

Arkansas HIGHWAYS

SUMMER 2024

A PUBLICATION OF THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | MAGAZINE

CROSSING THE FINISH LINE

30 Crossing Nearing Completion

**SAFETY EVENT LAUNCHES
Fundraising Effort**

**ARDOT ADDS
New Online Tool**

**STIP:
ARDOT's Playbook**

Dear ARDOT Family,

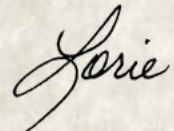
HOPE EVERYONE IS HAVING A GOOD SUMMER! I am happy to report that we are well on our way to raising the funds for our ARDOT Fallen Workers Memorial Monument. Our industry partners and friends of ARDOT have been so supportive and generous. And our ARDOT employees, both active and retired, have also given generously.

In a previous message, I talked about the French term, "esprit de corps" which means a strong sense of unity and enthusiasm among a group of people. It's like a special team spirit that makes everyone feel connected and committed to the same goals. Our coming together to raise funds for the Monument has increased ARDOT's esprit de corps in a very positive and meaningful way. I have loved the comradery and the fun. I hope you have enjoyed James Patrick's songs to commemorate some of the fund-raising events:

- Mouth Full of BBQ
- Burgers, Dogs, and Songs
- Smoked Bologna

By the end of the summer, we should have the funding in place to begin construction. I am so thankful for everyone's hard work and contributions to make the Monument a reality. I am so proud to be a part the amazing ARDOT family.

All my best,



Lorie H. Tudor, P.E., Director



FRONT COVER:
Work progresses on 30 Crossing.

BACK COVER:
Wildflower field near Interstate 40 Bridge.

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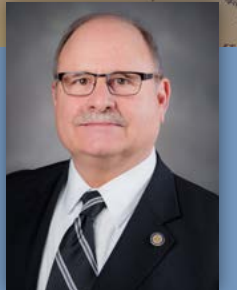


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CROSSING THE **FINISH LINE**

30 CROSSING NEARING COMPLETION

BY MARK WOODALL

I F YOU HAVE EVER RACED IN A 5K OR A MARATHON, YOU FEEL A SENSE OF RELIEF WHEN YOU CAN SEE THE FINISH LINE APPROACHING. ARDOT engineers, contractors, and those who drive through central Arkansas feel the same about the 30 Crossing project between downtown Little Rock and North Little Rock.

After four years of construction and several more years of planning before that, we are finally on the home stretch of this marathon and everyone is cheering us on as we approach the finish line.

A BRIEF HISTORY

On April 26, 2016, a public involvement meeting was held at the Wyndham Riverfront Hotel in North Little Rock to discuss the proposed widening of Interstate 30 through North Little Rock and Little Rock, including widening I-30 as it crosses the Arkansas River between the two cities. The project was branded "30 Crossing."

This was the sixth outreach meeting, and it was an opportunity for the public to see detailed plans for expanding one of the most traveled Interstates in Arkansas.

The need to widen I-30 and improve its interchanges with Interstate 40 directly resulted from projected population increases in the Little Rock and North Little Rock regions. According to a Metroplan study conducted at the time, the region was expected to grow by 220,000 people between 2015 and 2025.

Severe congestion on I-30 near downtown Little Rock and long commutes put businesses at risk of moving out of downtown to outlying suburban areas.

The area where Interstates 630, 30, and 40 converge averages 120,000 cars daily.

"The structural and functional deficiencies within the corridor

and the much-needed operational improvements to outdated access to downtown Little Rock and North Little Rock had to be addressed," Assistant Chief Engineer for Program Delivery Keli Wylie said. "The improvements to the corridor had been identified and proposed by local planning officials for almost two decades, so action had to be taken."

At first, the project was met with criticism by some.

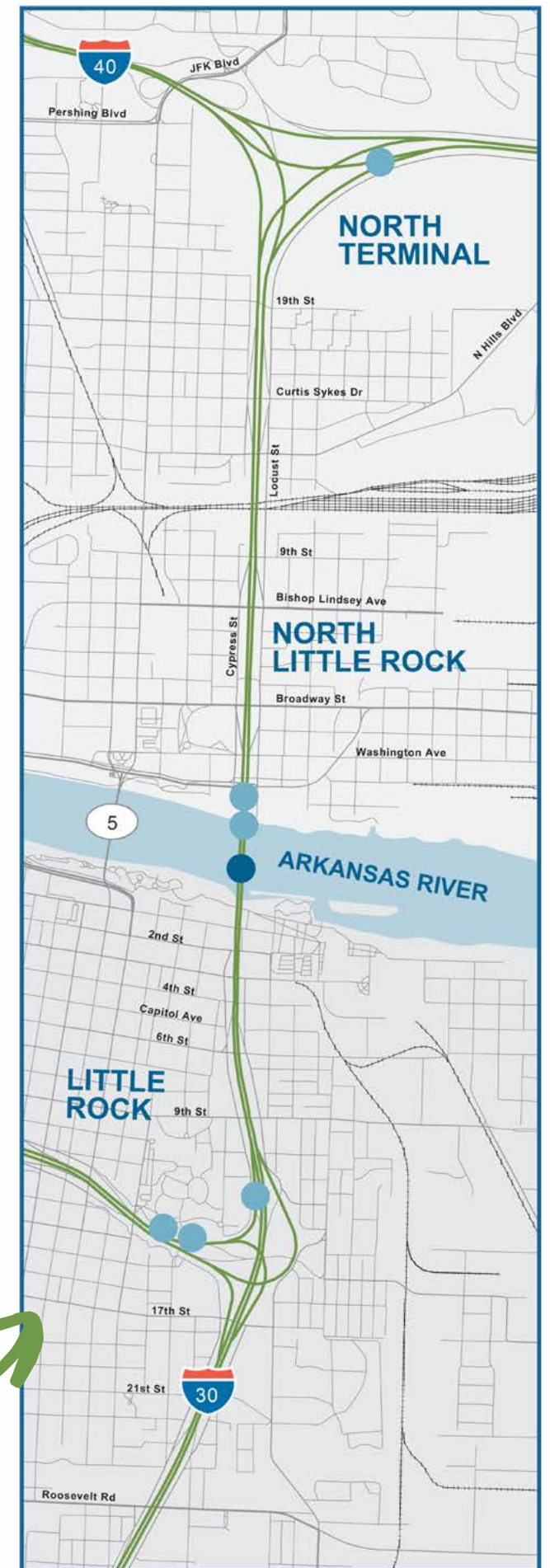
"I quickly realized that a lot of the frustration and hostility was borne from a lack of understanding of the final design and just wanting to be heard, and their feelings and concerns validated," Wylie said, "I can honestly say that we did listen, and the final design is completely different than what we started with – a truly collaborative process."

A MASSIVE UNDERTAKING

Construction began in late summer of 2020. The work involved reconstructing the existing six-lane (three in each direction) roadway, reconfiguring and demolishing the Highway 10 interchange, widening and improving the Arkansas River Bridge, and enhancing connectivity in the downtown road network. An added benefit is the creation of 18 acres of green space between Cumberland and Mahlon Martin streets, which improves connectivity and continuity between the east and west sides of Interstate 30.

This is the first design-build project that involved multi-level collaboration between ARDOT, Kiewit-Massman Construction (KMC), and Garver Engineering. The size and scope of the plans for such a large-scale project came with a unique set of challenges. For example, construction required utility relocations and complex subsurface conditions during the drilling operations on the eastbound bridge. Custom equipment was designed and fabricated to alleviate the issue during work on the bridge's westbound side. The old bridge

(continued on page 6)



deconstruction required an entire year of planning.

“What truly sets the 30 Crossing project apart from others is not just the scale or complexity but the people behind it,” Cass Sobek, KMC Project Manager said. “This cooperative approach has not only facilitated problem-solving but also fostered a strong sense of partnership and mutual respect. It’s a testament to the power of collaboration in overcoming obstacles and achieving shared goals.”

Many new urban projects face resistance due to their

THE NUMBERS

94,000 CY concrete	499,000 CY embankment
23,000 Tons structural steel	170 Tons asphalt
8,000 Tons reinforcing steel	1,992,000 Man Hours (including Subcontractors)
525,000 CY excavation	1,575 calendar days

Trouble visualizing?



1 CY (Cubic Yard)
looks like a standard
washing machine



1 Ton is about 2 times
the weight of a horse

proximity to and impact on the local community, and 30 Crossing was no different. However, the on-time and on-budget project has steadily gained support from citizens and local leaders.

“I’ve already received calls from people who are excited about the additional green space in downtown Little Rock and the look of the new roadway, which is fitting for a metro area the size of Little Rock,” Arkansas Highway Commissioner Marie Holder said.

The City of Little Rock has expressed interest in developing the green space into a public park to further enhance the downtown landscape. ARDOT is actively working with the City to allow these improvements by permit.

SAFETY FIRST

When undertaking such a complex project, safety has to take precedence. The construction team has prioritized the welfare of its workers and the local community at every step of the way.

ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor remains committed to the well-being of ARDOT’s workforce and its contractors. “We prioritize safety on every project, but I’m especially proud of how everyone on the 30 Crossing team has worked together to ensure a safe work environment.”

