



ARKANSAS STATE FREIGHT PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2022



Arkansas Department of Transportation

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Arkansas River facing Downtown Little Rock

Introduction

The movement of freight is critical to economic vitality and quality of life in Arkansas. The state's multimodal freight transportation network, comprised of highways, railroads, airports, ports and waterways, and pipelines provides Arkansans with access to essential goods and services, as well as job opportunities.

The Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) is updating its statewide freight plan at an unprecedented time. As the global, national, and state economies continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain disruptions across the country and world have driven up prices and led to shortages of goods. These bottlenecks have caused shortages of products that Arkansas' residents and industries are accustomed to having readily available, from raw materials to household goods to automobiles.

This State Freight Plan is intended to guide multimodal freight transportation investments and promote strategies to help the state best position itself for the future. Across all modes, freight volumes in Arkansas are projected to grow by more than 50% by 2050, with the value of that freight expected to grow by 88%. The movement of those goods will be impacted by many emerging and unforeseen trends, including evolving technologies, changing population demographics, national and global politics, and international trade. Planning for those opportunities and challenges is an essential step toward delivering a safe, reliable, and competitive freight system for the future.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives highlighted below provide a framework to improve the multimodal freight system, to compete for quality jobs, and to provide for the safe and efficient movement of goods in Arkansas. These goals and objectives were informed by stakeholder outreach and national best practices, and aligned with strategic aspects of other ARDOT plans, including the Long-Range Intermodal Transportation Plan (LRITP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Together, they provide a strategic vision for the future of Arkansas' freight transportation system.



Safety and Resiliency

Improve statewide safety by funding projects that reduce fatal and serious injury crashes, reduce vulnerability, and improve resiliency of the system.

- » Improve the safety of highway freight.
- » Reduce the risk of railroad grade crossing crashes/incidents.
- » Support the development of safe and secure truck parking facilities.
- » Reduce the vulnerability of the freight transportation system with an emphasis on critical infrastructure with an elevated risk of failure.
- » Improve the resiliency of the freight transportation system to extreme weather events and natural disasters.



Economic Competitiveness

Improve intermodal transportation system connectivity, efficiency, and mobility to support existing industries and strengthen national and regional economic competitiveness.

- » Continue development of the four-lane grid system to connect communities and promote economic growth.
- » Promote freight system performance – safety, condition, and efficiency – as essential for economic development, business expansion and attraction, job growth, and access to critical goods.
- » Support the development of intermodal and multimodal facilities to increase connectivity between highway, railway, air, and waterway modes.
- » Foster and strengthen partnerships with and between freight stakeholders.
- » Promote adequate funding for operations, maintenance, safety, capital and capacity improvements, and other needs of all freight modes.



Infrastructure Condition

Invest in existing infrastructure and supporting technologies to maintain and preserve the existing system.

- » Rehabilitate or replace highway infrastructure that impedes freight movement, such as load-posted bridges and highways.
- » Follow asset management principles to optimize return on freight infrastructure investments.
- » Support and encourage the preservation and maintenance of roadways, railways, waterways, airports, and multimodal connections.



Congestion Reduction, Mobility, and System Reliability

Invest in the multimodal transportation system to improve mobility, connectivity, accessibility, and reliability for people and goods.

- » Reduce congestion with an emphasis on freight bottlenecks and first- and last- mile connectors.
- » Support freight transportation alternatives (including multimodal or intermodal alternatives) that best match origin-destination patterns.
- » Provide predictable, reliable travel times on key freight corridors.
- » Optimize the performance of existing multimodal freight assets with an emphasis on technological solutions and operations management.



Environmental Sustainability

Enhance the performance of the transportation system while avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating impacts to natural and cultural resources.

- » Identify and reduce barriers to minimize delay and improve the project delivery process.
- » Minimize impacts to natural, historic, and cultural resources.
- » Support initiatives and investments that reduce the impacts of freight movement on local air quality (including greenhouse gas emissions), flooding, stormwater runoff, and wildlife habitat loss.
- » Utilize context-sensitive solutions in transportation system design, as appropriate.
- » Improve equity across the multimodal freight system.



Stakeholder Outreach

This State Freight Plan Update was developed under the guidance of a diverse group of freight stakeholders known as the Freight Advisory Committee (FAC). The FAC advised ARDOT on freight-related priorities and funding needs, served as a forum for discussing issues affecting freight mobility, and provided a conduit for public participation in transportation planning.

The FAC was comprised of members from the public sector and private sector, including modal authorities, economic development agencies, representatives of major industries, freight carriers, planning organizations, advocacy groups, safety partners, and other freight stakeholders.

The FAC met virtually on three occasions to discuss progress on the freight plan, goals and objectives, critical freight needs and issues, and strategies for addressing current and future system needs. Future FAC activities are anticipated as the State Freight Plan is implemented.

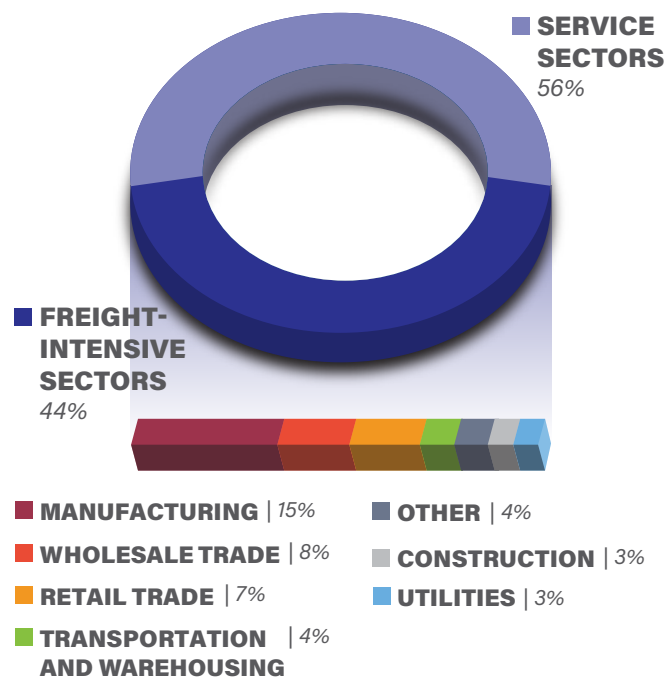
In addition to engagement with the FAC, other select critical freight stakeholders were interviewed both one-on-one and in group settings, including industry roundtables, to discuss recent changes and developments, key issues, and potential freight improvement projects and policy considerations.

Freight and the Economy

Demand for freight transportation is directly correlated to economic activity in both freight-intensive industries and the service sectors they support. In 2019, statewide economic output generated from freight-intensive activities was valued at \$51 billion or 44% of total economic output. Manufacturing accounts for the largest share of freight-generating activity, followed by retail and wholesale trade. Arkansas' manufacturing sector grew more than any other freight-intensive industry over the last 5 years, largely driven by primary metals, petroleum and coal products, and the food and beverage sector. Employment in freight-intensive sectors accounts for approximately one-third of all jobs in Arkansas.

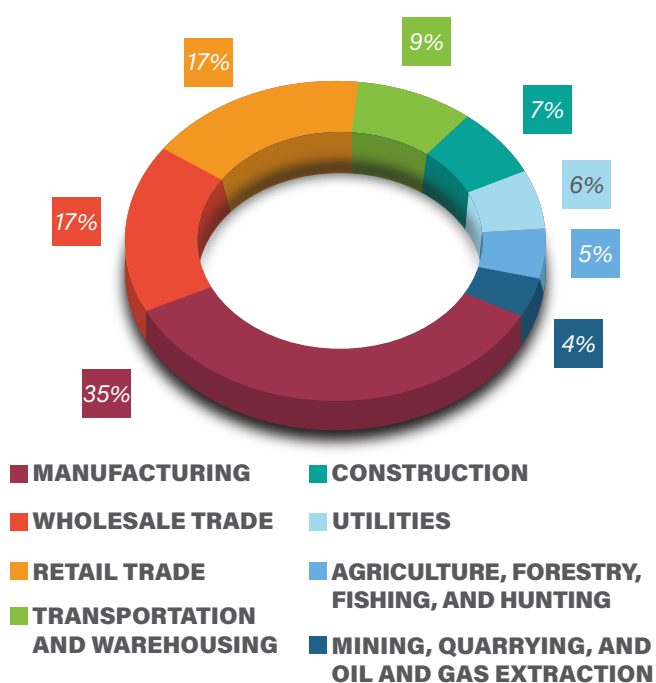
The Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) reports that between January 2015 and April 2020, there were 94 economic development projects proposed in the food and agribusiness manufacturing industry, totaling \$2.3 billion and resulting in more than 5,000 new jobs. Relative to the nation, Arkansas continues to have a strong competitive advantage in multiple manufacturing sectors, including food and beverage, fabricated metal products, paper, and machinery.

