/sep/07/womack-led-appropriations-measure-puts-aside/>

OLD RIVER BRIDGE TO RETURN

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

BUILT IN 1891 OVER THE SALINE RIVER, THE OLD RIVER BRIDGE IN SALINE COUNTY HAS BORNE WITNESS TO MUCH OF ARKANSAS' HISTORY. It serves as a local landmark and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

In 2017, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Saline County, and ARDOT entered into a Memorandum of Agreement to rehabilitate and reconstruct the Old River Bridge, one of the oldest remaining bridges in the state. The project has been conducted in phases, as funding has become available.

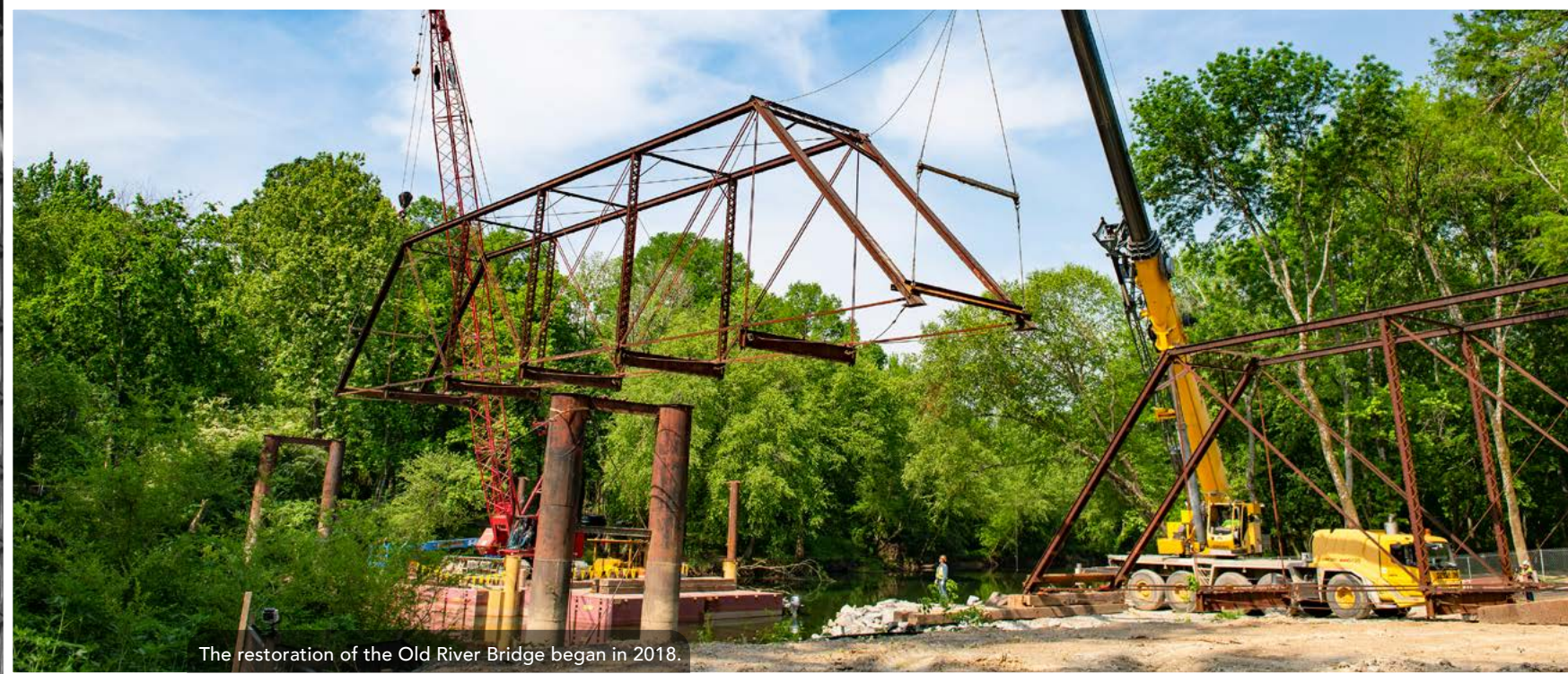
"This historic landmark, once at risk of fading into memory, is now being revitalized thanks to the vision of the late Benton Mayor Lynn Moore and the Saline Crossing group, who first championed its restoration," Saline County Judge Matt Brumley said.

TIMELINE OF THE OLD RIVER BRIDGE

In 1815, William S. Lockhart settled with his family on the banks of the Saline River, at the point where the Southwest Trail (also known as the Old Missouri Trail) crossed the river. Soon other families followed, settling in the area that became known as Saline Crossing.