Sobek echoes the importance of avoiding harmful incidents on the job site and the surrounding area. “Every decision we make, every action we take, is guided by our commitment to ensuring the well-being of our team and the community. It’s not just about building an infrastructure, but about doing so in a manner that respects and safeguards everyone involved.”

ON THE HOMESTRETCH

Wylie has received much credit for heading up such a large-scale operation, but she humbly dismisses the numerous kudos in favor of recognizing everyone involved. “This entire project is a great example of collaboration and teamwork between Department staff, our consultant partners, local stakeholders, elected officials, the Federal Highway Administration, and the design-build team,” Wylie said. “We have had unlimited support from the Director and the Commission throughout the entire process, which has undoubtedly contributed greatly to the success of the project.”

While it’s not a literal race to the finish line, we know the citizens of Arkansas and those traveling along the I-30 Corridor will no doubt be cheering when we finally cut the ribbon on this project’s completion. ■

North Little Rock

Final traffic switch at I-30/I-40 Interchange

River Bridge

Place final deck on I-30 WB bridge
Partial opening of the new I-30 WB bridge

Little Rock

Place deck on I-630 bridge
Place closure pour on I-630
Open new I-30 WB frontage road ramp to I-630

MID 2024

River Bridge

Fully open the new I-30 WB Bridge

LATE 2024



SAFETY EVENT LAUNCHES FUNDRAISING EFFORT

Fallen Workers Memorial Monument Concept Unveiled

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

ON APRIL 15, ARDOT HOSTED A NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK KICK-OFF MEDIA EVENT IN DOWNTOWN LITTLE ROCK, OVERLOOKING THE INTERSTATE 30 CROSSING WORK ZONE. The event's purpose was two-fold: to bring awareness to the safety of the men and women working in construction zones and to launch the fundraising effort for the ARDOT Fallen Workers Memorial Monument.

"Today's event is so meaningful and important because it does focus on lives, the lives of our ARDOT employees and the lives of our contractor employees that are all family to us," ARDOT Director, Lorie Tudor said.

In partnership with the Arkansas Good Roads Foundation, ARDOT has launched fundraising efforts for a permanent ARDOT Fallen Workers Memorial Monument. Dedicated to the men and women who have died in service to our state, the memorial will be placed on ARDOT's campus in Little Rock.

"The reason for this memorial will always be sorrowful, but it's

also something humbling and an honor to see the project begin and be part of something special for their families," Arkansas Good Roads Foundation President, Robert Moery said.

During the 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 (AGRF) with checks to help pay for the Fallen Workers Memorial.

ARDOT maintains a list of employees who have been lost in work-related accidents. Currently, those who lost their lives in a work zone are recognized with a temporary memorial of orange cones, each with the name of a fallen worker.

Earlier this year, ARDOT employees were asked to submit ideas for a permanent workers memorial. Those ideas were used to create a concept drawing by ARDOT Advanced Public Involvement Specialist, Edward Ariza (Ariza retired in April).

"I'm looking forward to coming back with my grandkids and my kids to see it one day," Ariza said.

The kick-off event was timely for announcing the fundraising effort because National Work Zone Awareness Week calls

“**TODAY'S EVENT IS SO MEANINGFUL AND IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT DOES FOCUS ON LIVES, THE LIVES OF OUR ARDOT EMPLOYEES AND THE LIVES OF OUR CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEES THAT ARE ALL FAMILY TO US.**”

ARDOT Director, Lorie Tudor

attention to the safety of the men and women who spend their days working in construction zones.

"This week and beyond, we commit to making our work zones safer and more secure, and we'll continue to honor and appreciate the invaluable contributions of the men and women who build, maintain, and improve our infrastructure," AGC of Arkansas Executive Vice President, Brad Spradlin said.

The awareness week is held annually at the start of construction season. During the campaign, state departments of transportation, national road safety organizations, government agencies, private companies, and individuals come together to promote safe driving practices within roadway work zones. This year's theme was especially poignant, "Work zones are temporary. Actions behind the wheel can last forever."

"Work zone safety isn't just about rules and regulations. It's about protecting the lives and preserving the moments that make life worth living today and every day," AAPA Executive Director, Park Estes said.

ARDOT is still in the early planning stages of the memorial. Be sure to check back for updates.

"We are committed to continually strive to make our roads, work zones, and employees safer," Arkansas Highway Commissioner, Marie Holder said. "I'm optimistic that 2024 will be our best year yet." ■



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 (AGRF) with checks to help pay for the Fallen Workers Memorial Monument.



AGCARKANSAS

ATSSA
Safer Roads Save Lives



ARDOT Adds NEW ONLINE TOOL

BY MARK WOODALL

THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ARDOT) HAS CREATED A NEW ONLINE TOOL TO ENABLE ARKANSAS RESIDENTS TO CHECK THE LATEST DATA ABOUT ROAD AND BRIDGE CONDITIONS.

The Transportation Performance Dashboard was developed as part of an Arkansas Legislative Council (ALC) efficiency study recommendation, which requires ARDOT to establish a dashboard that showcases the status of various Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Anyone with computer access can check bridge, interstate, and non-interstate conditions simply by hovering over the area with a mouse.

“The oversight and subcommittees for this recommendation determined KPIs should be featured on the dashboard to show pavement and bridge conditions on Arkansas’ National Highway System,” said ARDOT Staff GIS & Mapping Administrator Sharon Hawkins.

The website displays color-coded gauges on the dashboard. Green represents good conditions, orange indicates fair conditions, and red shows poor conditions. Federal guidelines determine the standards for these condition ratings.

“When users go to the website, the various gauges and charts on the front page allow a quick view of the KPIs. When those are clicked on, back pages offer additional information, graphs, and web map applications that allow any user to learn more about how ARDOT gathers and reports on the data shown,” added Hawkins.

Users can view the Department’s Fact Sheet and Transportation Asset Management Plan from the front page. The web page also provides additional information about construction job status and completed projects around the state. Details about funding, fact sheets, and the ARDOT Asset Management Plan are hyperlinked so users can gather additional information.

Data for the KPIs is gathered from different resources at ARDOT, and the Bridge Operations Division provides condition data as reported to Federal Highways annually for the National Bridge Inventory. The System Information and Research Division (SIR) provides the pavement condition as reported to Federal Highways annually as a part of the Highway Performance and Monitoring System (HPMS) submittal. The Planning Division provides the safety information reported and used to make decisions towards developing safety measures, and the Program Management Division provides the construction project totals and costs.

“Having all this information in an easy-to-use spot for users has been ideal,” Hawkins said.

Users can also access data from the previous year and view previous reports.

The committee considered and developed the website with the intent that users would quickly see the performance of the KPIs featured on the site. By clicking on each one, they can learn more and view additional information.

ARDOT is excited to hear feedback about this new site and looks forward to keeping users informed about our performance. ■