Share of Economic Output for Freight-Intensive vs. Service Sectors in Arkansas, 2019



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Distribution of Economic Output for Freight-Intensive Industries, by Sector, 2019



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Arkansas' Freight Network Supports Key Industries

The multimodal freight transportation network supports key industries in Arkansas, including metals, agriculture, timber and forest, and retail/e-commerce, as well as the freight needs of military and defense industries. The multimodal network provides businesses with access to domestic and international supplies, facilities, and markets. Highlighted below are key facts about Arkansas' most critical freight-intensive industries (2019 reference year unless otherwise indicated).



Metals

- » 22,300+ employed in the metals industry in Arkansas.
- » Accounts for 13.6% of total manufacturing in the state.
- » \$683+ million worth of fabricated metal goods exported.
- » Mississippi County in Northeast Arkansas has the second-largest capacity for steel production in the nation, and is expected to become the nation's top steel producer as new production capacity becomes operational through 2024.

Source: AEDC.



Agriculture

- » #1 in the nation for rice production.
- » #2 in the nation for broilers, processing more than 1 billion broilers in 2021.
- » 21 million chickens processed per week.
- » 3 million table eggs produced per day.
- » #5 in the nation for turkey production, producing 27 million annually.

Source: AEDC, stakeholder interviews.



Timber and Forest

- » 19 million total acres of forestland covering 56% of the state.
- » Forestry contributes 5.1% of the state's economy.
- » Arkansas is the 9th leading producer of timber in the U.S. (2018).
- » 12.7% of the state's workforce is employed in timber and forest-related manufacturing, with 27,700+ skilled workers employed in timber and related industries.

Source: AEDC.



Retail/E-commerce

- » 26% of jobs in Arkansas supported by the retail industry, with nearly 275,000 directly employed in the state (2018).
- » U.S. e-commerce sales grew by 50% to \$870 billion during the pandemic, leading to more warehouses and fulfillment centers, including multiple e-commerce fulfillment centers in Arkansas in the last five years.
- » Walmart, one of the largest retailers in the world, is headquartered in Arkansas.

Source: National Retail Federation, Forbes.



Military and Defense

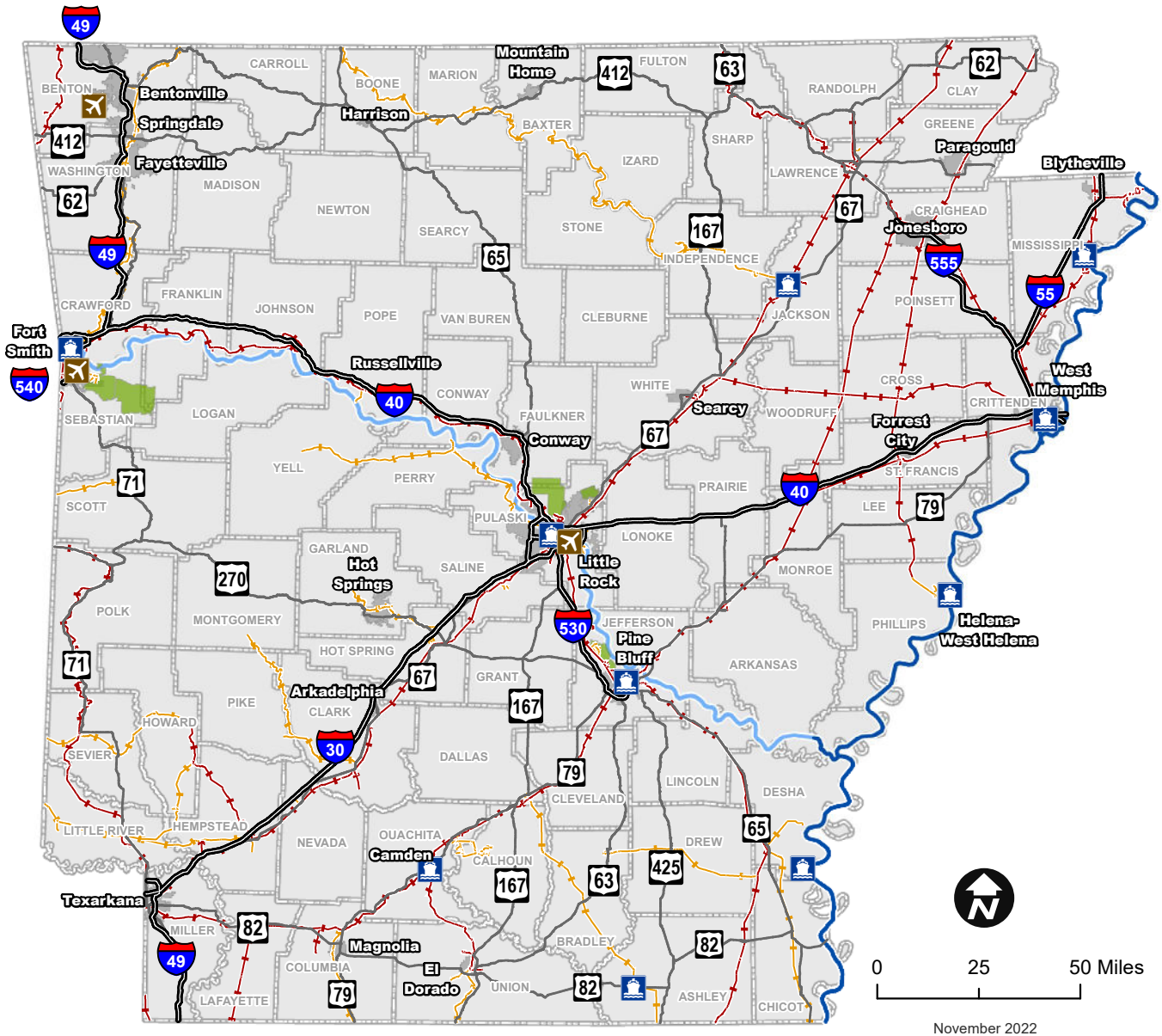
- » 62,400+ employed, generating \$3 billion in labor income, \$4.5 billion in Gross State Product, and nearly \$330 million in state and local tax revenue (2015).
- » Major facilities include Little Rock Air Force Base, Pine Bluff Arsenal, Camp Robinson in North Little Rock, and Ebbing Air National Guard Base and the Fort Chaffee Joint Maneuver Training Center, both in Fort Smith.

Source: AEDC.



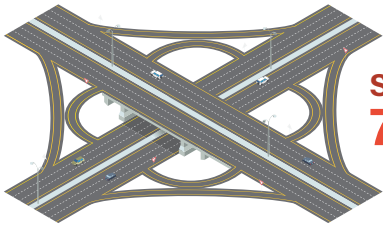
Union Pacific Rail Yard (Newport)

Arkansas' Multimodal Freight Network

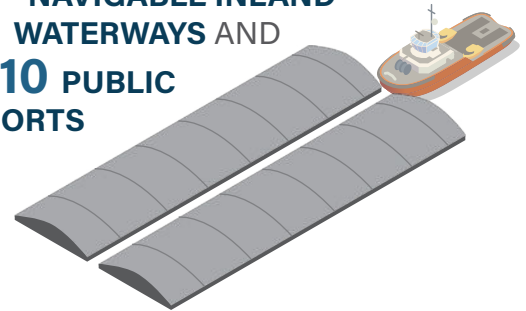


- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Interstate | Military Base |
| Major Highway | Cargo Airport |
| Class I Railroad | Public Port |
| Class III Railroad | |
| Marine Highway - M-40 | |
| Marine Highway - M-55 | |

OUT OF ROUGHLY
102,600 MILES
OF PUBLIC ROADS,
16,451 MILES ARE
ON THE STATE HIGHWAY
SYSTEM, OF WHICH
768 MILES ARE
INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS



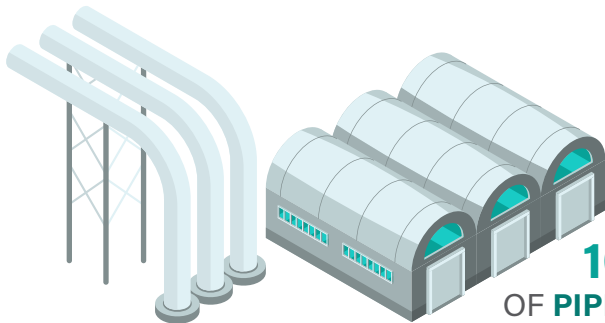
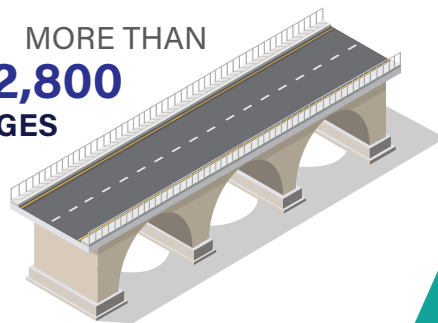
MORE THAN
600 MILES OF
NAVIGABLE INLAND
WATERWAYS AND
10 PUBLIC
PORTS



2,700+ MILES
OF RAIL OPERATED BY
3 CLASS I RAILROADS AND
23 CLASS III RAILROADS



MORE THAN
12,800
BRIDGES



OVER
10,000 MILES
OF PIPELINES

LITTLE ROCK
AIRPORT IS THE
PRIMARY AIR-CARGO
HANDLING AIRPORT,
WITH

**GROWTH
OPPORTUNITIES**

AT ALL AIR CARGO FACILITIES



Highways

Arkansas has an extensive roadway network consisting of 768 miles of Interstates, 15,683 miles of other State and U.S. highways, and over 86,100 miles of county roads and city streets. This network provides the backbone of the trucking industry and allows trucks to safely and efficiently move freight across all distances, from long hauls to local deliveries. The roadway freight network also includes key links at intermodal centers to the rail, port, air, and pipeline modes that keep multimodal/intermodal freight moving.