In the 1800s, the Southwest Trail was made up of a network of trails that connected St. Louis to northeast Texas, crossing Arkansas from northeast to southwest. In the 1830s, Congress passed military appropriation bills that funded improvements to the road, and it became known as Military Road.

In 1889, citizens petitioned the Saline County Court to build a bridge across the Saline River at or near the crossing of Military Road. In 1890, the Saline



The restoration of the Old River Bridge began in 2018.

County Court published a notice in the local newspaper, the Benton Courier, advertising for bids to build the bridge. The contract was awarded for \$7,000 on April 7, 1890, to the lowest bidder, the Youngstown Bridge Company of Youngstown, Ohio.

The Old River Bridge was operational from 1891 until 1974 when a truck loaded with concrete blocks tried to cross the bridge, severely damaging it. It was decommissioned and removed from the state highway system.

In 1996, the bridge was featured in the movie "Sling Blade." The movie was written and directed by Malvern-native Billy Bob Thornton, who also starred in the lead role. The bridge appears in the background of the movie poster and in several scenes throughout the movie.

The Old River Bridge remained at its original site until the restoration process began in 2018. When work is completed, it will be returned to the original site.

THE STRUCTURE

The Old River Bridge is a type of bridge known as a truss bridge. Truss bridges are made up of a series of connected elements called trusses. The

trusses are often triangular shaped and are secured together, distributing the load of the bridge's weight.

Spanning 260 feet, the Old River Bridge was made up of two 130-foot-long Pratt through trusses and a wooden deck or driving surface, supported by steel column piers filled with concrete. The bridge carried a single lane of traffic.

FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT

Saline County, the Local Project Sponsor, has received grants for multiple Federal-aid projects totaling approximately \$4.75 million for the rehabilitation and restoration of the bridge, including funding through Metroplan, ARDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and the Arkansas Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP). The County also received funding through the United States Department of Agriculture.

When repairs are completed, the rehabilitated bridge will provide a crossing over the Saline River as part of the ongoing Southwest Trail Project. The trail will run from Hot Springs National Park to the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site. The recreational, non-motorized,

multiuse trail will be 65 miles long and will tie into the Arkansas River Trail and existing trails in Hot Springs.

REHABILITATION AND REPAIR OF THE BRIDGE

In May 2018, Phase I of the project to restore and rehabilitate the bridge began. The bridge was removed, and the old piers were taken down. The elements were inspected to see what could be salvaged and what would need to be replaced.

In Phase II of the project, the bridge parts were shipped out of state. New parts were manufactured to meet the original design and to bring the bridge up to current safety standards (including the addition of handrails).

Phases III and IV were combined into a final phase due to funding constraints. The project is now in this last phase, which involves rehabilitating the two existing truss spans, constructing two new simple plate girder approach spans, and constructing approaches to the bridge.

Saline County held a groundbreaking ceremony for the bridge in March. The project is expected to be completed early next summer. ■



Public Involvement

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

WITH THE 12TH LARGEST STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM IN THE NATION, MORE THAN 16,000 MILES OF ROAD, AND MORE THAN 3,600 EMPLOYEES,

ARDOT HAS A LOT OF MOVING PARTS. As such a large entity, there are plenty of behind-the-scenes pieces that work together to achieve our purpose of delivering a modern transportation system and enhancing safety and quality of life in Arkansas.

We're shining a light on some of the behind-the-scenes work we do to better help Arkansans understand how ARDOT serves them. We recently visited with Public Involvement Specialist, Shawnda Majors, to find out more about what this section does.

Public Involvement (PI) is a section within the Environmental Division at ARDOT. PI is responsible for ensuring compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations pertaining to "early and ongoing" public involvement during the project development process, including scheduling and conducting public involvement meetings and hearings, as well as publishing legal notices for public hearing offerings.

Q: What goes into preparing for a meeting with the public?

A: Meetings are set up once a preliminary proposed design is ready from the Roadway team. The public officials are contacted to confirm a date. Then, a location in the project area is set for the meeting. Meeting materials are prepared, and internal meetings are held to assure accurate information is being given to the public. Meeting invites are sent out to the community in the project area, and a website is established for each job. The comment period stays open for 15 days. Once all comments have been gathered, ARDOT reviews and addresses them as appropriate.

Q: How many meetings do you conduct per year?

A: The number of meetings differs from year-to-year based on the need and what is forecasted in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP, see Summer 2024 Arkansas Highways "STIP: ARDOT's Playbook" for



Public Involvement Section: (L. to R.) Cameron Carter, Rosana Lavender, Marcus Stuckey, Ricardo Ramirez, Shawnda Majors, and Matt Strawn. Not Pictured: Shana Williams.

more about the STIP). We had 30 meetings in 2023. Fall and winter are usually busier times.