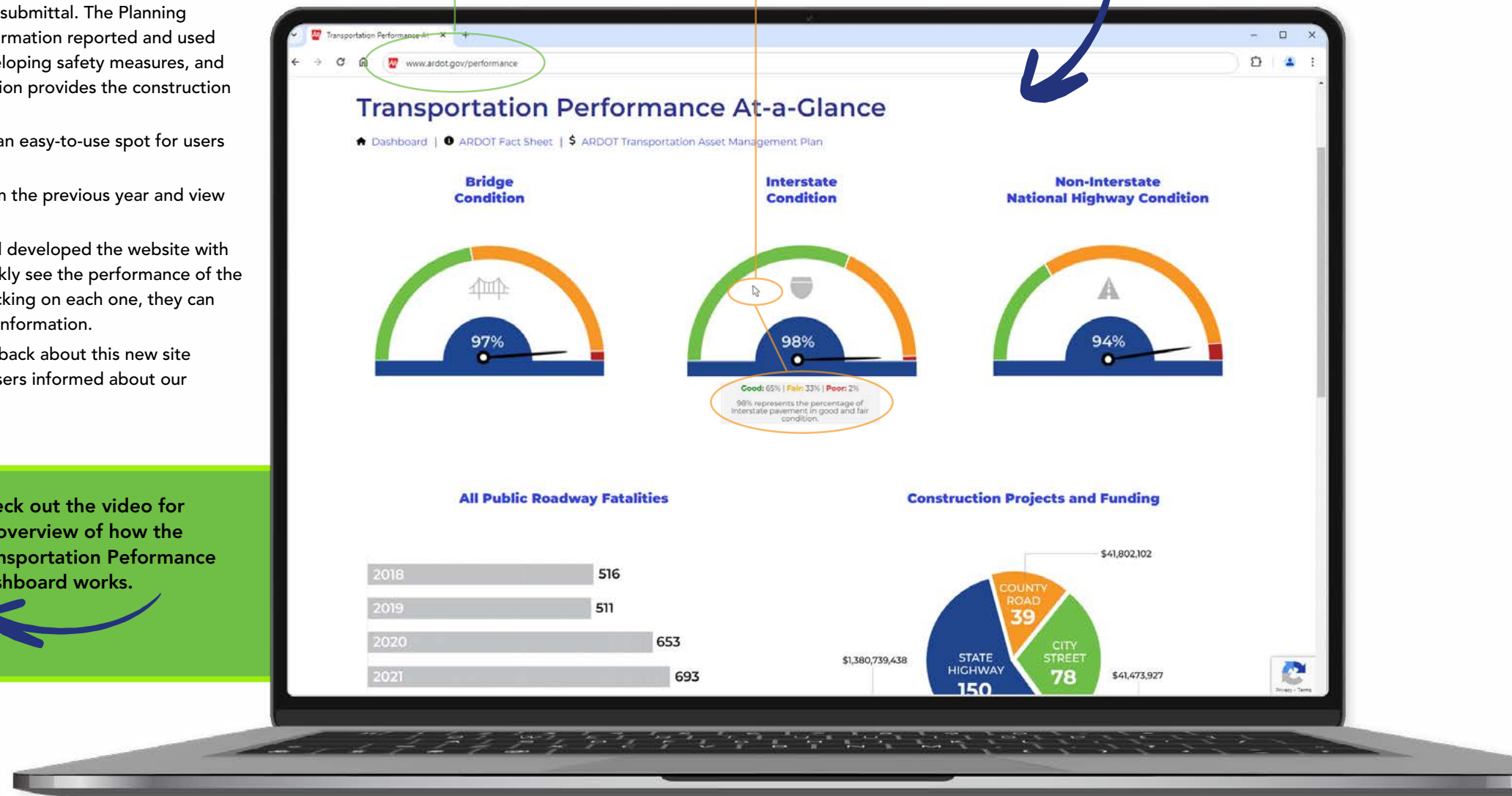


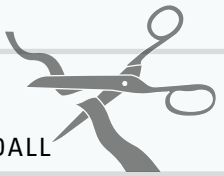
Check out the video for an overview of how the Transportation Performance Dashboard works.

Visit the new webpage at ardot.gov/performance

Interested in a detailed breakdown?
Hover over each graph.

Interested in learning more?
Click each graph for a back page.





Groundbreaking Ceremony at XNA

Growth in Northwest Arkansas Creates Need for Airport Connector and Bypass

For years, Arkansas residents have heard about the tremendous growth in the northwest corner of our state. Based on 2022 U.S. Census Bureau reports, the Northwest Arkansas (NWA) metropolitan area, made up of Benton, Madison, and Washington counties, has been named the nation's 100th largest metro area.

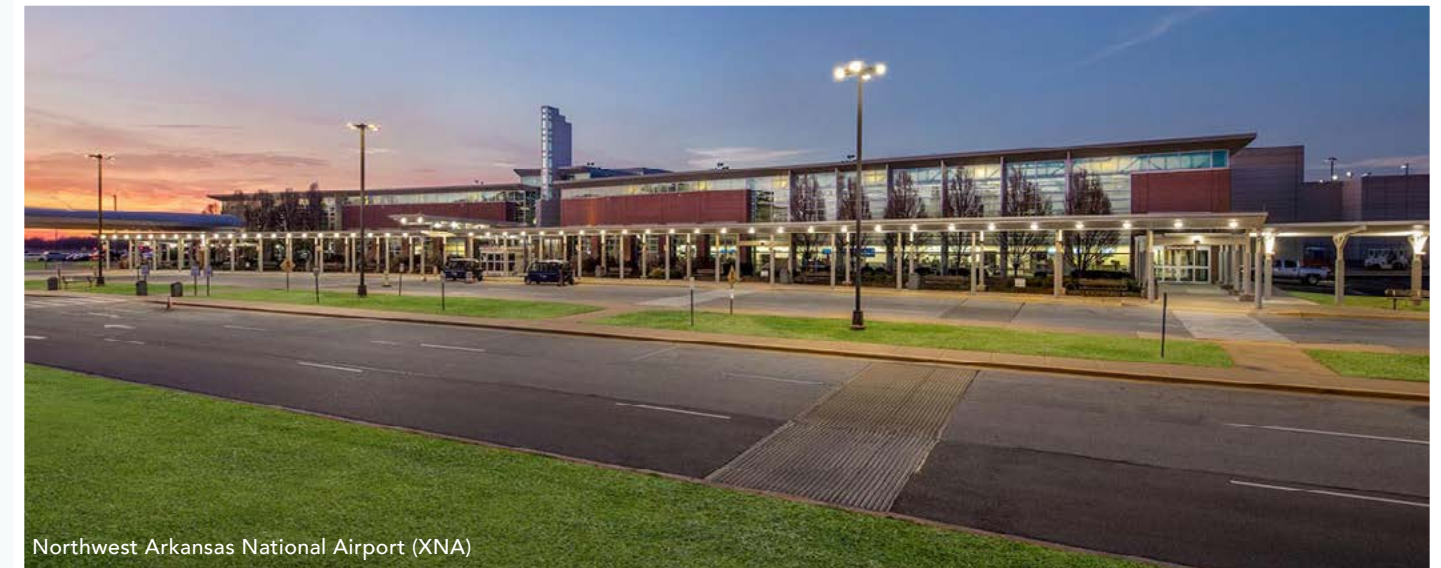
"Thirty-six people move here every day, so we are just trying to keep up with the tremendous growth in the area," Highway Commission Vice Chairman Philip Taldo said.

The area's rapid growth has created a need for improvements to infrastructure, including a better way to get to and from the Northwest Arkansas National Airport (XNA). Since it opened in 1998, XNA has seen monumental growth in the number of enplanements (people boarding a plane and flying out of an airport). In the 12-month period from March 2023 to February 2024, XNA had more than 1 million enplanements.

ARDOT has been working hard to keep up with the incredible rate of growth in the area. This April, we held a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the start of construction on a new XNA Connector Road and a new section of the Springdale Northern Bypass. Planning for these projects began over 20 years ago. These improvements will help alleviate traffic congestion and allow for safe travel.

According to Howard Kerr, XNA Board Chairman, "Today marks a significant milestone for Northwest Arkansas National Airport. For over two decades, the need for a safe and efficient access road, to and from the southern part of the region, has been a lengthy topic of discussion. For as long as I can remember the XNA Board has not had a meeting without mentioning the need for an XNA road to provide quick access for our passengers."

When completed, the XNA Connector will be a four-lane,



Northwest Arkansas National Airport (XNA)

interstate-style divided highway that spans nearly 4 miles between XNA and the Springdale Bypass. The new section of the Springdale Northern Bypass will complete the connection of Interstate 49 in Springdale to Highway 412 in Tontitown. These improvements will continue to position Northwest Arkansas for success, enabling the economy to prosper, local businesses to flourish, and tourism to thrive.

Among the dignitaries who attended the event was former Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson. He played a key role in the permanent taxpayer-approved funding in 2020 through Issue 1.

"This is an important day for Arkansas, and obviously, the ½-cent sales tax the voters of Arkansas supported, and the Governor's Highway Plan, makes a big difference to be able to do these projects. Thanks to the citizens of Arkansas for having that vision – it's not only going to enhance our growth, but this connector will make it a lot easier on everyone," Hutchinson said.

Springdale Mayor Doug Sprouse echoed the thanks of everyone who helped make this project happen. The mayor also brought huge laughs from the crowd by jokingly suggesting a new way to raise funds for additional projects in Northwest Arkansas.

"I know this isn't the last project we'll need funding for. Imagine, with me, if you will, Highway 412 in Springdale with a strategically placed series of swear jars. I think we would have raised the money for this much sooner. But I'm also up on the latest technology, so I would suggest a Swear Jar App. We could easily get \$1 to \$2 from people coming through Springdale. I've ridden with some of you; we could easily get \$15 to \$20. It's just food for thought," Sprouse said.

Following the laughter from the crowd, Mayor Sprouse ended on a serious note by thanking the voters of Arkansas, the Arkansas Highway Commission, Director Lorie Tudor, and everyone involved in making this project happen.

The contract for the Springdale Bypass was awarded to Emery Sapp & Sons, Inc. for \$181 million. The anticipated completion date is mid-2026. The XNA Connector contract was awarded to Crossland Construction Company, Inc. for \$128 million. Its expected completion date is scheduled for mid-2027.

Phase III of the bypass, from Interstate 49 to Highway 265, is under development. Construction on that section is expected to begin in early 2026. The final phase, which will connect Highway 265 to Highway 412 East, is also under development. Construction will begin on that project when additional funds become available.

ARDOT Director Tudor praised our elected officials, Senator John Boozman and Congressman Steve Womack, for their assistance in securing an additional \$7 million in community project funds. "These projects would not have been possible without their assistance and support from the XNA Airport Authority and the City of Springdale." ■



In April, ARDOT officially broke ground on a new XNA Connector Road and a new section of the Springdale Northern Bypass.





Tuckerman Ribbon Cutting

Citizen's Concerns Inspire Partnership and a Safer Roadway

In October 2017, Josh Loftin was hauling grain from his farm in Grubbs to market in Tuckerman. It's a relatively short distance if traveled on Highway 37 East, directly between the two communities. But for large trucks, it could be a dangerous 15-mile stretch.

Due to an extremely sharp curve, Highway 37 East could be difficult for large trucks to navigate. Often, this caused drivers to leave the lane of traffic to make it around the curve. Sometimes trucks would even overturn when traveling this part of the road, so most of the farming community would travel the route with extreme caution.

When the new section of Highway 67 opened, bypassing Tuckerman and intersecting with Highway 37 East, it inadvertently created a new dilemma for Loftin and other community members. Although Highway 37 East was the shortest, most direct route between Tuckerman and Grubbs, it was a low-weight road. It was restricted to vehicles weighing less than 64,000 lbs.; vehicles weighing over the limit were required to use a different road.