The Interstate System is the workhorse of Arkansas' State Highway System, accounting for approximately 40% of truck vehicle miles traveled. Increased congestion, truck tonnage, daily truck trips, and truck-miles traveled on Arkansas' Interstate System, coupled with population growth and other factors, represent challenges to the efficient movement of freight throughout the state. The highest volumes of truck traffic are seen near Texarkana, Little Rock, and West Memphis, primarily along the Interstate 30 (I-30), Interstate 40 (I-40), and Interstate 55 (I-55) corridors. In 2020, despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, I-40 from Little Rock to West Memphis continued to carry high truck volumes (generally exceeding 20,000 trucks per day), as did I-30 from Texarkana to Little Rock (generally exceeding 15,000 trucks per day).

IN 2019, TRUCKS

TRANSPORTED ALMOST

360 MILLION TONS

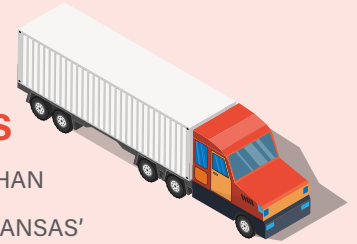
OF **FREIGHT** WORTH MORE THAN

\$770 BILLION ON ARKANSAS'

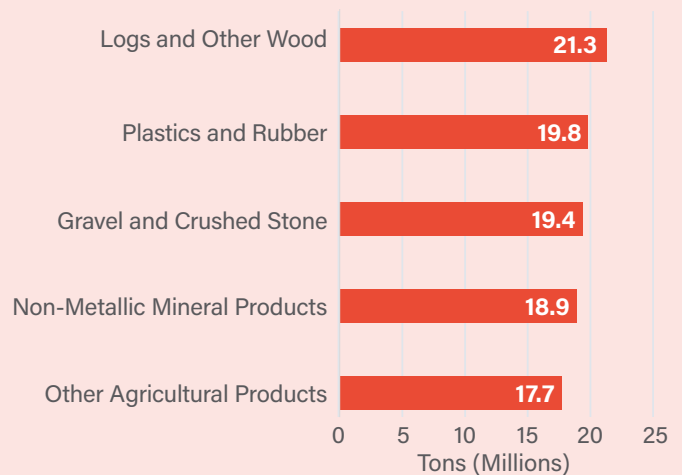
ROADWAYS, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO GROW TO

ALMOST **600 MILLION TONS** WORTH

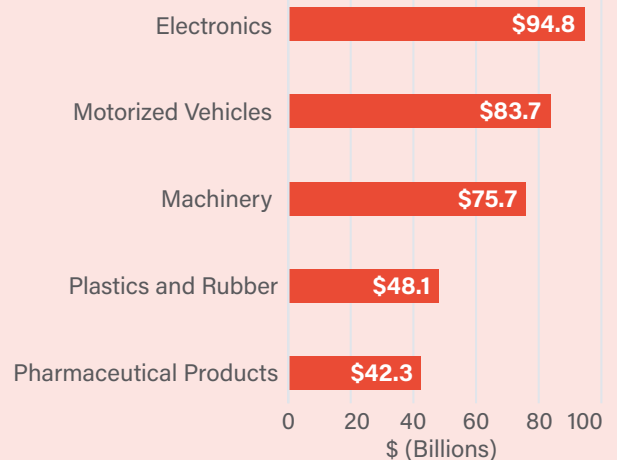
OVER **\$1.5 TRILLION** BY 2050.



Top Commodities by Tonnage (2019)



Top Commodities by Value (2019)

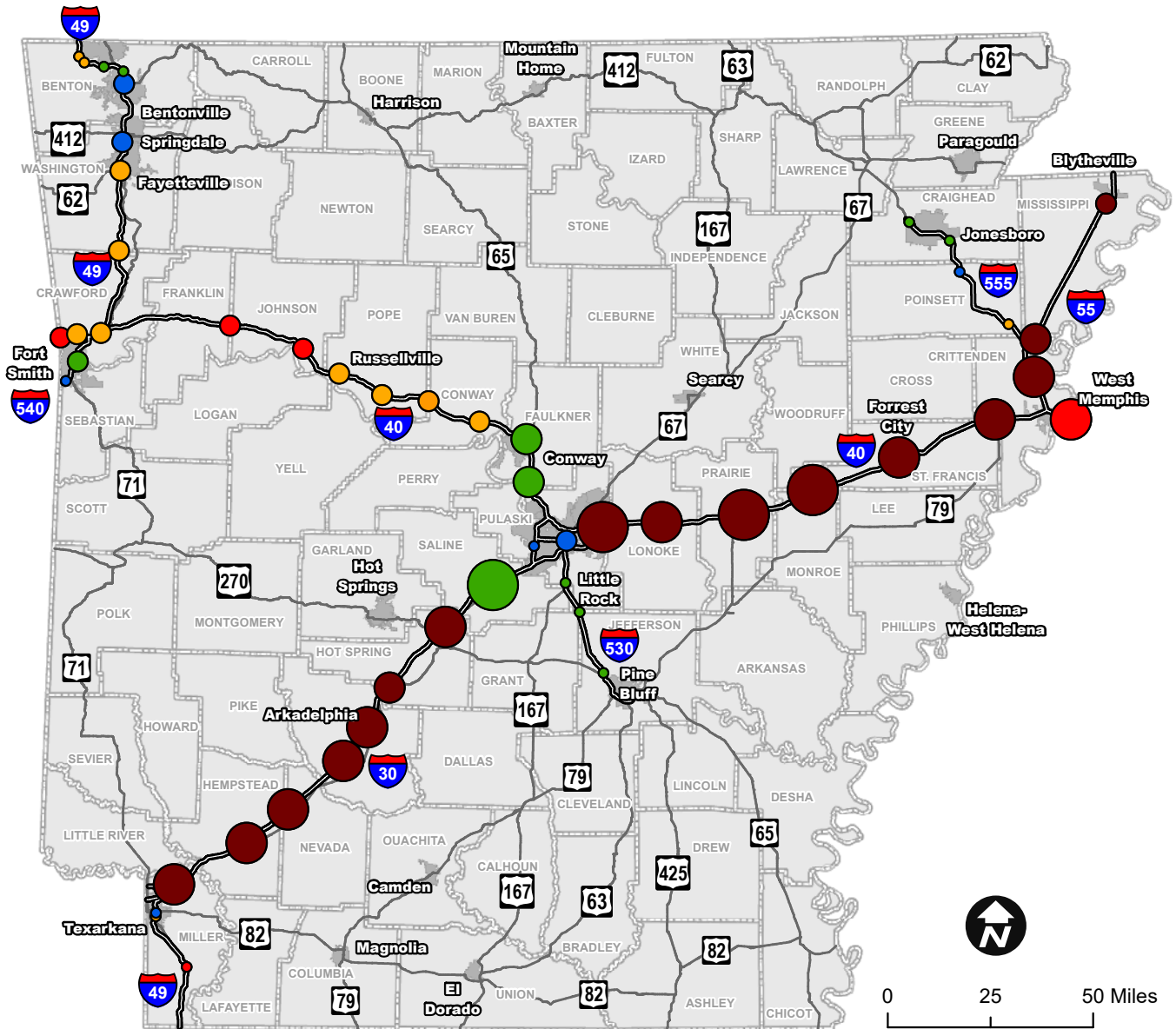


Source: Freight Analysis Framework, Version 5.