Q: Is the meeting the first time that the information about the project is shared with the public?

A: The information is presented to the public at the meeting first. It is a preliminary proposal. We do put the information on the website five days prior to the meeting, so the public has time to see the preliminary design ahead of the meeting.

Q: How does the community find out about the meetings?

A: We have various ways to get information out about each proposed project. We send out invitations by mail to everyone within a 2-mile buffer of the project location area. We run an ad in local newspapers and run a Public Service Announcement on local radio stations. Once a final design has been completed, individual landowners who are impacted are notified by the Right of Way Division.

Q: What happens when citizens have concerns?

A: We address all concerns that the community has about the project and ensure all questions are answered in a timely manner. Most of the questions are handled at the public involvement meeting.

We provide comment forms for the public at the meeting as well as online, so they can voice their concerns about the project. We also answer e-mails and phone calls from concerned citizens.

If a citizen has a specific question that we are not able to answer, we get someone from other ARDOT divisions

to call them back with the answer. Some questions about engineering or Right of Way will be sent to those specific divisions to provide the community member with the most accurate information.

Q: If the project changes, is there another public information meeting? If not, how do you get the word out about changes?

A: In general, if changes are made, we post the information online for a virtual meeting. This would include all information normally presented at an in-person meeting. In some cases, if there is a large impact on the community, we have a second meeting to ensure the public is well informed. If the proposed project becomes an Environmental Assessment, it will become a Public Hearing and a second in-person will be held. This meeting would be held locally as well as including a website with the information.

Q: What is the next step for the project after the meeting?

A: Once we have had the meeting and the 15-day comment period has closed, a synopsis of all comments from the meeting are sent to the administration for review.

Q: What should people know about the PI Section?

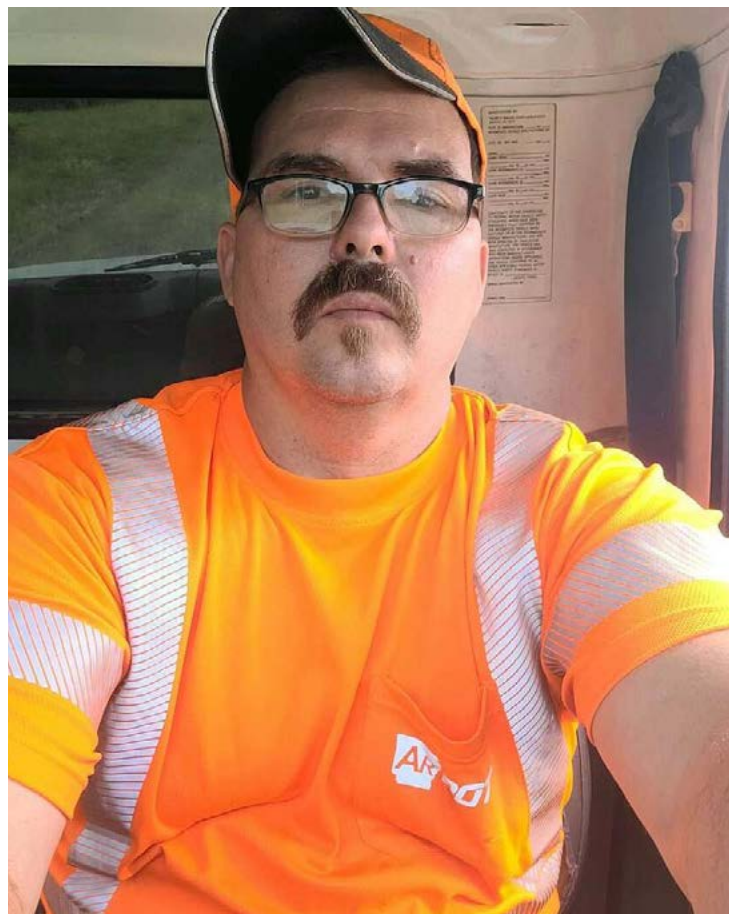
A: We value the community's input, and we use their feedback to improve the proposed project. We are the voice of the community through these meetings, and a very big part of our job is to ensure there is no discrimination or displacement to minority, low income, or disadvantaged community members. ■

ARDOT EMPLOYEE HAILED AS HERO

BY MARK WOODALL



“If someone is in need, he is going to jump in and help. That is simply the kind of man he is.”
— David Archer, District 7 Engineer



FRIDAY, JUNE 21, WAS NO ORDINARY DAY OFF FOR DISTRICT 7 MAINTENANCE AIDE SILAS COMPTON.

