



## Judge Mahoney Addressed GAC 3/6/2020

### Description

By Cheryl Dowden, March 7, 2020

Garland County, Arkansas [Judge Darryl Mahoney](#) addressed the Governmental Affairs Committee on March 6, 2020. [Jerry Yeric](#), Chairman of the Voting Procedures Review Subcommittee and Justice of the Peace, [Larry Raney](#) both introduced the Judge.

Judge Mahoney passed out two handouts which addressed both the half-cent gasoline sales tax and the upcoming census.

### Gasoline tax & Garland County roads

Judge Mahoney said the half-cent gasoline tax is “something that is of great concern to everyone because it’s dealing with infrastructure. I think that so far it’s [the half-cent gasoline tax] doing well for Garland County and the Village. I know 70 East going out towards Saline County from Hot Springs is part of something that was paid for by the half-cent sales tax on fuel.”

Mahoney reported that he has a positive view of the Justices of the Peace that he works with. Mahoney stated, “We’ve got a really good group on our [Quorum Court](#). We have a really relaxed relationship to work through our problems and I can’t tell you how much I’ve appreciated the support of the Village in the items that we came up with...” “Anything you do always follows the path of least resistance. If it’s easier for me to get here on one road, I take that. Electricity follows the path of least resistance. Water follows the path of least resistance. Our children certainly follow the path of least resistance.”

Mahoney reiterated, “In saying all that, we try to make our infrastructure have the least resistance we can in order to get people to Garland County and Hot Springs and we’re working hard to connect Hot Springs Village with Hot Springs, in the hopes that someday, probably not in my lifetime, but someday, they’ll all be one.” The thoroughfares that connect the two are going through a lot of changes over the next few years. “The project goes from Highway 5 and 7 up to the Junction of 298, which is basically just some safety improvements, right now...rumble strips... There are going to be some rumble strips

in turn lanes, improvements in stripings, somethings that make it a little easier to see to drive at night. It's not what we envisioned for the long-run. Hopefully, at some point, there will be a four-lane that goes from here to all of Hot Springs. But we'll keep working on that. As long as we ask, we can at least hope we're going to get it because a closed mouth never gets fed."

"We've made some improvements into the back entrance of the Village off of Danville Road. I know that you went through some hard times last year, struggling with transportation... We've made some safety improvements there," stated Mahoney.

Mahoney said, "Sometimes, I feel like that we're not getting anything done in the big picture. We have about 925 miles of road to maintain. And we only have 109 bridges over 20 feet. I can't tell you how many under 20 feet, we have. But, the good part is we got five of those replaced this year. So I am down to 104. I only have to work on 104 of them. But I appreciate your patience when we are doing these. I know that its a struggle sometimes when you are in a hurry to get to town, and you get to the orange barrel. But just remember, the orange barrels mean progress. And we have a lot going on this end."

Mahoney said the safety improvements on Highway 7 should have begun on March 1. Cranford Construction Company is handling this job. The Judge was not privy as to the reason why Cranford did not start this job.

The Judge said the booklet he passed out gives us an idea of how the loss of the half-cent sales tax will affect Arkansas Counties.

### **Road funding source expires in 2023**

Per the "Arkansas Street, Road, and Bridge Funding Sources" Booklet, "In 2012, Arkansans voted in favor of establishing a one-half percent (.5%) sales and use tax dedicated to fund county roads, city streets, and bridges. This funding will expire in 2023."

"Counties and cities receive a total of about \$280 million in turnback funding from the state each year to pay for roads, streets, and bridges. Of that figure, 32 percent-or about \$89.6 million- comes from the .5% sales tax. That \$89.6 million is split evenly between cities and counties." The booklet shows the budget lost by county, annually beginning in 2024 if this .5% sales tax bill is not continued. (Only Garland and Saline County are included in the pdf below.)

### **"Arkansas Street, Road, and Bridge Funding Sources" – Garland and Saline Counties**

#### [ar-street-road-bridge-funding](#)

One impact of this bill not passing is that some of the county roads which are at present "chip and seal" may be turned back to gravel in order to be able to maintain the "hot mix" roads.