Interstate 40 at the White River (Prairie County)

Daily Truck Volumes on Interstate Highways (2020)



November 2022

Truck Volume at Count Location

- 5,000 or Less
- 5,001 to 10,000
- 10,001 to 15,000
- 15,001 to 20,000
- 20,001 or More

Truck Percent of Daily Traffic

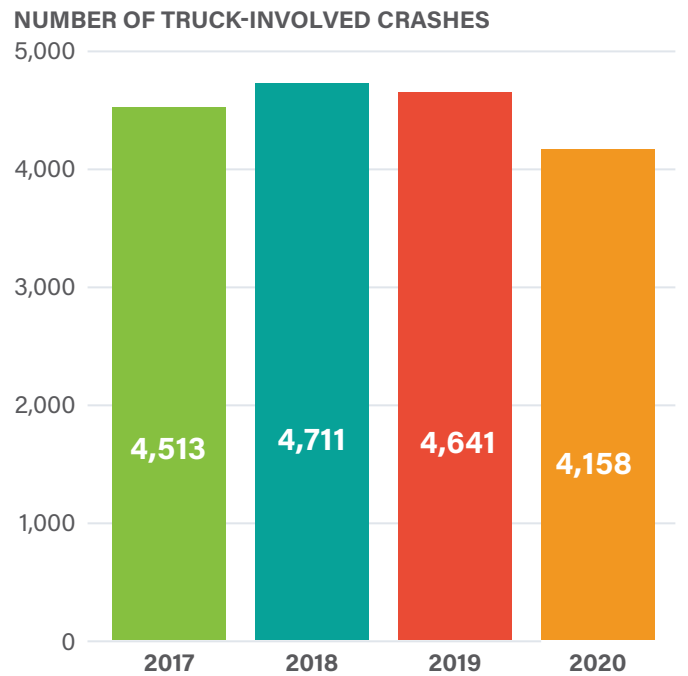
- 0 - 10% of Daily Traffic
- 10% to 20% of Daily Traffic
- 20% - 30% of Daily Traffic
- 30% - 40% of Daily Traffic
- Greater than 40% of Daily Traffic



Safety is ARDOT's top priority in planning for and managing the State Highway System. Crashes involving trucks and passenger vehicles are more likely to be fatal due to the size differences between the two vehicle types. Given the projected increases in freight volumes over the next several decades, truck safety will continue to be a focus for ARDOT. From 2017 to 2020 there were 18,023 truck-involved crashes in Arkansas, which is just over 4,500 crashes per year on average. The sharp decrease of crashes in 2020 could be due to the fact that there were, on average, fewer vehicles on the road due to travel restrictions following the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

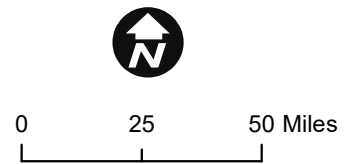
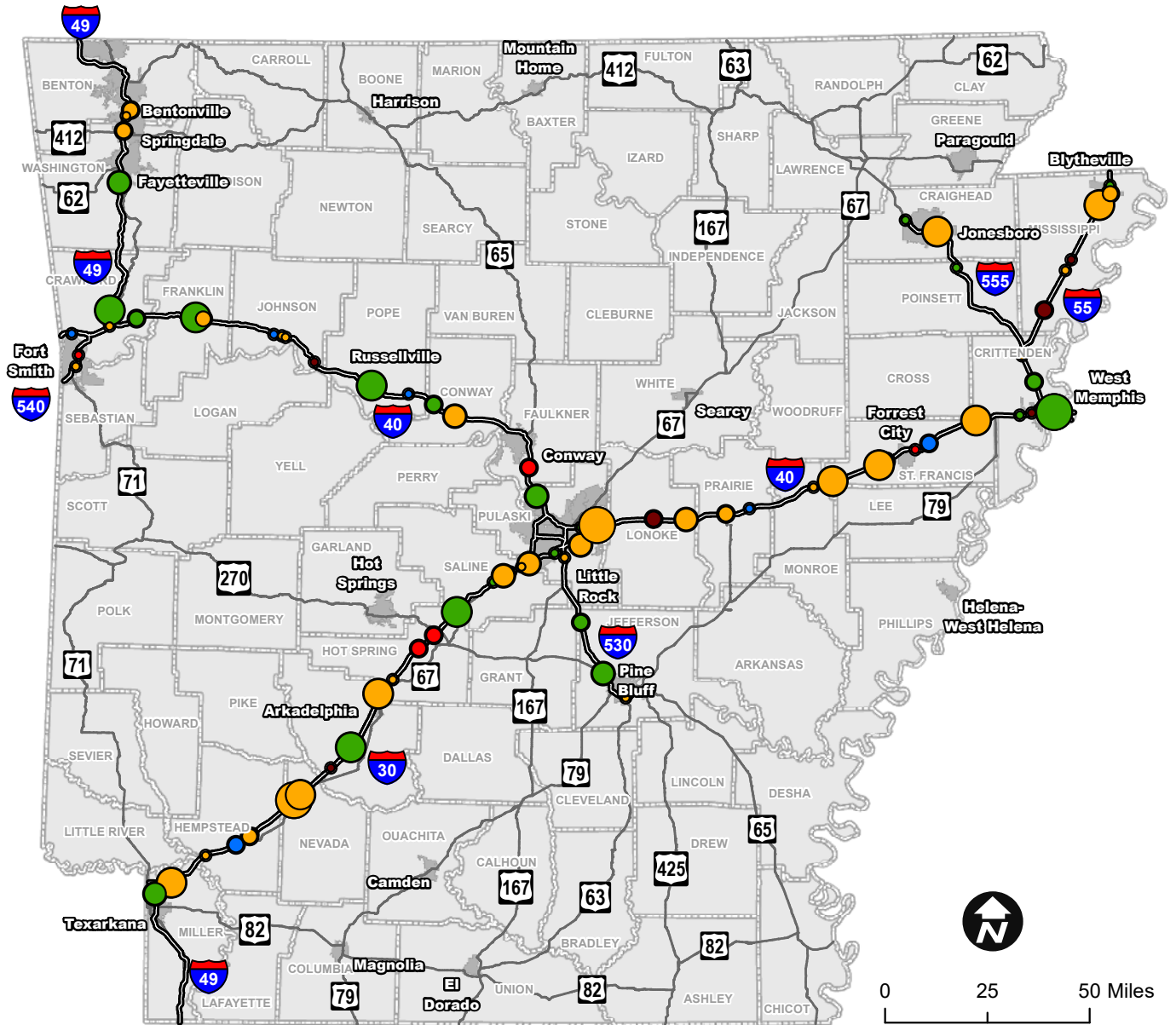
Trucking industry stakeholders are strong advocates for increased truck parking availability along major freight corridors, and adequate truck parking ensures that drivers can comply with federal hours of service (HOS) requirements. Sufficient truck parking also ensures that drivers have a safe location to stop, rather than parking along highway ramps or shoulders, which poses a safety risk for truck drivers, and the traveling public.

Truck-Involved Crashes in Arkansas per Year, 2017-2020



Source: ARDOT.

Truck Parking Utilization at Public and Private Facilities (2019)



November 2022

Number of Spaces

- 5 - 25
- 26 - 50
- 51 - 100
- 101 - 300
- 301+

Utilization

- 0 - 50% of Capacity
- 50 - 100% of Capacity
- 100 - 150% of Capacity
- 150 - 200% of Capacity
- Over 200% of Capacity

Note: Mapped values reflect the total number of parking spaces (public and private) and parking demand at a given exit. Exits where no legal truck parking is provided are not mapped.

Railroads

Railroads are an essential component of Arkansas' multimodal freight transportation system. Located between the major freight centers of Dallas, Texas and Memphis, Tennessee, trackage in Arkansas plays a key role in the transport of freight from east to west coast markets. Railroads are ideal for cost-effectively transporting heavy, bulk goods and containers over long distances. Key industries utilizing these goods include many of Arkansas' largest economic sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture, construction, and mining. Arkansas' rail network is expansive, with 26 carriers operating over 2,700 miles of track.

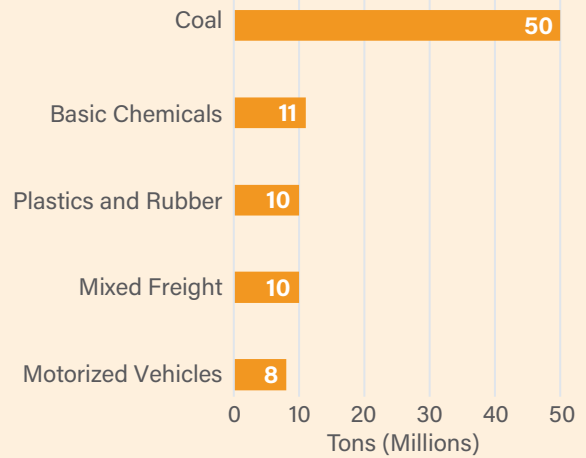
Congestion and infrastructure constraints on the railroad network limit system capacity and economic development opportunities, particularly in the state's rural areas. One of the primary constraints involves portions of the network that are not capable of handling standard 286,000-pound rail cars. Most trackage with a weight capacity below this standard is concentrated in Southeast Arkansas and consists of Class III trackage. Track capacity upgrades in this region could bolster economic development as part of a larger freight investment strategy. Other bottlenecks require infrastructure upgrades, such as double tracking certain rail segments, extending trackage and siding, or improving weight or logistical restrictions along specific bridges and tunnels.