Shortly after 11:30 a.m., he was picking up medications for his wife at a pharmacy next door to The Mad Butcher grocery store in Fordyce when he noticed something was off.

He witnessed a man walking into the grocery store with a shotgun and extra ammunition strapped to his body. Compton followed him inside and watched in horror as the man opened fire on innocent people. He yelled out to the man to stop, and that’s when the gunman turned the shotgun on him.

“I could see the cash register people on the floor and whimpering, and so I yelled at him again, ‘STOP!’ I ducked down when he fired at me, and I guess that’s what saved my life,” Compton said.

Compton was hit with several shotgun pellets. He suffered wounds to his head and upper body, with one fragment lodged next to his spine. Doctors are closely monitoring that wound because any surgery near the spine can be extremely dangerous.

Despite his injuries, Compton returned outside and warned others to stay out of the store. He collapsed at a business next door. The last thing he remembers is officers assisting

him as he faded in and out of consciousness.

Compton is being hailed as a hero for distracting the gunman and warning others to stay away, but he quickly dismisses that notion.

“In my opinion, another guy is the real hero in the deal. His name is Roy Sturgis, and I’ve known him for years. He tried to talk the guy down, but he was shot too,” Compton said.

Sturgis drove himself to the hospital, where he later passed away. He is one of four fatalities from that day.

Compton was taken to the trauma unit at Baptist Hospital in Little Rock. As doctors continue to evaluate his wounds, he knows that the road to recovery will not be easy.

Released from the hospital on Monday, July 8, Compton is currently undergoing therapy and has already made some encouraging progress. Following the shooting, he has received an outpouring of support from friends, family, coworkers, and the entire ARDOT leadership team.

“We are so proud to call Silas a member of the ARDOT family. The bravery he showed during the tragic event in Fordyce is a testament to his character. He is a humble hero who is an inspiration to us all,” ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor said.

One of Compton’s closest friends, fellow District 7 ARDOT employee Myla Rawls, experienced a wide range of emotions upon hearing the news.

“I felt so heartbroken and emotional all the way to the emergency room,” Rawls said. “Everything was so vague about what happened during the shooting, and I didn’t know if he was alive at the time – or how many other lives were lost.”

Compton’s supervisor, District 7 Engineer David Archer, said he is not surprised that Compton would emerge as a hero in a chaotic situation.

“Silas is the kind of person who would do anything for anybody. He would give you the shirt off of his back. He does not stand back and watch but gets involved with whatever happens. It is not surprising he would see a need in a grocery store and help even though he was walking into a very dangerous situation,” Archer said. “If someone is in need, he is going to jump in and help. That is simply the kind of man he is.”

The people of Fordyce and neighboring communities have rallied around Compton and the families of the victims through local fundraisers. District 7 employees have also raised funds to provide support for friends and family who were impacted on that tragic day.

“It has really been amazing to watch and see how, in the midst of evil and tragedy, there are still so many hearts full of goodness and love that will still sacrifice to stop a shooter and help a neighbor in need,” Archer added. ■



A Helping Hand for Royalty

ARDOT's Monarch Action Program

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY'S BOLD ORANGE AND BLACK COLORATION IS WELL KNOWN AND LOVED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. Easy to spot and identify, monarchs spark awe and interest as they migrate en masse across North America.

Arkansas lies in the heart of their migratory path, providing habitat for first and last generations each year.¹ However, their numbers have been in decline over the past 20 years, with many conservationists concerned that if the decline continues, they could eventually disappear.

In 2021, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed the monarch as a candidate for the Endangered Species Act (ESA). It was determined that the monarch warrants listing, but the agency was unable to do so at that time because there were other species that were considered higher priority. The monarch is a candidate until at least December 2024, the next ESA deadline.

Monarch butterflies rely on milkweed as the sole food source for their larvae. For the survival of the species,

monarchs need milkweed plants. This is why many of the efforts to help the monarch involve planting milkweed or monitoring populations of current milkweed plants. Adult monarchs rely on wildflowers for the nectar they need to survive, so planting and maintaining native wildflowers also helps monarchs.

Prior to the monarch's listing as a candidate species, ARDOT had already implemented pollinator friendly practices like herbicide restrictions in sensitive areas, conservation mowing, Wildflower Routes, and Native Wildflower Areas. You can read more about ARDOT's wildflower efforts in our Summer 2024 magazine article "Wildflowers for Miles: ARDOT's Programs Help Flowers Grow."

In anticipation of the monarch being listed under the ESA as threatened or endangered, the USFWS has worked to implement voluntary monarch conservation plans. In partnership with the USFWS, ARDOT has implemented an action program to help reduce threats to monarchs and other species.

