

ARDOT Newsletter

June 2023



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

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- Business Plan Development
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ARDOT working on \$124 million worth of projects in Jonesboro

The Arkansas Department of Transportation is making sure it makes the lives of Jonesboro drivers easier. It said it is working on \$124 million worth of projects in the area.

District 10 Engineer Brad Smithee talked about how much activity drivers around could notice soon, starting with new construction on the I-555 to Highway 49 bypass.

"If you're able to navigate some of the back roads and know the right places to look, there is a lot going in those what were farm fields," he said.

Some projects like that are hundreds of millions of dollars, but others like the expansion on County Road 351 are a little cheaper, but at the same time, it is something much needed.

"That is a very busy very high traffic two lane section now, so getting that improvement can decongest that area and allows us to really improve what that intersection looks like which at peak hours is like a parking lot at times," Smithee said.

When it comes to projects in Jonesboro, the one everyone thinks about is the construction on I-555 towards Highway 63. Smithee said that is a zone that has seen major improvements. "Over the last two to three years, we have done two projects that span from Jonesboro city limit to city limit mostly that has reconstruction," he explained. "That original build from was 1950's to 1960's concrete from the old original 63 bypass which we now identify as I-555."

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Falling Short: Construction Must Prioritize Worker Safety

A building boom across the United States, particularly in nonresidential projects, has many construction firms and contractors concerned about the availability of workers. To keep up with demand, some contractors have resorted to lowering their hiring standards. But in one of the most perilous professions in America, these actions could have serious implications for the safety of workers.

Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows construction and extraction occupations had the second most occupational deaths in 2021—the most recent data available—at a rate of 12.3 fatalities for every 100,000 workers. Falls continue to be a leading cause of construction deaths and injuries on jobsites, with more than 300 fall-related deaths each year and thousands of serious injuries. Despite increased awareness and stringent regulations, these incidents continue to disrupt workers' lives and livelihoods, as well as businesses' abilities to operate.

There has not been a notable reduction in construction fall-related deaths or injuries over the past 10 years, but these accidents are mainly preventable. Increased focus, education and training are vital to combatting these hazards in the construction industry.

LESS EXPERIENCED WORKERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO SUFFER FALLS ON JOBSITES

It's critical that construction employers pay close attention to the experience level of workers. Nationwide claims data show construction workers with less than two years of experience with a company account for more than half (53%) of all reported construction fall claims since 2020. This underscores the importance for builders to ensure all workers, and especially those new to their company, are properly trained and equipped with the necessary safety gear to prevent such accidents from occurring.

This issue isn't just about complying with regulations. It's about protecting the lives of our workforce and ensuring their well-being on the job.

GROWING COSTS OF WORKER INJURIES

In addition to the human cost of falls on jobsites, there is a significant financial burden that companies must bear. Across all industries, the average workers' compensation claim cost in 2022 rose by 15% over 2021, Nationwide's data reveals.

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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.



CEI DBE Supportive Services

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