As of November 2022, pending regulatory approval, Kansas City Southern is set to be acquired by Canadian Pacific. If this acquisition goes through, the new Class I railroad would be the first to directly connect Canada, Mexico, and the United States, including track that directly traverses Arkansas.

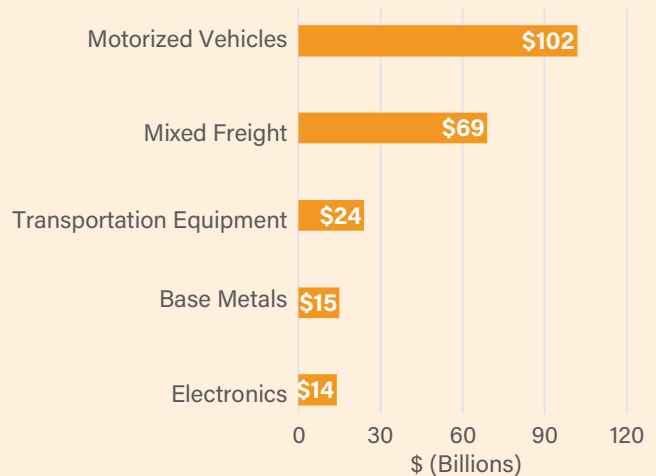


IN **2019**, MORE THAN **160 MILLION TONS** OF **FREIGHT** WORTH MORE THAN **\$300 BILLION** MOVED ON ARKANSAS' RAILROAD NETWORK, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO GROW TO ALMOST **200 MILLION TONS** WORTH **\$500 BILLION** BY **2050**.

Top Commodities by Tonnage (2019)

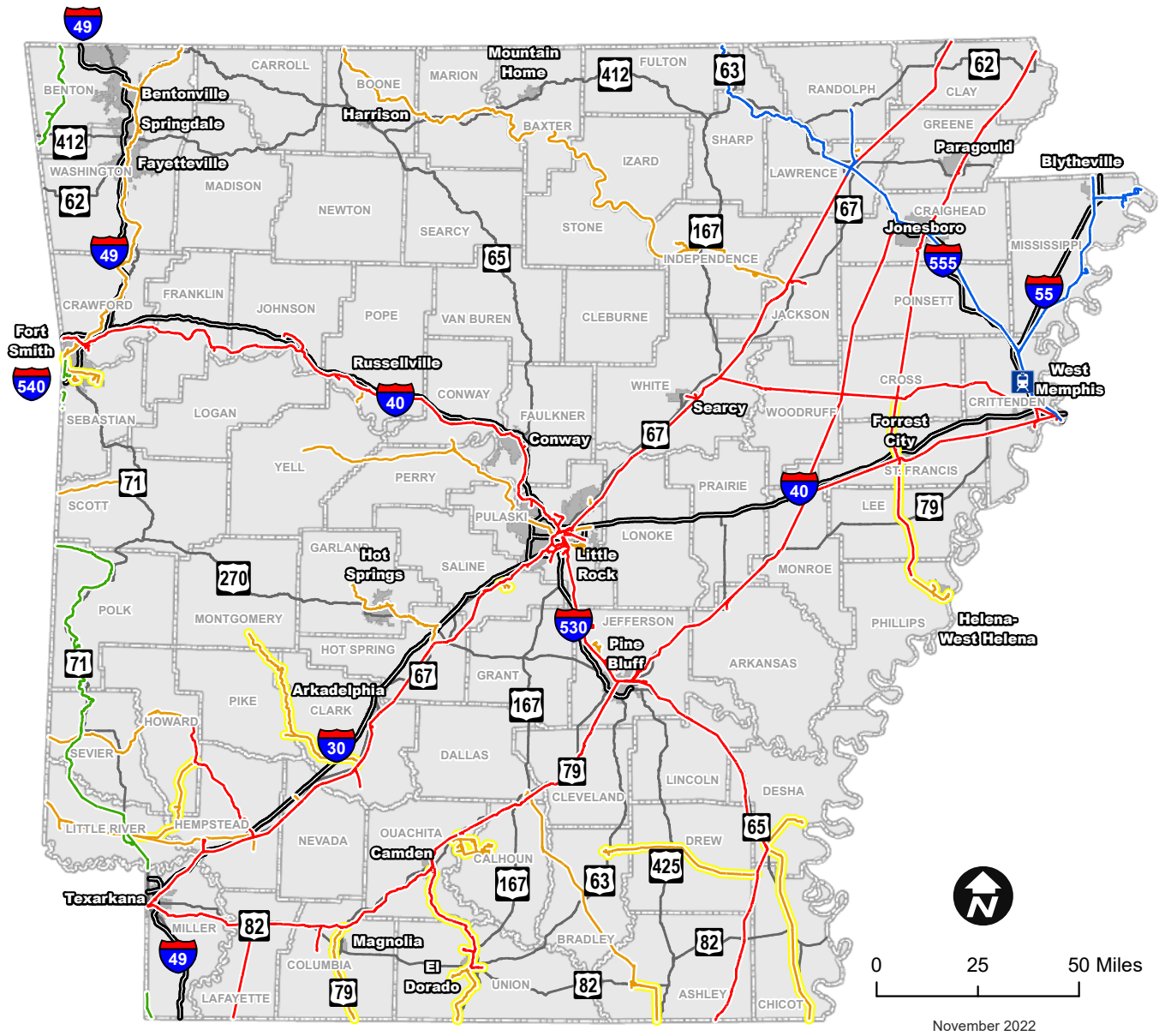


Top Commodities by Value (2019)



Source: Freight Analysis Framework, Version 5.

Track Ownership and Weight Restrictions



- Class I Railroads
 - Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF)
 - Kansas City Southern (KCS)
 - Union Pacific (UP)
- Class III Railroads
 - Various Owners
- Rail Intermodal Terminal
- Less than 286,000 Pound Capacity Segment

Ports and Waterways

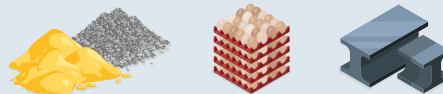
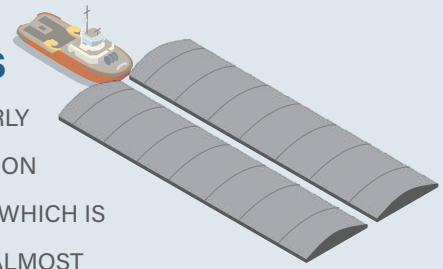
Arkansas' ports and waterways provide an efficient and economical shipping option for non-time sensitive bulk products from manufacturing, agriculture, and production and extraction industries. Barges are the primary freight transportation vehicle for inland waterways. Barges are also ideal for hauling oversized or overweight equipment. One barge can move the same tonnage as 16 train cars or 70 truck trailers. Inland ports often interface with roadway or rail networks, providing a competitive transportation solution that alleviates congestion on the nation's roadways and railways.

The U.S. inland waterways system links Arkansas to both domestic markets and coastal ports in the Gulf of Mexico. Arkansas is third in the nation for number of inland waterway miles and is currently served by five navigation systems: the Mississippi River, the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS), the Ouachita-Black Navigation System, the Red River, and the White River. The state borders 320 miles of the Lower Mississippi River and also borders or contains more than 600 miles of other commercially navigable waterways.

Challenges with waterways include dredging, funding for critical operations and maintenance projects, and port access. Aging lock and dam infrastructure – including portions outside the state – limit the usage and capacity of barge transportation services. Further complicating these issues is the difficulty in collecting accurate commodity flow data for the inland waterways system, which determines federal funding levels.

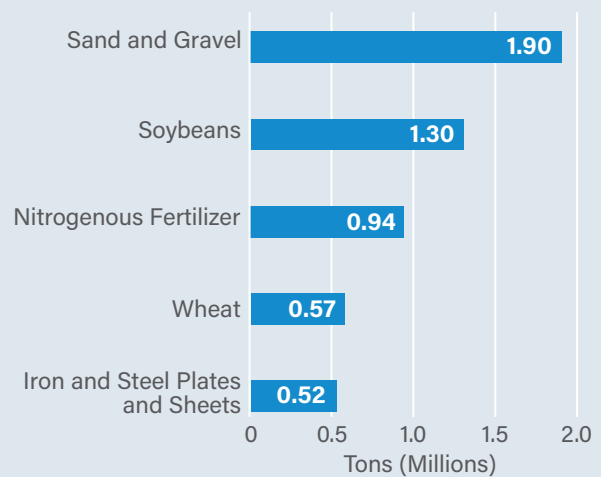
More so than any other mode of freight transportation, navigation along the nation's inland waterway system is highly susceptible to weather events that can cause delays and unsafe conditions. Since the last State Freight Plan, flooding and network resiliency has emerged as a top issue for inland ports and waterways. The most extreme recent example of such an event was the flooding of the Arkansas River in May 2019.

IN 2019, ALMOST
8 MILLION TONS
 OF **FREIGHT** WORTH NEARLY
\$3 BILLION MOVED ON
 ARKANSAS' WATERWAYS, WHICH IS
 EXPECTED TO GROW TO ALMOST
9 MILLION TONS
 WORTH **\$4 BILLION** BY 2050.