Under the program, ARDOT staff look for habitats that need improvement to make them suitable for monarch butterflies. These areas can be located along highway rights of way or open areas with few trees. We then work with other agencies, like the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Quail Forever, and the USFWS to create a written site management plan. The plan includes the preparation needed for the site, which plants to use, a schedule for activities needed, and any long-term maintenance needs. Once the plan is approved, staff begin to implement it.

The first project under ARDOT's monarch conservation plan with the USFWS is located at an ARDOT mitigation property in Montgomery County called Blowout Mountain. In December 2019, ARDOT received a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Little Rock District, to restore streams on the property which had been previously used for cattle grazing, timber harvesting, and as a hay source. When surveyed, the property had almost no variety of wildflowers, but large areas of invasive plants. Because of

these conditions, the project was a perfect site for ARDOT's monarch conservation efforts.

ARDOT has started by focusing on two areas at Blowout Mountain: a 5-acre hayfield on the northern boundary of the property and a 35-acre hayfield on the western edge. ARDOT contracted with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Forestry Division to conduct controlled burns in both areas. After the use of herbicide to remove undesired grasses, more than 140 pounds of seed (comprised of more than 60 species of native grasses and wildflowers) were planted at the site this past winter.

In a few years, visitors to the Blowout Mountain site should be able to see fields of wildflowers and hopefully, numerous monarch butterflies. ■

¹ <https://www.arkansasheritage.com/blog/dah/2021/09/29/the-multifaceted-migration-of-the-monarch-butterfly>.



Mural in Jonesboro, AR

ART ON A LARGE SCALE

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

THERE'S SOMETHING MAGICAL ABOUT THE TRANSFORMATION OF A PLAIN, FADED WALL INTO ONE COVERED IN COLORFUL ARTWORK. Perhaps it is the large scale of the artwork, the vivid colors, or the stories they whisper to us that gives murals such a popular place in our communities and our collective psyche.

Although murals have been around since our forebearers painted on cave walls, they have seen a resurgence in popularity in recent years. Because of their size and visibility within a community, murals are one of the most easily recognizable forms of public art. They can be found outside buildings, on concrete walls, water towers, stairwells, and other public places.

According to a study commissioned by Americans for the Arts, 70% of Americans believe that the "arts improve the image and identity" of their community.¹ The energy brought by even just one mural in an urban space is contagious. Murals have been credited with creating community pride, ownership, and connection, as well as attracting local foot traffic,

increasing tourism, boosting the local economy, and helping revitalize neighborhoods. Some even claim that they reduce crime rates within a neighborhood and improve individuals' mental health.

Due to their popularity among individuals, businesses, and communities, urban planners and downtown revitalization efforts encourage inclusion of murals in their communities. Arkansas has several cities and towns that have designated an area for murals or have mapped out a mural art walk and several others that are the main feature.

A MURAL TOUR OF ARKANSAS

In the northwest corner of the state, Fayetteville has mapped out an interactive art walk map of more than 60 public art installations, with well over 30 murals. Another source for information about Fayetteville's murals and artists is the website [Sprayetteville](http://Sprayetteville.com). Don't miss out on beauties like "Bearly Legal" by Ernest Zacharevic, "Athena" by Octavio Logo and Eugene Sargent, "Solidarity," by Samuel Hale, and "It's Fayetteville for Me" by Austin Floyd.

Eureka Springs is a town known for its art and artists, so it is no surprise that you can find murals throughout the hilltop

town. One of the favorites is "Dogs Walking Hippiess" on the Harmon Park Art Trail. Eureka Springs adds at least one new public art piece per year, so you'll want to plan for a return visit. Learn more at <https://www.visiteurekasprings.com/category/things-to-do/arts-culture/>.

Fort Smith has fueled an entire downtown revitalization immersed in murals. Main Street Fort Smith, The Unexpected project, and 64.6 Downtown have worked together to bring more than 30 murals to the downtown area, including some by famous international mural artists like D*Face, Ana Maria, Roa, Askew One, Okuda San Miguel, as well as local artists. You can find an online version of the downtown mural map at <https://www.646downtown.com> or <https://www.646downtown.com/the-unexpected>.

ARkanvas is a statewide engagement that brings public art by world-renowned artists to Arkansas communities, including Bentonville, Rogers, Springdale, Fort Smith, Conway, Little Rock, Hot Springs, Stuttgart, and Pine Bluff. Some favorites brought about by ARkanvas include the sister butterfly murals "The Little Rock Nine" in Little Rock and "The 21st Collection" in Bentonville by Mantra; "I'll Bring You Flowers" in Pine Bluff by Lakwena; and "We Are Us" in Stuttgart by Keya Tama. You can find more information about the artists and their murals at <https://www.ozartnwa.com/arkanvas/>.

