

ARDOT Newsletter

April 2024



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Construction Management Program
- Business Development Program
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- Business Plan Development
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ARDOT Set To Receive An Additional \$91 Million In Federal Funding For Six Projects

The Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) is set to receive an additional \$91 million in Congressionally Directed Spending and Community Project Funding for six projects. Members of Arkansas' Congressional Delegation, including Senator John Boozman along with Representatives Rick Crawford, Bruce Westerman, and Steve Womack, secured the additional funding in the latest Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) appropriation for the Federal Fiscal Year 2024.

This funding is stipulated for the following projects:

- \$67 million for Interstate 49 between Barling and Alma – requested by Senator Boozman;
- \$6 million for the Future Interstate 57 from Walnut Ridge to the Missouri State Line – requested by Senator Boozman and Representative Crawford;
- \$5 million for the Highway 10 Greenwood Bypass – requested by Representative Womack;
- \$5 million for Highway 82 Corridor improvements in Ashley, Chicot, Columbia, and Union Counties – requested by Senator Boozman and Representative Westerman;
- \$5 million for Highway 412 Corridor improvements of the portion that interfaces with Interstate 49 – requested by Senator Boozman and Representative Womack; and
- \$3 million for Highway 412 Corridor improvements in northern Arkansas – requested by Senator Boozman and Representative Crawford.



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Vision Kwest: Presenting ABC's 2024 Contractor of the Year

Kwest Group was just supposed to be a regional player in northwestern Ohio. Twenty years, 350 full-time employees and \$130 million in annual business later, the nationally known heavy contractor is ABC's 2024 Contractor of the Year

Kwest Group was always going to be a success. Ryan Odendahl is sure of that today—but even 20 years ago, it was always the plan. Odendahl had left a good position with a successful contractor to join his boss in running a new heavy contracting company in northwestern Ohio. He was 30 years old, a former Marine, and used to making a plan, executing on it and achieving commensurate results.

“Our revenue goal this year is \$165 million,” Odendahl says. “In 2003, would I have said that? Probably not. But to get here, it’s just been the next step, and the next step, and the next step. So, I would not have said \$165 million at the time, but I would’ve said, ‘We’re going to make this something really great,’ because otherwise we wouldn’t have done it.”

Done it they have—crowning two decades of high-performing growth by being named ABC’s 2024 Contractor of the Year at ABC Convention last month. “For little old Kwest Group, in the pool of contractors that is ABC, to get Contractor of the Year is humbling,” Odendahl says. “Like, a pinch-yourself humbling experience. We are really, really proud of the team.”

RECESSION TO THE RESCUE

“Little old Kwest Group” isn’t actually all that little today, but it certainly was when Odendahl and Mark Murray started the business. Both were working at a large, family-owned heavy highway firm in northwestern Ohio—Odendahl as part of the environmental group, Murray as president of the holdings company. When Murray found an opportunity to acquire a small industrial contractor located in Port Clinton, Ohio, he organized a partnership to procure it and asked Odendahl to run the operations side.

As managing partners, the two rebranded the company Kwest Group, named for Murray’s affinity for Key West. Including Odendahl, Murray and Murray’s wife, Kelly, who served as office manager, there were a total of eight employees, all operating out of a double-wide office trailer.

“Then we just started adding some more team members along the way,” Murray says. “I always think back to some of my early mentoring, when they told me, ‘If you surround yourself with good people, they’re going to make your life easy and the company more successful.’ And I have been very blessed to do that.”

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About The ARDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on ARDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.

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