By Arkansas law, heavy trucks are allowed to travel on a weight-restricted roadway until they reach an intersection

with a road without weight restrictions. In the past, farmers could use Highway 37 East with their oversized loads despite the weight restrictions because there wasn't a non-weight-restricted road that intersected with Highway 37 East between Tuckerman and Grubbs.

The Highway 67 bypass created an intersection with Highway 37 East. Highway 67 was not weight-restricted, so oversized loads were required by law to turn off there. This caused trucks traveling between the two communities to travel an additional 21 miles out of the way.

In 2017, Loftin was traveling Highway 37 East, the direct route from Grubbs to Tuckerman, when he received a citation for having an oversized load.

"It was a 64,000-pound-weight-restricted road at the time, so it was a low-weight highway. It was a costly ticket," said Loftin.

Unless he wanted another citation, Loftin had to take the detour to deliver his grain to Tuckerman. The citation was only a small part of the problem. Anyone driving an 18-wheeler, large farming equipment, or a school bus had to navigate the narrow curves.

"The tractor-trailer trucks were having difficulties making



(L. to R.) Jackson County Judge Jeff Phillips, Former ARDOT District 5 Engineer Bruce Street, District 2 Justice of the Peace Tommy Young, and ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor hold a sign for Highway 37 at the ARDOT ribbon-cutting ceremony in Tuckerman.



(L. to R.) Tommy Young and farmer Josh Loftin at the ceremony.

the sharp 90-degree turn on Highway 37, and on more than one occasion, a loaded truck tipped over," said Highway Commission Chairman Alec Farmer.

Loftin contacted the local Farm Bureau for help. Tommy Young, who was the Jackson County Farm Bureau Chairman in Tuckerman at the time, reached out to city, county, and state officials.

"We held a meeting with Highway Commission Chairman Alec Farmer, ARDOT District 5 Engineer Bruce Street, and the Arkansas Highway Police," Young said. "In my opinion, the cooperation from the different agencies should be an example for others to follow. We feel like today is a great event for us because it marks the end of a project and a new bright future for Tuckerman."

That meeting led to a partnership agreement to develop a plan to fix the problems.

In April, ARDOT held a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Tuckerman.

"This is a fabulous project where everybody stepped in to work together," ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor said. "We were able to take the weight restriction off. The county did some base work, and the City of Tuckerman took over some roads to help offset the cost. We've also added shoulders and

straightened out the curve so that people traveling between Tuckerman and Grubbs have a safe road to travel on."

As for Josh Loftin, "The road is much better. It's in good shape, we don't have any problems, and it's safe for travel."

Atlas Asphalt was awarded the \$6 million project. The company resurfaced 20 miles of roadway between the Black River and Grubbs.

A video of the ribbon-cutting celebration can be found by scanning the QR code below. ■



Scan here to watch a video of the ribbon-cutting celebration in Tuckerman.

STIP: ARDOT'S PLAYBOOK

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL



2023-2026 STIP

2023-2026 STIP

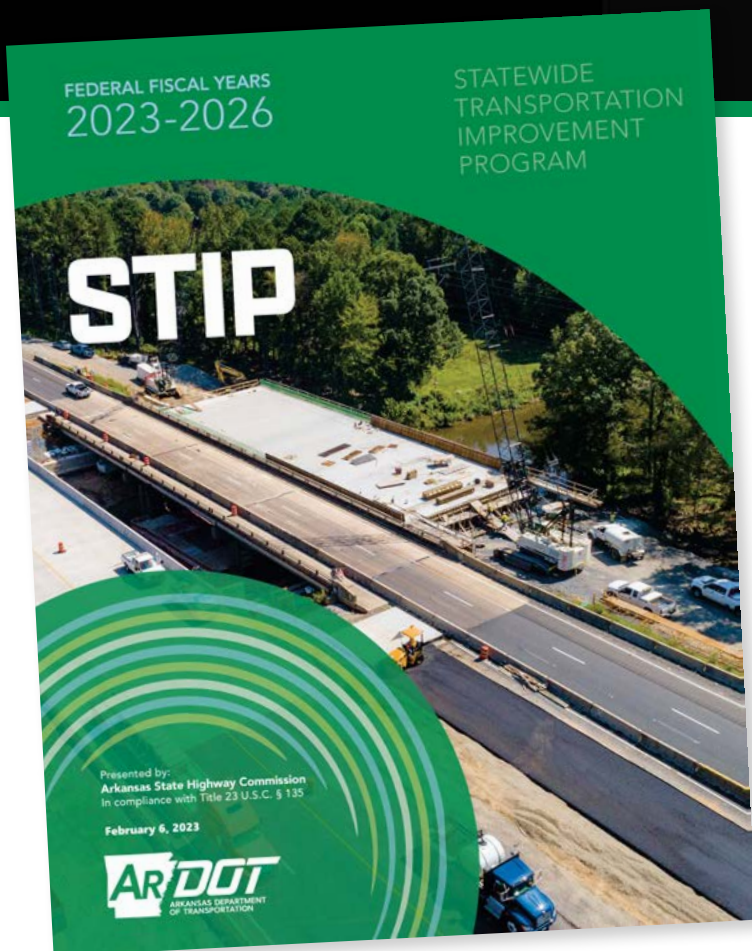
2023-2026 STIP FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORT

All amounts shown in thousands.

FTA Funding Category	2023		2024		2025		2026		Total
	Available	Scheduled	Available	Scheduled	Available	Scheduled	Available	Scheduled	
FTA - Safety	\$ 1,170.0	\$ 1,170.0	\$ 1,170.0	\$ 1,170.0	\$ 1,170.0	\$ 1,170.0	\$ 1,170.0	\$ 1,170.0	\$ 4,680.0
FTA - System Preservation	\$ 2,485.0	\$ 2,485.0	\$ 2,485.0	\$ 2,485.0	\$ 2,485.0	\$ 2,485.0	\$ 2,485.0	\$ 2,485.0	\$ 9,940.0
FTA - Capital Improvement	\$ 16,544.0	\$ 16,544.0	\$ 17,110.0	\$ 17,110.0	\$ 17,110.0	\$ 17,110.0	\$ 17,110.0	\$ 17,110.0	\$ 67,484.0
FTA - Other	\$ 3,402.0	\$ 3,402.0	\$ 3,402.0	\$ 3,402.0	\$ 3,402.0	\$ 3,402.0	\$ 3,402.0	\$ 3,402.0	\$ 13,608.0
Total	\$ 24,601.0	\$ 24,601.0	\$ 24,167.0	\$ 24,167.0	\$ 24,167.0	\$ 24,167.0	\$ 24,167.0	\$ 24,167.0	\$ 96,657.0

We look at pavement and bridge condition needs, but we also want to make sure we are spreading that money around the state as evenly as possible.

- ARDOT Chief Engineer for Preconstruction, Jared Wiley



IN SPORTS, TEAMS HAVE A PLAYBOOK THAT INCLUDES STEPS, STRATEGIES, AND VISUALS THAT BREAK DOWN EACH PLAY INTO INDIVIDUAL PARTS. Before the team ever competes on the field of play, each member learns the content of the playbook and practices its content. The playbook is like a detailed roadmap or manual for the team's success.

ARDOT has its own playbook – the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

“Without the STIP, the public doesn’t know what we are working to deliver for them over the next four years,” ARDOT Chief Engineer for Preconstruction, Jared Wiley, said. “Without the STIP, our staff doesn’t know where to focus their efforts and attention each day.”

The Federal government requires every state department of transportation to produce a STIP that covers four fiscal years. The STIP plan must be financially constrained – it can’t include more projects than the department expects to have money for. Federal funds can’t be used for any project that isn’t included in the plan.

ARDOT’s current STIP covers Federal Fiscal Years 2023 to 2026. It includes 814 projects, covering 4,100 miles of highways, 270 bridges, and a budget of \$4.4 billion.

The STIP is updated every two years. ARDOT begins work on the next STIP as soon as the most recent two-year update has been approved. This ensures that staff have a constant stream of projects to work on and keeps them from being overwhelmed by multiple years of projects dropping on them at once.

HOW DOES ARDOT DECIDE WHAT PROJECTS TO INCLUDE IN THE STIP?

Ideas for the STIP can come from anyone. Suggestions for projects come in from the public, legislators, department subject-matter experts, metropolitan planning organizations, and other transportation partners. Ideas reach us through letters, emails, and phone calls.

Once we receive this “universe of projects” the ideas are grouped into three main project categories: safety improvement, system preservation, and capital improvement (or economic development).

Once all data is in, a requested list of projects is generated. Data is fed into a software package called Decision Lens.

“And back to the sports analogy, this is a software that we’ve been using for over a decade now,” Wiley said. “But when we started using it, we learned that many professional sports teams use this same software package to help decide who to draft and hire when they’re making decisions.”

ARDOT then compares projects based on safety data, condition data, and mobility. Safety data is submitted by law enforcement partners around the state and processed by ARDOT’s Traffic Safety Division. Traffic count information is collected by ARDOT’s System Information and Research division. Staff consider how much more volume a roadway can handle, and economic competitiveness of a project, including whether it is on the four-lane roadway grid system, on the primary highway network, and what percentage of truck traffic is in the area. We also look at performance measures that ARDOT is required to meet, based on the prescriptive measures the federal government has put in place.