Hot Springs is another Arkansas town with a comprehensive mural tour and map. You can find whimsical murals like "Verna's Dream" by Pepe Gaka and "Remember" by Danae Brissonnet; historically inspired murals like "Quapaw Mural" and "Black Broadway" both by Pepe Gaka; or more abstract art like "ARkanvas Northwoods" by Camille Walala. Visit <https://hotsprings.org/blog/touring-the-murals-of-hot-springs/> for more information about the Hot Springs mural tour.

Arkansas has so many more to see from the "Scott Joplin" mural in Texarkana, "Blytheville Greeting Card" in Blytheville, 13 mural panels on the Arkansas River "seawall" in North Little Rock, "Holy Cow" in Cabot, "Moon Over #MySearcy" in Searcy, and a grouping of downtown murals in Jonesboro. Arkansas has enough murals to spur more than one road trip throughout the state. You can find more about Arkansas murals at <https://www.arkansas.com/directory?text=murals&page=0>.

Hop on a highway and head out of town for a mural tour and see how murals have transformed ordinary urban spaces. Arkansas has so many murals to see that you are sure to find your favorite. ■

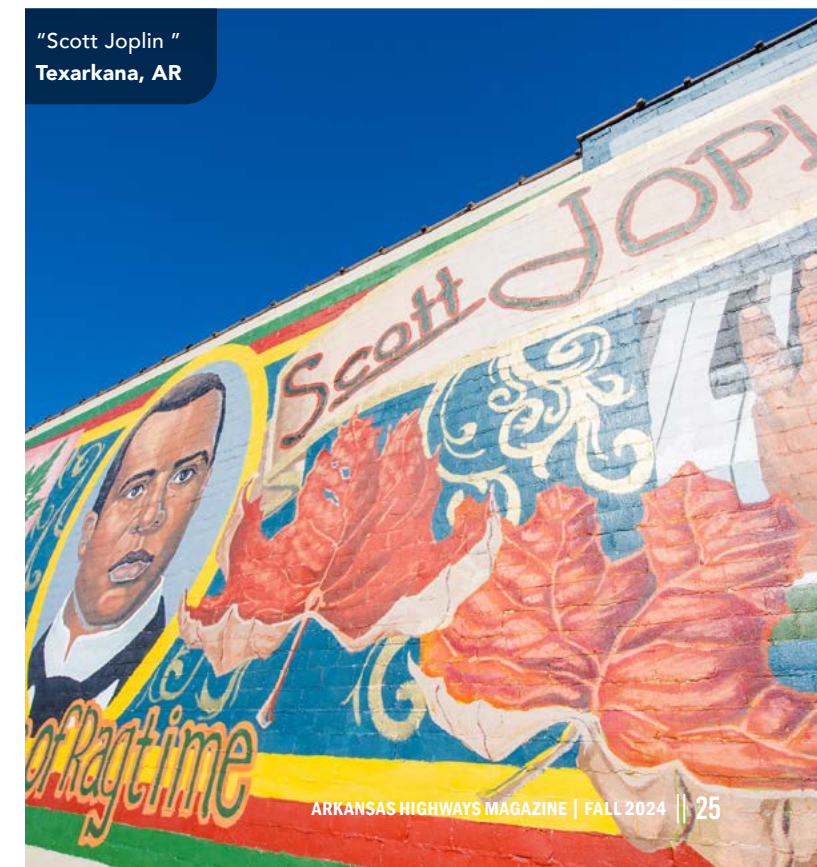
¹ <https://www.americansforthearts.org/2019/05/15/americans-speak-out-about-the-arts-in-2018-an-in-depth-look-at-perceptions-and-attitudes-about-the>



"Athena" by Octavio Logo and Eugene Sargent
Fayetteville, AR



"Remember" by Danae Brissonnet
Hot Springs, AR



"Scott Joplin"
Texarkana, AR

ROLLING ALONG

with David Li

BY MARK WOODALL

DAVID LI SPENDS HIS DAYS WORKING AS A PROGRAMMER FOR SYSTEM & INFORMATION RESEARCH (SIR) FOR THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION. STILL, AFTER WORK, HE CAN USUALLY BE FOUND ENJOYING A DIFFERENT FORM OF TRANSPORTATION FOR BOTH EXERCISE AND ENJOYMENT.

As a child in Beijing, China, Li watched in wonder as a neighbor was riding a unicycle. The experience left a lasting impression on him throughout his teen years.

Years later, while attending school at the University of Arkansas, a friend took him to a local bike shop. That's when he saw another unicycle hanging on the wall.