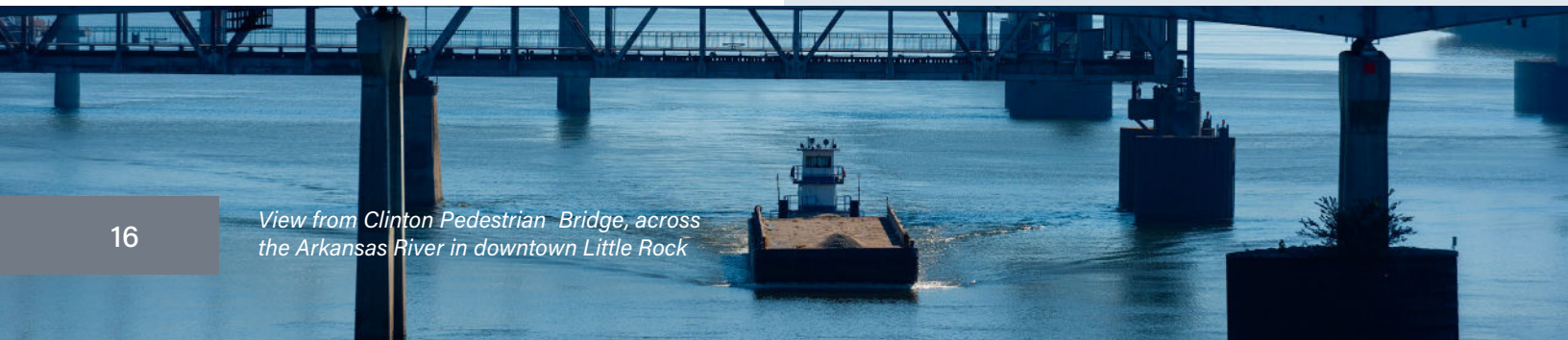


PORTS AND WATERWAYS ARE IDEAL FOR MOVING
HIGH VOLUMES OF BULK GOODS, INCLUDING TOP
 COMMODITIES SUCH AS **SAND AND GRAVEL**,
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, AND **METALS**.

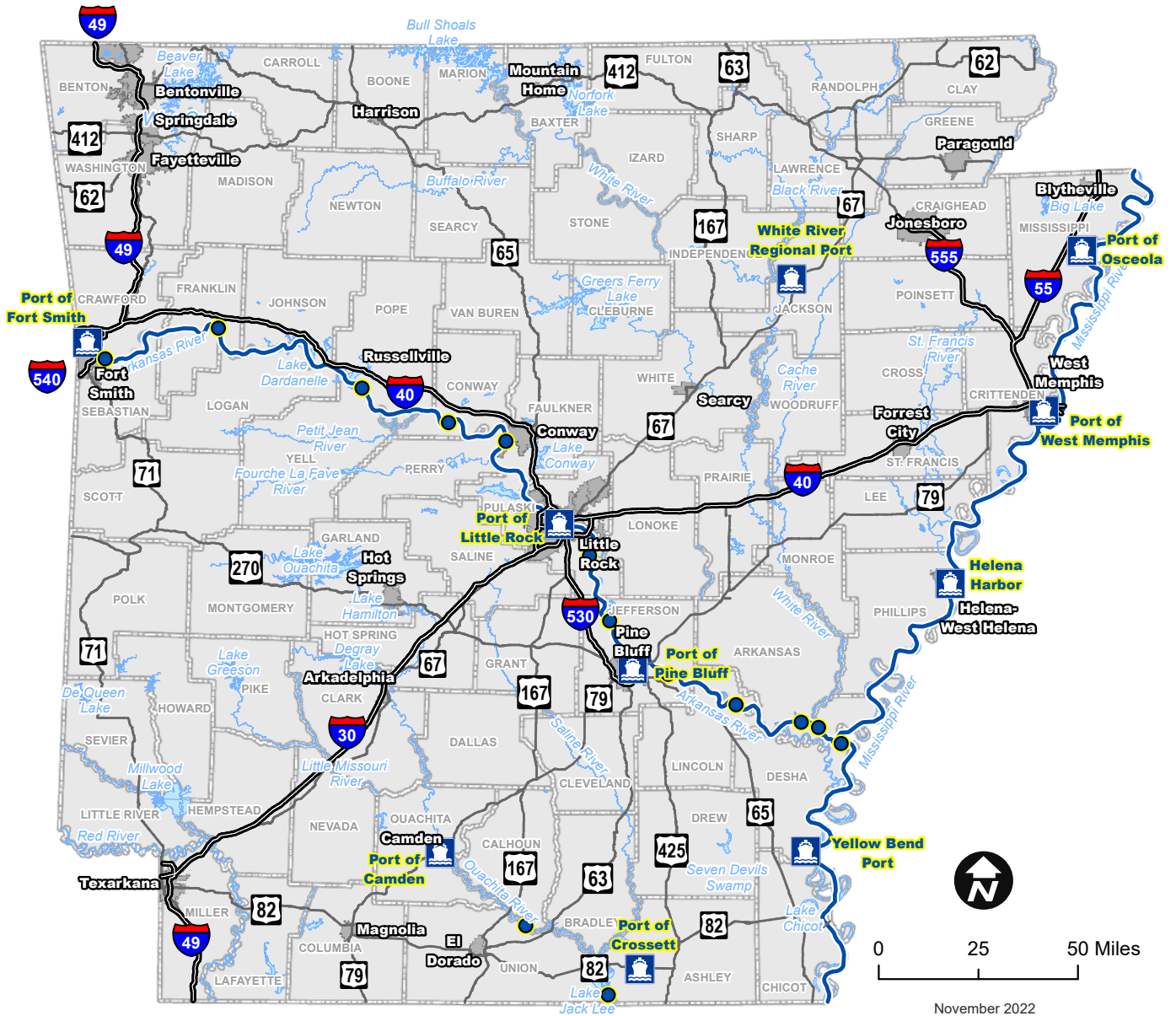
Top Commodities by Tonnage (2019)







Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Ports and Waterways



-  Marine Highway
-  Major Water Body
-  Public Port
-  Lock & Dam

Airports

Arkansas' airports support the state's businesses and industries by transporting commodities and finished goods from suppliers to customers. Air cargo is an important element of Arkansas' freight network, allowing for low-weight, high-value freight to be moved quickly, and for the state to compete with other air-served freight markets. Arkansas has two major national airports and benefits from proximity to other major international airports in neighboring states. The largest air cargo facility in Arkansas is Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport (LIT) in Little Rock, which transported nearly all air cargo tonnage in the state in 2019, while Northwest Arkansas National Airport (XNA) and Fort Smith Regional Airport (FSM) together handle the rest.

Arkansas' airports face significant competition due to the state's proximity to major airports in other states. Most notably, Memphis International Airport (MEM) is the largest airport in the U.S. for air cargo activity and is just 11 miles east of the Arkansas-Tennessee state border. Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), another major airport hub, is about 320 miles from Little Rock, approximately 4.5 hours by car or truck. Most of Arkansas' air cargo-handling facilities have capacity to handle increased volumes if the market demands.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a catalyst that accelerated e-commerce growth in the U.S., resulting in a jump in the share of e-commerce in total retail sales. Although it is unclear whether the rapid adoption of e-commerce will be sustained in the long-term, some buyer preferences may permanently shift to certain online retailers or goods after a positive experience during the pandemic. This may lead to increased demand for expedited air cargo service. Retailers have also restructured their operations to better serve e-commerce, and these decisions and investments are likely to have a long-term impact on future business models.

IN 2019,

AIRPORTS IN ARKANSAS

MOVED MORE THAN

25,000 TONS

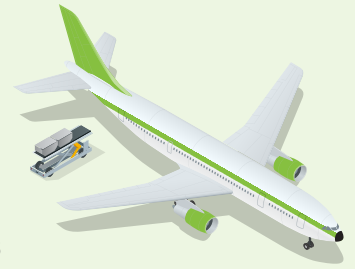
OF **FREIGHT** VALUED AT

\$2 BILLION, WHICH IS

EXPECTED TO DOUBLE IN VOLUME TO

51,000 TONS VALUED AT

\$4.7 BILLION BY 2050.