“We look at pavement and bridge condition needs,” Wiley said. “But we also want to make sure we are spreading that money around the state as evenly as possible.”

All of this information is run through Decision Lens and it

creates a ranking system. District engineers review the data and subject-matter experts are consulted. At this point, once ranking is established staff start looking at how much funding we estimate that we’re going to have – we can’t put more projects into the STIP than we can afford.

Wiley estimates that the current update will include \$2.2 billion in new projects for 2027 and 2028 combined. In general, funding is distributed on a 75/25-percent basis, as directed by the Arkansas State Highway Commission (ASHC). Seventy-five percent of the funding goes toward taking care of what we currently have. Twenty-five percent goes to capital improvement/economic improvement projects.

After the Commission provides input and direction, a notice of its availability is published in newspapers and sent to over 1,000 people/businesses within the state. A 30-day comment period is initiated. Once the comment period ends, staff look at every comment we receive and respond to every comment in-kind – emails receive an email response, letters are answered by letter, etc.

ARDOT summarizes all comments and comes back to the Commission. They work together to finalize a draft STIP.

“This is the most important document/report at ARDOT,” Wiley said.

Once the Commission approves a final draft of the STIP, then it goes to the Federal Highway Administration. Once they approve it, then it becomes final.

Although Wiley makes it sound like an easy process, it requires many hours of staff time from beginning to end because staff members don’t just work on the STIP; they also have their regular day-to-day duties and responsibilities to complete at the same time.

“A lot of work goes into projects before they are projects,” Wiley said. “Countless hours are dedicated to making this successful and our staff are much appreciated for it.”



Carmen Rose,
Chief Meteorologist at Fox16



Kanesha Adams,
Founder & CEO of Bearapy Bookshelf



Dr. Tina Moore,
ADHE Director of Workforce Development

THE POWER OF BEING AT THE TABLE

ARDOT Hosts Women in STEM Conference

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

HOSTED BY ARDOT AND ON THE JOB TRAINING AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAMS (OJTSS), THE THIRD ANNUAL WOMEN IN STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH) CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN LITTLE ROCK ON APRIL 12. The event, for female students in grades nine through 12, encouraged young women from all over the state to learn about and pursue careers in STEM.

ARDOT Director Lorie Tudor spoke at the beginning of the conference and encouraged young women to learn more about engineering and other STEM fields. Talking about her own choice to become an engineer, Tudor said, "It's been a great career—I have never regretted going into this field. I have loved every minute of it."

Carmen Rose, chief meteorologist for Fox-16 in Little Rock, served as the event's moderator. She encouraged young women to explore, learn, and ask questions.

"This is something that I'm very passionate about," Rose said. "Meteorology is basically science, but there's a ton of math. Of course, there is technology too and there's even a little bit of creativity that we get to do as well."

Students learned about the job market and STEM career choices from Dr. Tina Moore, director of Workforce Development, Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

"Why study STEM?" Moore said. "Why is the STEM workforce so great?"

Moore explained that the STEM fields are growing faster than non-STEM fields and that they have higher salaries. She shared information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics that predicts that jobs in STEM fields are projected to increase by 10.8% between 2022 and 2032, while non-STEM occupations are only predicted to grow by 2.3% during the same period.

Moore shared different types of career paths in STEM fields including the more well-known professions – engineer, doctor, dentist, scientist – to some of the lesser known, like robot choreographer, naval architect, and technical writer. She talked about training for the fields that included traditional colleges, two-year colleges, trade schools, and apprenticeships. Above all, she encouraged young women to examine what they enjoy doing and seek a related career.

Students were able to choose from three different breakout sessions that were offered in the morning and the afternoon with Dr. Sandra Leiterman, managing director, University of Arkansas Little Rock; Julia Phillips, P.E., director of Transportation Systems, BGE, Inc.; and Jane Hurley, Education and Outreach specialist, Central Arkansas Water.

Kanesha Adams, founder and CEO, Bearapy Bookshelf, spoke during lunch. Bearapy Bookshelf is an EdTech company that Adams created to teach students the importance of storytelling and creativity. Bearapy is short for Bears, Books, and Therapy.

Adams discussed gender stereotypes and how these have been proven to start as early as preschool. She reminded the young women present that "you can be cute and code."

Women in STEM CONFERENCE

On a more serious note, she discussed how this has traditionally impacted women's participation in STEM careers, causing girls, especially minorities to shy away from STEM fields that have been seen as male-dominated and inflexible.

"If more women show up in these male-dominated spaces, they (men) are going to have to shift what happens and be a little more inclusive of who we are and what we bring to the table," Adams said. "But first we have to show up at the table." She encouraged participants to realize that there is a place for them in STEM careers and to "just know you have a place at the table, know what that looks like – in the power of you being in those places," and what impact that will have for other women and other young girls.

The afternoon breakout sessions were followed by a panel discussion mediated by ARDOT's Media Communications Manager, Ellen Coulter. The panel included Kiana Waits, marketing coordinator, BreachBits; Dr. Dina Jones, assistant professor, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; Keli Wylie, P.E., assistant chief engineer, Program Delivery, ARDOT; Staci Stagg, strategic account manager, CISCO Systems; Natalie Rogers, P.E., water resources engineer, Halff Associates, Inc.

While not attending a breakout session or listening to a speaker, participants were able to visit vendor booths. Many of the booths were staffed by women who have careers in the STEM fields and participants were able to interact one-on-one and ask questions.

Among the exhibitors were Harbor Environmental Safety and Engineering, Garver Engineers, McClelland Consulting Engineers, CEI Solutions, Rogers Group, Inc., Jacobs Engineering, Cromwell Architects Engineers, Federal Highway Administration, Dr. LaCandian Spencer Foundation, Arkansas Tech University, Central Arkansas Water, Deloitte, Windstream Communications, McCormick Asphalt Paving and Excavating, Inc., Union Pacific Railroad, BGE, Inc., Michael Baker International, Inc., Halff Associates, Inc., and Terracon.

Jessica Halbrook is a bridge engineer with Garver. She was encouraged by the turnout at the event. "I know, specifically, me working in the transportation sector, it's very male-dominated. There's a lot of men, and so I love that this many girls are here and interested in STEM. I would really like for them to come join us in the engineering world."

If the attendance at the event is any indicator, Halbrook and the other women working in STEM might just get their wish. This year's event was attended by approximately 275 people, 194 of them from schools. The attendance numbers were so high that the event had to change venues in order to accommodate the number of participants. ■



WILDFLOWERS FOR MILES

ARDOT's Programs Help Flowers Grow

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

SOFT PURPLES, PALE PINKS, SUNNY YELLOWS, AND VIBRANT REDS DANCE IN THE GENTLE BREEZE. Petals stretch their long arms to the sunshine, and green leaves flutter. Butterflies flit about wildflowers as bees buzz past, seeming to bounce from one flower to another.

Arkansas' many wildflowers create a stunning landscape throughout our state. In our aim to provide a safe, aesthetically pleasing, and functional transportation system for the traveling public, ARDOT has implemented several wildflower programs.

These programs provide, establish, and manage roadside wildflowers along the more than 16,400 miles of highways and the more than 200,000 acres of highway roadsides. They provide natural beauty and attractive roadsides, as well as help reduce long-term maintenance costs, enhance roadside habitats for pollinators and other wildlife, and preserve native plant populations.

WILDFLOWER ROUTES AND NATIVE WILDFLOWER AREAS

More than 1,200 miles of Arkansas State Highways are designated as Wildflower Routes based on the presence of

naturally occurring wildflower populations. In addition, "Native Wildflower Area" signs identify areas throughout the state with naturally occurring wildflowers in highway rights of way.

According to Joe Ledvina, ARDOT botanist, "We occasionally have people call in asking, for example, 'What are all those blue flowers that you planted on 530?' and I get to tell them – 'Hey, those are naturally occurring native wildflowers. We have managed to retain natives on many of our highways'."

As part of our efforts to promote wildflower growth along our roadways, after most highway construction projects ARDOT plants six native wildflower species along the newly constructed rights of way: black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), showy evening primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*), lance-leaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), tickseed coreopsis (*Coreopsis tinctoria*), purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), and prairie blazing star (*Liatris pycnostachya*). According to Ledvina, these are some of the species that are referred to as "workhorse" species by native plant and pollinator proponents.

"They are generally easy to establish from seed, they persist fairly well, and they provide a good variety of nectar resources.

Because they are all widely available, they also keep planting costs low," Ledvina said. "They all naturally occur nearly statewide, so we do not have to specify a multitude of different seed mixes for different regions."

SPECIAL WILDFLOWER SEEDING PROJECTS

When highway construction projects involve federal lands or state conservation lands, a special provision is included in the job contract that directs the sowing of a native grass seed mix that includes three native grasses: big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), and Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*). Ledvina says that these are included because they are some of the most common and widespread grasses in North American prairies and other grasslands.

There's another benefit too. As with the six species in the wildflower seed mix, "The most widespread are also widely available to purchase as seed and are more likely to be successful across the state," Ledvina said.

In addition to the native grasses, seven wildflower species are planted: lance-leaf coreopsis, black-eyed Susan, prairie blazing star, partridge pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*), and wild bergamont (*Monarda fistulosa*).