"At that time [1994], it was \$80, and I considered it too expensive," Li said. "My friend challenged me, but I did not buy it." As a college student the price was a bit out of his reach.

Fast forward to 2010, and Li saw another unicycle on Amazon for \$60 and decided to purchase one.

"I had to put it together, but it was very simple. Then I started to ride it without any help — and it was really hard. I tried many times and then finally gave up," Li said.

Five years later, at the age of 52, he decided to try again. He spent several months just trying to get on the unicycle and eventually succeeded. After a few months, he was able to ride the one-wheeled bike for short distances.

Since then, Li has improved his riding abilities to an expert level. He can be found riding his newest unicycle purchase at least three times a week at Two Rivers Park, near the Big Dam Bridge in Little Rock.

"I normally ride for an hour, which is about 5 to 6 miles," Li said.

To put that into context, when you're riding a normal two-wheeled bicycle, you can pedal and then coast for a while to rest your legs. That's not possible with a unicycle. You are constantly exercising to move forward or backward. The only way to rest is to hop off and stop riding.

Li credits his success to having the drive and determination to keep trying. He feels it's important to get back up whenever you fall off. Li has fallen off many times without injury, but his perseverance has kept him going. He also enjoys the health benefits that come with riding a unicycle.

"The first thing is that you get a full-body workout, not only the legs but also your core. It keeps your waistline trim. It's a good workout, and you don't have to spend a lot of time riding," Li said.

Li feels that riding his unicycle gives him a sense of physical and mental balance, which benefits both mind and body.

"It's also easier to carry. I can't fit my bike into the car, but I can throw this in easily because it's just one wheel. I can throw it in my car and go." ■



If you'd like to see some of Li's unicycle moves and watch him "go," scan the QR code to watch a short video.





ARDOT RECEIVES 3 PERPETUAL PAVEMENT AWARDS

BY MARK WOODALL

THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HAS BEEN HONORED WITH THREE PRESTIGIOUS PERPETUAL PAVEMENT AWARDS FROM THE ASPHALT PAVEMENT ALLIANCE (APA) FOR 2023.

ARDOT's exceptional performance has been recognized in three separate categories, a testament to the department's outstanding work in the transportation sector.

In the Performance category, ARDOT's work on Highway 82 in Union County was recognized. This award honors Perpetual Pavement projects that are at least 35 years old, have suffered no structural failures, and have an average interval between resurfacing of fewer than 13 years.

ARDOT's work on Highway 59 in Benton and Washington counties was recognized in the Design category. This award is given for new roads that meet perpetual design requirements.

The third award, in the Conversion category, was presented to ARDOT for its work on Highway 18 in Mississippi County. The Conversion award recognizes work on roads that have been converted to meet perpetual pavement design criteria.

"We are so grateful for our partnership with the Asphalt Pavement Alliance and the recognition they've given us," ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor said. "This is such an honor for ARDOT and especially our employees who work so hard to improve our highways and interstates to make our lives safer."

The Asphalt Pavement Alliance developed the prestigious Perpetual Pavement Awards to recognize long-life asphalt pavements in the U.S. and honor pavements demonstrating outstanding design and construction.

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

Dear ARDOT

RESURFACING HIGHWAY 255

I just wanted to thank you for resurfacing Highway 255 between Lavaca and Central City, Arkansas. I have lived in Lavaca for 25 years. This is the first time in those 25 years when I have not had to worry about avoiding potholes on this stretch of highway.

— *Gay Williams*

MESSAGES FROM ASK ARDOT

FAST RESPONSE

Thank you so very much! The ARDOT trucks have moved to the center median and no longer block the view. I truly appreciate the fast response.

— *Dorothy Chandler*

NEW CULVERTS

ARDOT responded promptly concerning the stagnant water settling in my ditch in front of our residence. The water was not draining properly. They put in new culverts and dredged out the ditches to make them more level. They added fresh pea gravel at the bottom of both driveway areas above the culverts (2). I am very satisfied with the renovation, and the rainwater and effluent from my septic system are draining more efficiently.

— *Raymond Wilson*

RESTORED SHOULDER

I just wanted to say, they didn't waste any time. [ARDOT] came out and did an excellent job restoring the shoulder. If it ever gets overlaid again I would hope extra width would be added throughout the curve to keep 18 wheeler trailers from dropping off and chipping away at the highway. Thank you for taking care of the potential hazard.

— *David Westerman*

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

ARDOT'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 is the Ouachita National Forest Retirees group. They enrolled in the program in 1987. The group adopted a section of Highway 270 in Garland County.