AIR CARGO IS WELL SUITED TO HANDLE

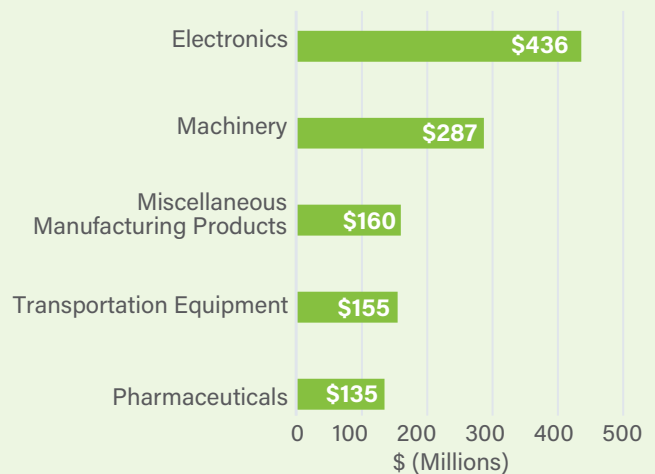
LOW-WEIGHT, HIGH-VALUE COMMODITIES,

INCLUDING TOP GOODS SUCH AS **ELECTRONICS,**

PRECISION INSTRUMENTS, PHARMACEUTICALS,

AND OTHER MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS.

Top Commodities by Value (2019)



Source: Freight Analysis Framework, Version 5.

Pipelines

Pipelines are a specialized system. Arkansas has over 10,000 miles of pipelines moving gas, oil, and other products. Often, modal shifts – between pipeline, trucking, and rail – occur at pipeline terminals.

Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Mississippi accounted for more than 90% of inbound pipeline flows, while Mississippi, Louisiana, and Missouri accounted for more than 95% of outbound pipeline flows.

IN 2019,

67 MILLION TONS

OF FREIGHT VALUED AT

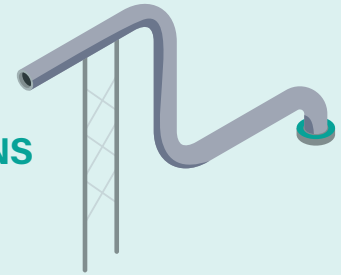
\$14 BILLION WAS

MOVED THROUGH ARKANSAS' PIPELINES.

BY 2050, PIPELINE VOLUMES ARE PROJECTED TO

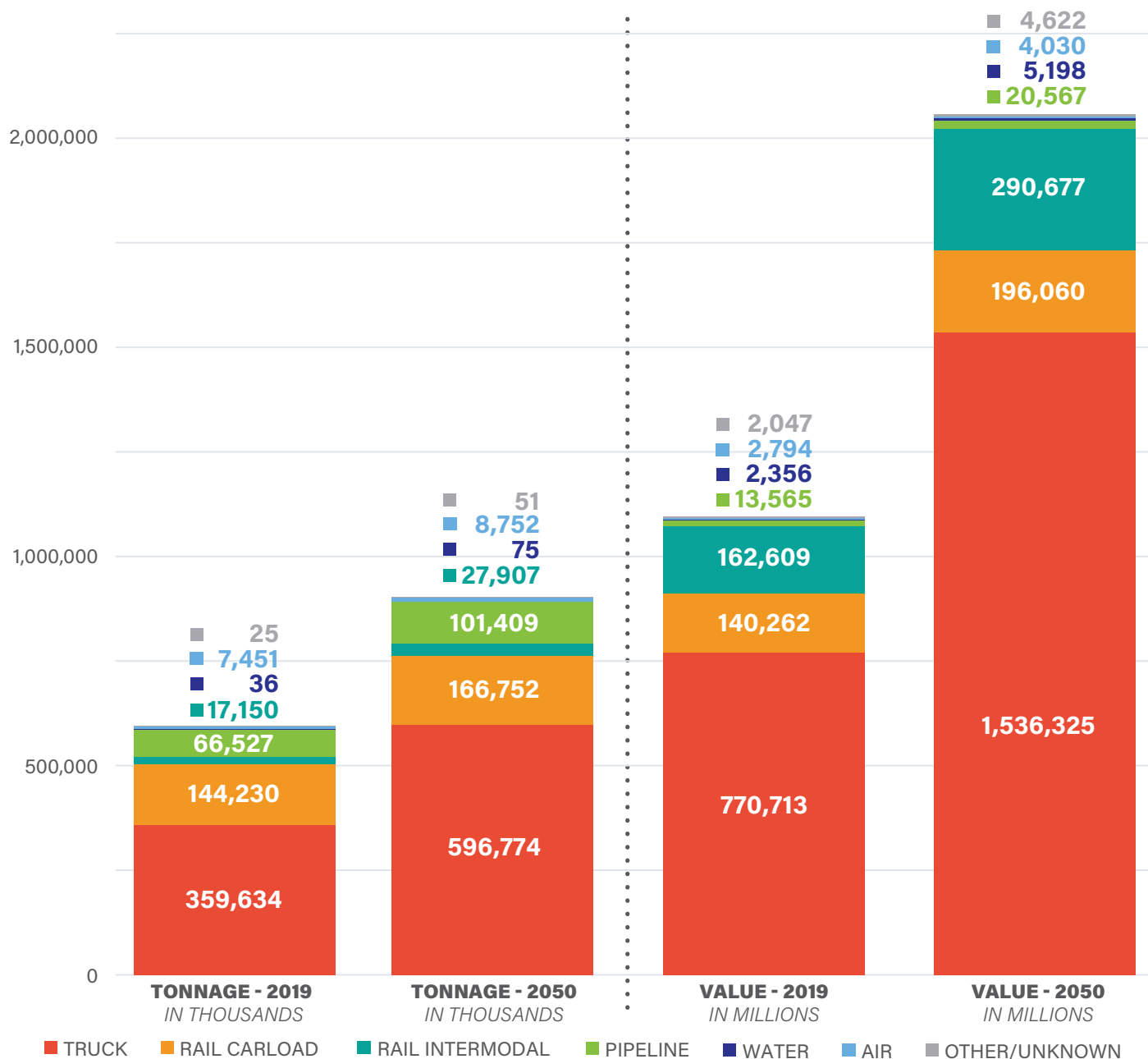
EXPAND TO **101 MILLION TONS** WORTH

\$21 BILLION.



Growing Arkansas, Growing Freight Demand

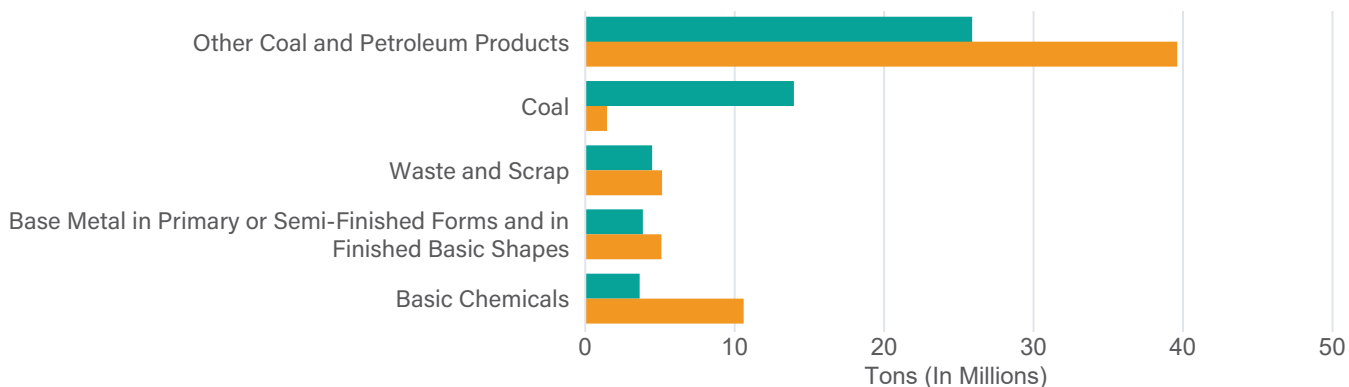
In 2019, approximately 595 million tons of freight moved over Arkansas' transportation system, valued at \$1.1 trillion. This freight volume has been forecasted to increase by over 50% by 2050 to 902 million tons, worth over \$2 trillion. More growth leads to more freight across all modes of transportation. Arkansas' central location offers access to extensive highway, rail, and pipeline networks, connecting the state to domestic and global markets from its ports, waterways, and airports. Arkansas also has an abundance of natural resources and is a top producer of key agricultural commodities, which are sold around the world.



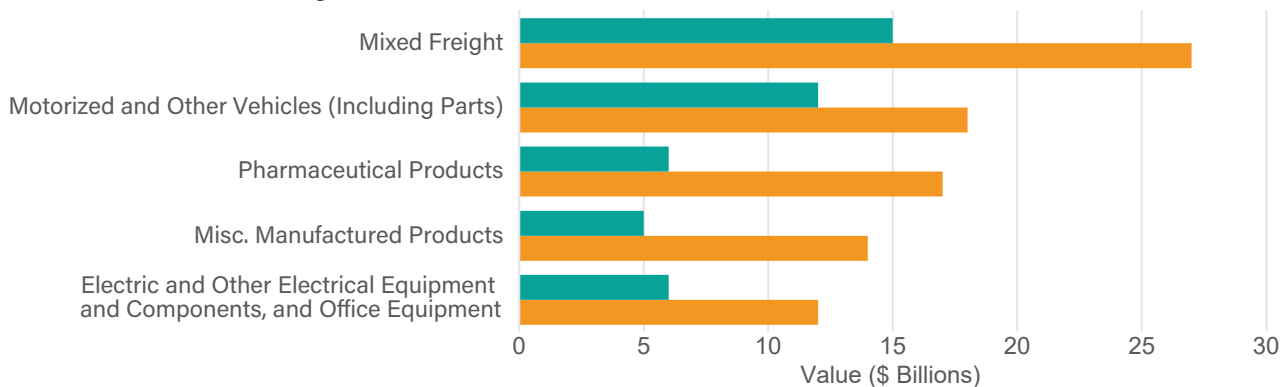
By 2050, trucks are expected to move a higher volume and proportion of freight flows in Arkansas, while railroad shares of freight volumes are projected to decline. Other modes are expected to grow modestly but retain a similar share of overall freight volume and value.