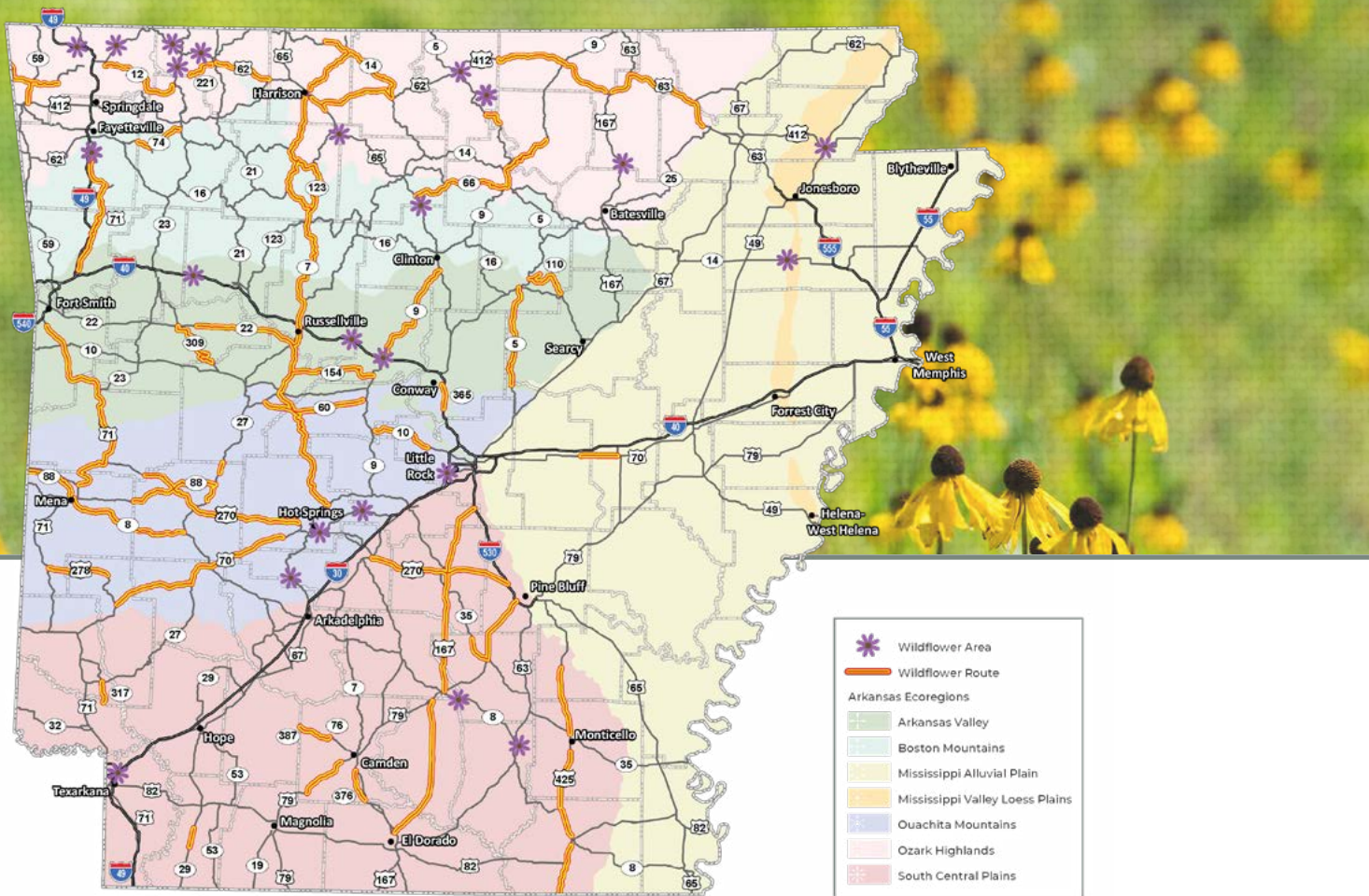
Another benefit of these seed mixes is that they span much of the growing season, providing color along the highways for months.

"We begin with the showy evening primrose in April through May, then the two tickseeds show up in turn from May until early July, and the other three begin in June and last into late summer."

(continued on page 22)

- Butterfly Weed *Asclepias tuberosa* * * * * *
- Tickseed *Bidens aristosa* * * * * *
- Texas Indian Paintbrush *Castilleja indivisa* *
- Butterfly Pea *Clitoria mariana* * * * * *
- Mistflower *Conoclinium coelestinum* * * * * *
- Lance-leaf Coreopsis *Coreopsis lanceolata* * * * * *
- Plains Coreopsis *Coreopsis tinctoria* * * * * *
- Carolina Larkspur *Delphinium carolinianum* * * * * *
- Pale Purple Coneflower *Echinacea pallida* * * * * *
- Purple Coneflower *Echinacea purpurea* * * * * *
- Rattlesnake Master *Eryngium yuccifolium* * * * * *
- Round-leaf Boneset *Eupatorium rotundifolium* * * * * *
- Biennial Gaura *Gaura longiflora* * * * * *
- Rose Vervain *Glandularia canadensis* * * * * *
- Spring Spider Lily *Hymenocallis liriosme* * * * * *
- Rough Blazing Star *Liatris aspera* * * * * *
- Prairie Blazing Star *Liatris pycnostachya* * * * * *
- Cardinal Flower *Lobelia cardinalis* * * * * *
- Wild Bergamont *Monarda fistulosa* * * * * *
- Blue Toadflax *Nuttallanthus texanus* * * * * *
- Showy Evening Primrose *Oenothera speciosa* * * * * *
- Hairy Scorpion-weed *Phacelia hirsuta* * * * * *
- Downy Phlox *Phlox pilosa* * * * * *
- Mexican Hat *Ratibida columnifera* * * * * *
- Rough Coneflower *Rudbeckia grandiflora* * * * * *
- Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia hirta* * * * * *
- Starry Rosinweed *Silphium asteriscus* * * * * *
- Blue-eyed grass *Sisyrinchium angustifolium* * * * * *
- Tall Goldenrod *Solidago altissima* * * * * *
- Ohio Spiderwort *Tradescantia ohioensis* * * * * *

* ARKANSAS VALLEY	* OUACHITA MOUNTAINS
* BOSTON MOUNTAINS	* OZARK HIGHLANDS
* MISSISSIPPI ALLUVIAL PLAIN	* SOUTH CENTRAL PLAINS
* MISSISSIPPI VALLEY LOESS PLAIN	



OPERATION WILDFLOWER

Another program that supports ARDOT’s efforts to plant wildflowers along our highways is Operation Wildflower. Promoted by Lady Bird Johnson in 1973 as an agreement between the Federal Highway Administration and National Garden Clubs, Inc., this program encourages public sponsors to donate wildflower seed to ARDOT for specific planting projects on highway roadsides.

Sponsors of Operation Wildflower who donate a significant amount of wildflower seed are recognized with signs that identify the sponsor.

MOWING AND MAINTENANCE

Wildflowers may be beautiful, but how does ARDOT balance the aesthetic of a wildflower area with the need to maintain the highway right of way?

Our statewide maintenance practices preserve and promote wildflowers with reduced mowing and limited herbicide use. ARDOT accomplishes this by establishing and maintaining a clear zone, transition zone, and natural zone.

The clear zone begins at the pavement’s edge and extends outward toward the transition zone. It is mowed three times a year and treated with broadcast herbicide between mowing cycles to maintain visibility for drivers.

The transition zone begins at the end of the clear zone, transitioning away from the roadway toward the natural zone. The transition zone is mowed in the fall to discourage encroachment of woody plants. Delayed mowing allows

wildflowers time to bloom and reseed throughout the growing season. The use of herbicide is limited within the transition zone and includes only spot-spraying of nonnative, invasive plant species.

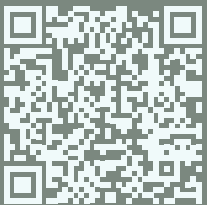
The natural zone extends from the end of the transition zone outward, away from the roadway. To accommodate mature trees and enhance the environment, it is not mowed.

ARDOT’s wildflower programs and maintenance practices add miles of color and beauty to our state’s highways. They also help us stay true to our state’s nickname, “The Natural State.”

As Ledvina says, “We seed only a handful of the hundreds of native wildflower species that grow along our highways. As you drive along our Wildflower Routes and in our National Forests, you can often see a different array of blooms around each bend, with a variation that in turn supports variation in insect assemblages that keep our ecosystems resilient.”

For more information about ARDOT’s Wildflower programs, including a link to our brochure, scan the QR code below. ■

Learn more about ARDOT’s Wildflower Programs and see our new brochure by scanning the QR code.




Brandy "Buddy" Campbell

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

BY MARK WOODALL

OUR “EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT” SECTION RARELY FEATURES ONE OF OUR ARDOT STAFF MEMBERS WHO HAS ACTUALLY BEEN IN THE SPOTLIGHT, BUT BRANDY “BUDDY” CAMPBELL HAS THAT UNIQUE DISTINCTION.

In addition to his daily work as a Beautification Coordinator at ARDOT, Campbell has gained notoriety through his second job as an actor.

Q: How long have you been with ARDOT?

A: I’ve been with the Department for 25 years.

Q: What does the Beautification section do?