A warm thank you to the **Ouachita National Forest Retirees** 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

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)

- * **GÜDRUN: NORTHWOODS MOUNTAIN BIKE FESTIVAL 2024:** All biking Vikings are invited to shred the trails during this 3-Day Mountain Bike Festival in Hot Springs. Compete in the Slow Roll Fun Ride, Full Enduro, Waffles & Coffee Time Trial, Jump Jam, Dual Slalom, and more. The event concludes with the Attila the Hun XC Race, the last race of the Arkansas Mountain Bike Championship Series. • NOVEMBER 8 – 10
- * **LIGHTS OF THE OZARKS:** Prepare to be awed by the beauty and magic of more than 500,000 lights at Fayetteville's Historic Downtown Square. Starting with Lighting Night on November 22, the square turns into a winter wonderland at 5 p.m. every night and remains lit until 1 a.m. the following morning. More than just a holiday celebration of lights, the annual event features festive seasonal activities, holiday music, winter treats, hot cocoa, and vendors each night. • NOVEMBER 22 – JANUARY 1
- * **PICCOLO ZOPPÉ WINTER CIRCUS:** This European-style circus will enchant you with its intimate performance – no audience member is more than 18 feet away from the ring. The Zoppé family brings new acts and beloved favorites to the Argenta Arts District this holiday season. Feel the rush of the horses as they gallop past, sharing in this old-world blend of acrobatics, humor, and family entertainment. • NOVEMBER 27 – DECEMBER 7
- * **OZARK HOLIDAYS CRAFT SHOW:** Get all of your holiday shopping done in one place and find unique, handcrafted gifts for your loved ones at the annual Ozark Folk Center State Park's Ozark Holidays Craft Show. Enjoy visiting with artisans in the Craft Village as you peruse handmade jewelry, stained glass, forged knives, painted copper, leather goods, woodcrafts, fiber arts, quilts, pottery, soaps, and more. Stay for lunch and dine at the park's restaurant, Ethan's Heirloom Kitchen. • NOVEMBER 30
- * **SOLSTICE LANTERN STROLL: ILLUMINATING THE LONGEST NIGHT:** Celebrate the Winter Solstice with an interpreter-led Lantern Walk at Mississippi River State Park. Follow the ½-mile Trotting Fox Trail for a leisurely walk under the stars with lanterns followed by warm drinks and s'mores by the campfire. • DECEMBER 21

NOVEMBER 8 - 10
GÜDRUN: NORTHWOODS MOUNTAIN BIKE FESTIVAL 2024
 Cedar Glades Park
Hot Springs, AR

NOVEMBER 22 - JANUARY 1
LIGHTS OF THE OZARKS
 Historic Downtown Square
Fayetteville, AR

NOVEMBER 27 - DECEMBER 7
PICCOLO ZOPPÉ WINTER CIRCUS
 Argenta Arts District
North Little Rock, AR

NOVEMBER 30
OZARK HOLIDAYS CRAFT SHOW
 Ozark Folk Center State Park
 Craft Village
Mountain View, AR

DECEMBER 21
SOLSTICE LANTERN STROLL: ILLUMINATING THE LONGEST NIGHT
 Mississippi River State Park
Marianna, AR



DISTRICT 10

CONSTRUCTION

CORNER



CREWS ARE AT WORK ON THE JONESBORO EASTERN BYPASS, A COMPLEX PROJECT THAT WILL WIDEN AND BUILD A BYPASS CONNECTING HIGHWAY 49 TO INTERSTATE 555. The connector road will remove through traffic on Red Wolf Boulevard, alleviating congestion in this area and improving traffic flow through Jonesboro.

As part of the bypass project, crews will widen a city street to a five-lane highway from Highway 18 north to Pacific Road, construct a new location of a four-lane highway with a raised median from Pacific Road north to Highway 49, construct a new overpass over the railroad and Kathleen Street, and widen Highway 18 Spur (Martin Luther King Jr Drive) from a two-lane highway to a five-lane highway.

"Work on the north end will proceed throughout this year. I would expect the overpass to be completed this work

season and a lot of the north end will also be complete," District 10 Construction Engineer Shannon Luke said. "As utility relocation is finished, work will begin on the middle section. This will entail building one side of the roadway, then moving traffic and building the other side. The south third of the project will proceed much like the middle section. We will widen one side of the road, then move traffic and widen the other."

All sections of the roadway will have storm drain, curb and gutter, and sidewalks. There will be three traffic signals installed: at Highway 49, Highway 18, and C.W. Post Road. When complete, this route will be designated as Highway 49 and the current Highway 49 (Red Wolf Boulevard) will be renamed Highway 49B.

The bid for the project was awarded to White River Materials, Inc. of Batesville, Arkansas for \$61 million. ■





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