According to Mahoney, 'chip and seal' roads are a "50% investment of what 'hot mix' costs," and the 'chip and seal' roads do not hold up very well. Garland County has purchased a 'hot mix' machine, to "try to reduce our costs, overall."

## Sales tax revenues up in 2019

Judge Mahoney said, “We have been blessed over the past year. In 2019 our sales tax revenues were up about \$700,000 over what we anticipated. We anticipated pretty conservatively because we don’t like to get ourselves into trouble.”

***“If you don’t have it, you don’t need to spend it.”*** – Judge Mahoney

“The proof that county government has tightened its belt is that we had a little over one million” unspent dollars, explained Mahoney. It is very unusual not to spend budgeted money.

## Garland County Detention Facility

The [Garland County Adult Detention Facility](#), which opened in 2015, continues to receive accolades and certificates.

Garland County is working to prevent recidivism. The facility presently houses 407 prisoners. The recent approval of a male pod and the addition of a female pod will increase the maximum capacity to 499. It is anticipated the facility will be at full capacity by 2021.

Staffing of the detention facilities was an issue in the past due to low pay. This issue was resolved last July (2019) by giving pay parity to the Detention Facility Deputies. The Detention Facility Deputies now receive the same wages as Patrol Deputies.

In order to earn higher pay, there is a process where Detention Facility Deputies may earn certification. Once certification is achieved, the Detention Facility Deputy is entitled to an increase in pay.

Also, pay increases are given on anniversary dates. Because of the wage increases, the detention facilities have achieved 100% staff levels and continue to maintain these levels.

Judge Mahoney is going to ask for approval of four additional Deputy Sheriff Patrol positions in an effort to deter crime and minimize the jail population.

***“Adding on and adding more beds [to the detention facility] is not the way to fix the problem. We need to start looking at the cause rather than treating the symptoms.”*** – Judge Mahoney

There is also a movement occurring to decrease the number of juveniles being sent to jail.

## Coronavirus

[Arkansas Department of Health](#) (ADH) gives a briefing every morning. [Click here to see the Coronavirus update on the ADH website.](#) As of March 6, 2020, there are zero confirmed cases of Coronavirus in Arkansas.

ADH is working with the Office of Emergency Management to make sure there is a plan in place to deal with any possible cases of Coronavirus or any other communicable diseases.

### **Exterior renovation of the Garland County Courthouse has been completed**

Judge Mahoney said, “We have worked hard to make it look like it did in the day.” The completed work includes:

- Replacement of many terracotta tiles,
- Pressure washing the building,
- Waterproofing- tuckpointing, which is replacing cracked mortar,
- Painting and sealing all the windows, and
- Some interior renovations, which will continue in 2020.

### **2020 Census**

Judge Mahoney said, “I cannot begin to impress on you how important this is [to take the census] for every person in the United States of America.” Hot Springs Village will probably achieve a more thorough count than many places in Arkansas.

#### [2020-Census](#)

Ninety-five percent of the people will receive the [census](#) through the mail and five percent will have a census taker come to their door. Some people have a fear of being counted in the census. The census information is not shared with anyone outside of the Census Bureau.

“Our future depends so much on the next ten years of census count.” Population-based funding is based on the census count. Less people equals less funding from the State and the Federal Government.

The census count affects representation in the Legislature. If we have fewer people in certain areas, it can change the boundaries. These numbers are critical in establishing our representation.

***“We have to live with the census [count] for the next ten years.”*** – Judge Mahoney

### **Veterans**

The Garland County Veteran Service Office (GCVSO) representative in Garland County is [Stanley Bee](#). Mr. Bee works very hard to take care of Garland County veterans. In 2019, Bee serviced 2,731 clients and filed 211 new claims.

### **Garland County Marine Patrol**

Lake Hamilton marine patrolling has increased due to a large anonymous donation. This money is being used to purchase new equipment.

## Oaklawn

Judge Mahoney thanked Oaklawn Park for being part of our community and “not just focusing on themselves but instead reaching out to the rest of the community to provide revenue sources for us this coming year that will all go towards public safety.”

[embedyt] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUBPTIJiy8w>[/embedyt]

By [Cheryl Dowden](#), March 7, 2020

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