A: Many people think we are out planting wildflowers and such but that’s not what we do. We are in charge of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, better known back then as the Lady Bird Johnson Act. It was passed in 1965 and it mandates that all billboards along federal and state routes be regulated. Arkansas passed its version in 1972. So, monitoring billboards is one of our responsibilities. We also issue permits for the logo signage program. Those are the signs you see for gas, food, and lodging you see before exits. Another thing we do is to monitor junk yards you may see on state primary routes to ensure junk is removed and out of sight. I’m one of

four coordinators here and we cover all areas of the state on a routine basis.

Q: Were you involved with acting before you started working here?

A: I got into acting doing plays in high school at Dover High School and college at Arkansas Tech University. After college, I didn’t think it would take me anywhere, so I got a job in the real world.

Q: When did you get your first big break?

A: In 2013 there was an open casting call for the movie “Greater” (2016), which was about the former Razorback football player Brandon Burlsworth. He was not offered a scholarship to play at the University of Arkansas, but through hard work and determination, he walked on and eventually received a scholarship. He became an All-American and was drafted by the Indianapolis Colts. He was driving from Fayetteville to Harrison to attend church with his mother when he was killed in a traffic accident (before he could sign his contract with the Colts).

Q: What was your involvement in that film?

A: They had a lot of roles for the casting call, and I’ve since learned they’re called “cattle calls.” They had tryouts and

(continued on page 24)



“
With my size, I’m always playing people with authority such as villains, bad guys, law enforcement, or lawyer types.
 ”



Campbell portrayed a police officer in "Montross: Blood Rules"

auditions at the mall in Fayetteville. The role I was going to audition for was for the Harrison High School principal. I dressed for that role, which I’ve learned is the opposite of what you’re supposed to do. You never show up dressed as the character or in “costume.” Hundreds of people auditioned for that role, so I didn’t get it, but they did invite me back as an extra. I thought that was the greatest thing in the world because it was a Screen Actors Guild (SAG) movie and so it had named actors in it. I was in two scenes as an extra. I was a Harrison High School teacher during the graduation and then I was in the funeral scene. That was my eight seconds of fame in that first movie. I caught the acting bug after that. I enjoyed acting in high school and college, so I started taking acting classes after that.

Q: What process do you follow when you’re going for a role?

A: Your goal should be to understand the character. Memorizing the lines can come later, but you need to read about the character over and over again. We were taught in class to know the backstory of our character.

Q: How do you find out about roles to audition for?

A: I have an agency I work with now, but there are also open casting calls on many Facebook group pages. REEL Arkansas has great information about auditions and film festivals.

Q: What happened next in your career?

A: My first speaking role was in a short film for The 48 Hour Film Festival. After doing short films, then I got to do more extra work and small-budget films. UCA has a film school and John Brown University has a film program in Siloam Springs. Student filmmakers are always looking for actors for short films. I started doing a few commercials and some web series work. You do small parts to build up your resume and make contacts. If you do a good job with one filmmaker, he’s going to tell his friends “You might want to hire this guy.”

Q: What changes have you seen in the film industry over the years?

A: My first audition was in person. They’re all self-tape now. You set up a camera or iPhone and send them a video.

Q: You’ve been in other big projects too, right?

A: Yes, I’ve recently had some movies come out that I’ve appeared in. One is called “Roadkill.” It’s an action thriller-type movie which is a throwback to the 70s-style action movies a young Burt Reynolds-type would have starred in. I play a small role as a county sheriff. They had a red-carpet screening, so I drove down to Panama City for that on January 1. They also had premieres in Los Angeles and New York. The film played in a few theaters, but it’s already on Amazon Prime. Back in March, an episode I did for the Oxygen Channel aired. I played a detective for the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). We shot that in Knoxville last summer. Recently, a Lifetime Network movie aired. I had a supporting role in it with about 15 lines in about four or five scenes.

Q: Do you have a particular role that you try out for?

A: With my size, I’m always playing people with authority such as villains, bad guys, law enforcement, or lawyer types.



Campbell portrayed Master Sergeant Sanders in "Heroes Immortal: The Story of the Four Chaplains"

Q: Is there a role that you won’t play?

A: I don’t mind playing a bad guy in a film, but I do have boundaries. I try to maintain a strict moral compass even when I’m playing a villain. I’d rather be remembered for playing a part with a good character. Remember me for someone good. I’ll play bad guys, but I don’t want to play killers. I like to keep my dialogue to a PG rating. My agent is in California, and she specializes in family films.

Q: Have you been given the “star treatment” before?

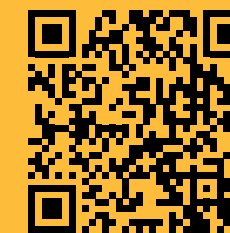
A: I was cast for a speaking role in an ABC miniseries called “Women of the Movement.” It was released in 2021. It was based on the Emmett Till murder. I’m in a scene that was shot in Memphis at the old train station downtown. I’m in the scene where Emmett Till’s mother put him on the train. I was the ticket taker at the station. I had one line in the scene, which is “Next.” Because I had a speaking role there were extras behind me. I was given my own trailer and an assistant. My costume was already fitted and placed in my trailer. My assistant knocked on my door and asked me what I wanted for breakfast. I said, “Sure where do I need to go?” She said, “No, I’ll bring it to you.” I also got to hang out in the green room. It looked like a large conference room with lots and lots of snacks. Most of the other actors were on their cell phones and talking to their agents. So, I was in there acting like I was talking to my agent too.

Q: Do you have any new projects you’re working on?



Campbell portrayed Sheriff Drake in "The Calling of Lizzie McBride"

IMDb



Visit Buddy Campbell's IMDb page by scanning the QR code.

A: I’m in a SAG film that was shot in Arkansas that will be coming out soon. It’s called “Sovereign,” and stars Dennis Quaid and Nick Offerman. It’s based on a true story that happened in West Memphis. Members of a Sovereign Citizens group killed two police officers. I can’t go too much into it because I had to sign a non-disclosure agreement. I did get to spend a whole day talking to Nick Offerman between takes. He couldn’t have been nicer.

Sitting down with Campbell, I find him equally nice and humble. While he may not yet be on the A-List, he loves films and the entire process of producing them. He is just happy to play a part in the industry, however small or large that may be. As he explains: “When you go to a movie there are usually only one or two big stars in a film. They need plenty of ‘regular people’ to play parts too. There may be hundreds of people auditioning for one role, but only three guys going for the janitor role.”

You can see Campbell’s work by checking out his IMDb professional website. ■

LANDSLIDES

Don't Bring ARDOT Down

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

WHEN YOU THINK OF LANDSLIDES, YOU MIGHT THINK OF CALIFORNIA OR SOMEWHERE ELSE FARTHER AWAY, LIKE CENTRAL OR SOUTH AMERICA. MANY PEOPLE MAY NOT REALIZE THAT LANDSLIDES OCCUR ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING ARKANSAS.

A landslide happens when rock, soil, or other matter slides down a slope. Some landslides are minor, but others can take out an entire highway lane. In Arkansas, landslides are usually due to heavy precipitation in the spring or winter.

When landslides occur on Arkansas highways, reports are directed to ARDOT's Materials Division. The division's engineers and geologists work to determine the best way to fix the issue. Sometimes, ARDOT crews can repair the landslide without outside assistance.

Other times, it requires the equipment and expertise of a company that specializes in this type of repair. When that's the case, ARDOT works with one of three contractors that specialize in landslide repairs and remain on-call for emergency repairs.

ARDOT or its contractors generally use one of three methods to repair landslides: a rock buttress, drilled rail repair, and soil nail repair.

ROCK BUTTRESS

The rock buttress repair method is commonly used to repair slides that occur above the roadway or where scour protection is required along with the slide repair. With this type of repair, the wet slide material is excavated and filled with rocks, which creates a retaining wall. The retaining wall acts as a blocking mechanism to help avoid future potential slides. This method has a bigger footprint due to more extensive excavation and therefore often requires additional right of way, utility relocation, and extensive environmental clearance.

DRILLED RAIL REPAIR

With this type of repair, 12-inch diameter holes are pre-drilled every 3 feet along the edge of the roadway. Used railroad track (steel) is placed into each hole. A retaining wall is created using connected pieces of used guardrail salvaged from highway construction projects. Wet failed material is excavated from the roadway side of the retaining wall and backfilled with rock. In addition, the pre-drilled holes are filled with high-density foam. This method is the least expensive, fastest, and has a very small footprint. However, rock must not be deeper than 25 feet for the method to be applicable.

SOIL NAIL REPAIR

In a traditional soil nail repair, holes are drilled at an angle from the slope where the slide occurred. Another way that soil

nails are used involves using the actual drill bit as the "nail." A steel rod with an attached hollow drill bit goes into the earth. Grout is used to fill the rod and mixes with the surrounding soil, creating a strong support that is larger than the drill bit's diameter. The drill bit is then detached from the drill and left behind as the "nail." Shotcrete is sprayed over the area to add more stability.

WHAT CAUSES A LANDSLIDE?

Landslides can be caused by many things depending on their location and the type of soil in the area. Heavy rainfall, a long period of rain, or melting ice/snow can cause a slope to become saturated and slide with the weight of the soil. A rise in the levels of waterways, of groundwater levels, or rapid drops in water levels after flooding can erode the base of a slope and cause a landslide.

