

# INFORMATION RELEASE



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### **AHTD Director Nationally Recognized at AASHTO 2016 Annual Meeting**

**LITTLE ROCK (11-17)** – The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has recognized Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) Director of Highways and Transportation Scott Bennett with the organization's prestigious Thomas H. MacDonald Memorial Award.

The award was presented during the AASHTO Annual Meeting held this week in Boston. Established in 1957 in recognition of outstanding achievements of the late MacDonald, who served as chief of the Federal Highway Administration's Bureau of Public Roads in the fields of highway administration, engineering and research, the award is considered the highest honor bestowed by AASHTO among its membership. In receipt of this award, Director Bennett is recognized for his outstanding public service contributions to the transportation industry at both state and national levels.

In his more than 28 years of employment at the AHTD, Bennett spent 22 of those years in the agency's Planning Branch where he was responsible for envisioning and developing great planning tools such as the Arkansas Primary Highway Network. He was also responsible for development of the State's Four-Lane Grid System, which identified a network of roads needed to stimulate economic growth in Arkansas.

In 2011, Bennett was named Director of Highways and Transportation by the Arkansas Highway Commission and has since emerged as a respected liaison between the agency and elected officials at the local, state and national levels. He has been successful in getting much-needed legislation passed for the AHTD during the past three state legislative sessions. He continues to be a strong advocate for finding a solution to transportation funding problems at the state level.

Director Bennett was a primary author and editor of the Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Highway Finance Report – the culmination of an 18-month effort in research and information gathering that has since served as a framework for highway funding reform in Arkansas. In 2015, Governor Hutchinson appointed him as a member of the Governor's Working Group on Highway Funding.

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At the national level, Director Bennett is a member of the AASHTO Board of Directors and has recently been appointed chair of the organization's Standing Committee on Planning. He is also co-chairman of the AASHTO/Associated General Contractors/American Road and Transportation Builders Association Joint Committee, and he is a member of the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee.

Director Bennett has also been successful in establishing strong and productive working relationships with groups such as the Associated General Contractors of Arkansas, the American Council of Engineering Companies of Arkansas, and the Arkansas Trucking Association.

Scott Bennett received a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering in 1989 and a Master's Degree in Civil Engineering in 1994 – both from the University of Arkansas. During this time, he was named Mack-Blackwell Transportation Center Student of the Year. Director Bennett is a registered Professional Engineer and has been appointed by Governor Hutchinson to the Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. He is also President of the Arkansas Academy of Civil Engineers.

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AASHTO Executive Director Bud Wright (right) and AASHTO President Paul Trombino (left) present AHTD Director Scott Bennett with the Thomas H. MacDonald Memorial Award. The award is considered the highest honor bestowed by AASHTO among its membership. In receipt of this award, Director Bennett is recognized for his outstanding public service contributions to the transportation industry at both state and national levels.