Another type of landslide, called a creep, can occur slowly over time due to erosion and/or heavy rains, snowmelt, and other stresses. In addition, other parts of the world experience landslides due to earthquakes, avalanches, melting permafrost, and volcano eruptions.

LANDSLIDES IN ARKANSAS

In 2015 when ARDOT first started tracking the number of landslides throughout the state, there were 230 locations with landslides and 152 of those were impacting a shoulder or road. From 2015 to 2021, ARDOT repaired over 28,000 linear feet of roadway due to landslides. ■



ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM NUMBERS INCREASE

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

WITH MORE THAN 100,000 ACRES OF RIGHT OF WAY, MORE THAN 16,000 MILES OF HIGHWAY AND THE COUNTRY'S 12TH LARGEST HIGHWAY SYSTEM, THAT'S A LOT OF SPACE WHERE LITTER CAN COLLECT ALONG OUR ROADWAYS. LUCKILY, ARDOT HAS AN ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM.

The 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, holding litter pick-up events across the state. The program has increased public awareness of what it takes to maintain the highway right of way while providing an opportunity for volunteers to become personally involved in keeping Arkansas beautiful.



ADOPTING GROUPS

Adopt-A-Highway groups sign up to adopt a one-mile stretch of highway. They agree to perform **litter pick up every three months** and try to schedule at least **one clean up in conjunction with state and national clean-up events**, like Keep Arkansas Beautiful's Great Arkansas Clean-Up in the fall.



THE NUMBERS

In 2023, **3,907** volunteers removed **6,595** bags of trash and spent **3,327** hours cleaning up their adopted spaces. Those numbers have grown – compared to 2019, **39% more people volunteered in 2023, 54% more bags of trash were collected, and 65% more hours were spent for clean-ups.**



3,907 VOLUNTEERS



6,595 BAGS



3,327 HOURS

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Adopt-A-Highway has the impact that it does because of its exceptional volunteers. In recognition of their hard work, we are creating an Adopt-A-Highway volunteer spotlight in each issue of the magazine.

Our first volunteer to spotlight is **Charles E. Smith**. He was involved with the program for more than 20 years, adopting a section of highway close to his home in Columbia County. We were saddened to hear of his recent passing.

Be sure to keep an eye out for more volunteer spotlights.



Learn more about Adopt-A-Highway

Scan here! 



Dear ARDOT

MESSAGES FROM FACEBOOK

HIGHWAY 38 RESURFACING

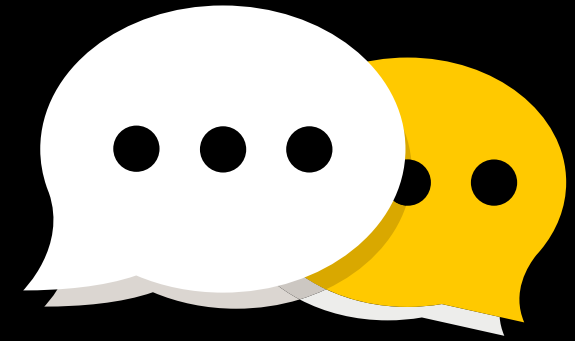
"I want to brag on the men working in the Cabot/Ward area. They have been resurfacing Highway 38. They have done an awesome job, working very hard and are very nice when dealing with drivers. I am not sure who I need to tell, but I want to say 'thank you' to these crews providing a great service as they repair our roads."

– Mandy Watkins

ECLIPSE WEEKEND

"Three cheers to all of you on your road presentations throughout the eclipse weekend! We have traveled from Louisiana to Hardy and the roads and traffic management were great! No barrels in Little Rock—wow! Thanks for a job well done!"

– Beverly Dobbs



Requests Can Prompt SAFETY REVIEWS

BY RUTHIE BERRYHILL

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT THAT A CURVE IN A ROAD MIGHT BE TOO SHARP? OR FELT LIKE A GUARDRAIL MIGHT IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF A HIGHWAY?

ARDOT gets several questions like these about our roadways each year – as many as 400 in the last year alone. Citizens, municipalities, counties, and businesses contact us about concerns or questions regarding the safety of roads they travel.

WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

What happens after someone contacts ARDOT regarding a safety concern? If ARDOT determines that the request requires further action, then staff may implement a safety study. This can include an analysis of crash data and historic data from the site, performing a site visit, a speed study, and logging of current conditions and roadway attributes. All data and field information are compiled and reviewed to determine the best low-cost safety improvements for the area of concern.

If the location needs more extensive improvements, it will be referred to the Traffic Safety Section under ARDOT's Planning Division. They will consider it for safety improvements under the Federal guidelines for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds.

The Planning Division will work with ARDOT's State Maintenance, the District, and other Divisions to implement the safety improvements using HSIP funds. Most of these improvements are eligible for Federal safety funds and are contracted out. The Traffic Safety Section receives approximately 100 requests per year.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY REQUEST HAS WARRANTED A STUDY?

ARDOT will respond back and let the concerned party know if the request warrants a review or why it does not.

HOW DO I MAKE A REQUEST?

ARDOT receives requests through Ask ARDOT (ardot.gov/askardot) or by phone call, email, or social media message. 

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OUT & ABOUT

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AROUND THE STATE

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

- * **ART TRAIL AT NIGHT: GLOW PARTY:** From artmaking to performances, the Art Trail will be transformed into a glowing garden of light and imagination that's fun for all ages. There will also be musical guests at the performance areas throughout the grounds. Free, no tickets required. Drop by anytime from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. • AUGUST 2
- * **ARKANSAS FIDDLE & BANJO CHAMPIONSHIPS & CONCERT:** Beat the heat and follow the music to the Ozark Folk Center State Park for this annual indoor music competition. Stick around for the evening and treat yourself to the sound of old-time fiddle and banjo virtuosos Dan Levenson and Bob Carlin. • AUGUST 3
- * **BLUEY AT THE BALL PARK:** Bluey, the loveable Blue Heeler Cattle Dog puppy, has taken his home country of Australia and the world by storm. Load up the kids and head to the Travs game to say g'day to this popular children's television character at Dickey-Stephens Park. AUGUST 3 & 4
- * **PERSEID METEOR SHOWER VIEWING:** The Perseid Meteor Showers are well-known for their awe-inspiring shooting star display. Mount Magazine State Park's dark skies are the perfect backdrop for viewing the Perseids, which are predicted to peak on this night. • AUGUST 12
- * **BEATLES AT THE RIDGE:** Celebrate the 60th anniversary since the day The Beatles made an unexpected visit to Walnut Ridge. This free festival boasts over 80 vendors, more than 15 food trucks, engaging kids' activities, and a captivating car show. • SEPTEMBER 21
- * **PEDAL PADDLE TOUR:** Immerse yourself into the natural landscape and discover the rich heritage of the Delta region on a guided bike and kayak tour led by a park interpreter. The journey starts with a 10-mile bike ride from Old Town Lake on the former rail line that is Delta Heritage Trail today. Later, explore how people have viewed the lake differently over time on a guided kayak tour. • OCTOBER 19

AUGUST 2

ART TRAIL AT NIGHT: GLOW PARTY
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art
Bentonville, AR

AUGUST 3

ARKANSAS FIDDLE & BANJO CHAMPIONSHIPS & CONCERT
Ozark Highlands Theater, Ozark Folk Center State Park
Mountain View, AR

AUGUST 3 & 4

BLUEY AT THE BALL PARK
Dickey-Stephens Park
North Little Rock, AR

AUGUST 12

PERSEID METEOR SHOWER VIEWING
Cameron Bluff Overlook, Mount Magazine State Park
Paris, AR

SEPTEMBER 21

BEATLES AT THE RIDGE
West Main St
Walnut Ridge, AR

OCTOBER 19

PEDAL PADDLE TOUR
5539 Hwy 49
Helena-West Helena, AR

DISTRICT 3

CONSTRUCTION

CORNER



CONSTRUCTION CREWS WITH MANHATTAN ROAD & BRIDGE COMPANY HAVE BEEN WORKING ON A LARGE-SCALE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT CONSISTING OF THREE BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS IN HOWARD, PIKE, AND SEVIER COUNTIES THAT BEGAN IN 2021. They were awarded the winning bid of \$20.5 million to complete the replacement of the Highway 70 bridge over the Saline River in Howard and Sevier counties, the Highway 70 bridge over the Caddo River in Pike County, and the Highway 278 bridge over the Saline River in Howard County.

The shortest distance between these three bridge sites is 13 miles, while the longest distance between sites is 40 miles. According to District 3 Assistant Resident Engineer Dayne Ghormley and District 3 Construction Engineer Jeremy Thomas, these distances have created logistical challenges that continue to arise as work progresses.

The Highway 278 bridge over the Saline River has been completed and is open to traffic, with only roadway (removal of Asphalt Concrete Hot Mix) and earthwork remaining. The bridge is 382 feet in length.

The Highway 70 bridge over the Caddo River in Glenwood in Pike County is being constructed in half widths. The first half has been completed and is open to traffic. The old bridge has been demolished and removed. Work has begun on the second half of the project.

Construction of the Highway 70 bridge over the Saline River in Howard and Sevier counties is ongoing. Most of the earthwork has been completed, but design issues were encountered in the field and the substructure of the bridge has had to be redesigned to include drilled shaft construction.

The project is estimated to be completed in the summer of 2025. ■





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