Top Commodities, All Modes, 2019-2050

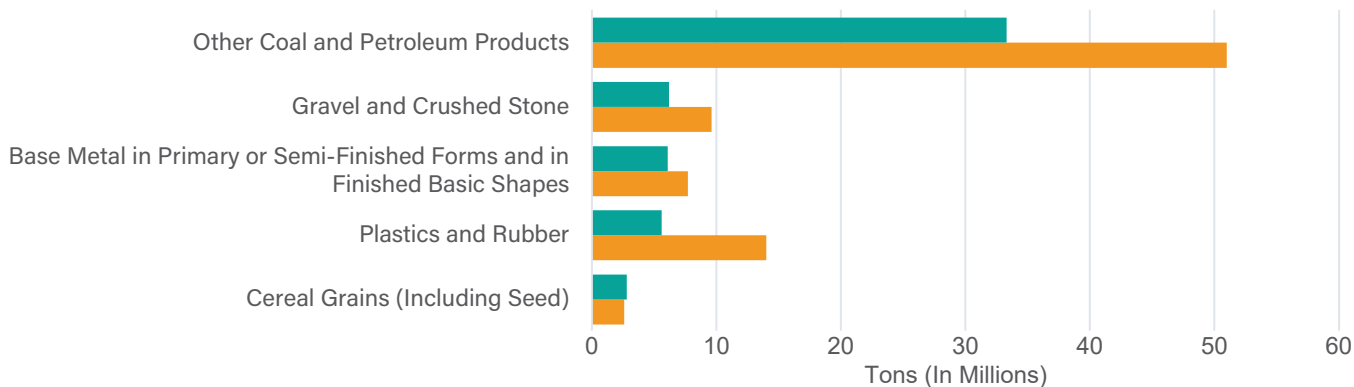
Top Inbound Commodities by Tonnage



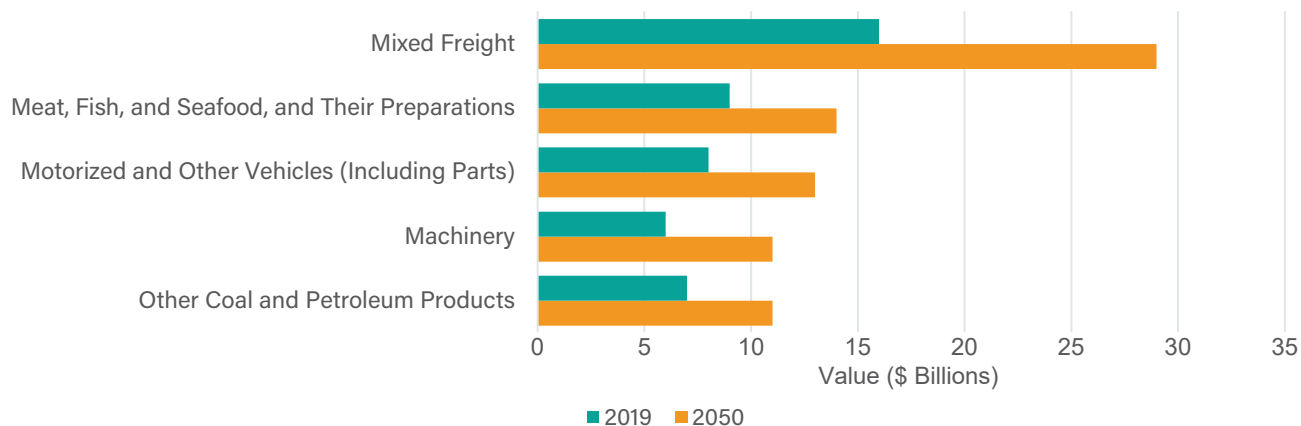
Top Inbound Commodities by Value



Top Outbound Commodities by Tonnage



Top Outbound Commodities by Value



■ 2019 ■ 2050

Source: Freight Analysis Framework, Version 5; STB Confidential Waybill Sample.

Arkansas' Multimodal Freight Needs

Access | Capacity | Aging Infrastructure and Deferred Maintenance | Resiliency | Funding

Highways



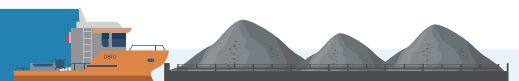
- » **Asset Management** - maintain pavement and bridges in good condition, replace or rehabilitate load posted bridges.
- » **Truck Safety** - reduce crashes through increased truck parking opportunities, educating the public, and increasing enforcement.
- » **System Connectivity and Mobility** - completing the four-lane grid system and addressing key truck bottlenecks.
- » **Truck Parking** - supports hours of service requirements and mitigates safety aspects of unauthorized parking.
- » **Transportation Technology** - potential to invest in truck parking notification systems to improve utilization of existing truck parking facilities.

Railroads



- » **System Enhancement** - increase the versatility of the system by developing rail spurs, freight rail facilities, intermodal connections, and additional capacity.
- » **Funding** - grant funding opportunities particularly challenging for shortline carriers to secure.
- » **Track Quality and Weight Restrictions** - upgrading all track to handle 286,000-pound weight standard would increase competitiveness of freight rail and provide economic development opportunities.
- » **Safety** - improving overall safety as well as at highway-rail at-grade crossings.
- » **Service and Labor Challenges** - address and mitigate persistent labor and workforce challenges following the onset of COVID-19.

Ports and Waterways



- » **Funding** - acquiring adequate levels of funding for priority projects, dredging, and maintenance needs.
- » **Highway and Rail Access** - highway and rail access is a priority for current and potential port users.
- » **Lock and Dam Infrastructure** - improving aging lock and dam infrastructure and tow haulage systems at all locks.
- » **Dredging** - consistent, annual dredging is essential for reliable operations at inland ports.

Airports



- » **Ground Access** - airport connector roads and connections to Interstate Highways to facilitate additional freight.
- » **Capitalizing on Available Capacity** - marketing capacity and service opportunities as an alternative to busy neighboring hubs.

Strategies and Actions

This State Freight Plan identifies a number of challenges and needs across the state's multimodal freight transportation system, including aging infrastructure, congestion and bottlenecks, safety, rural and multimodal connectivity challenges, and funding. Meeting these challenges requires that freight and industry stakeholders throughout the state collectively take actions that are multimodal and comprehensive, with the goal of strengthening the state's transportation network and supporting evolving population and demographics, industry composition, freight and economic growth, and quality of life in Arkansas.

Highlighted below are strategies and actions for advancing the success of Arkansas' multimodal freight system within each goal area.

1

Safety and Resiliency:
Improve statewide safety by funding projects that reduce fatal and serious injury crashes, reduce vulnerability, and improve resiliency of the system.

- » Continue to implement the railway-highway crossing improvement program.
- » Implement Commercial Vehicle (truck) safety strategies from the Strategic Highway Safety Plan.
- » Encourage development and expansion of truck parking areas.
- » Evaluate emergency response protocols to better support the trucking industry.
- » Support initiatives and investments that increase the resiliency of the multimodal freight network.

2

Economic Competitiveness:
Improve intermodal transportation system connectivity, efficiency, and mobility to support existing industries and strengthen national and regional economic competitiveness.

- » Improve road and rail access to inland port facilities, air cargo facilities, transload terminals, and intermodal terminals.
- » Improve last-mile access roads to Arkansas' rural industries, farms, and other freight-generating facilities.
- » Support public and private investments in inland ports, transload terminals, and intermodal terminals.
- » Continue working with the Freight Advisory Committee.
- » Improve communication between modal authorities.
- » Promote "Be Pro Be Proud" Initiative in Arkansas.
- » Coordinate with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC), Planning and Development Districts (PDD)/Economic Development Districts (EDD), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), and other economic development stakeholders.
- » Promote the importance of all freight modes to local, state, and national economies.

3

Infrastructure Condition:
Invest in existing infrastructure and supporting technologies to maintain and preserve the existing system.

- » Evaluate, adjust, and enforce posted-speed, routing, weight, and size restrictions on roads and bridges.
- » Continue implementation of the Transportation Asset Management Plan.
- » Prioritize maintenance of existing assets over construction of new infrastructure.

4

Congestion Reduction, Mobility, and System Reliability:
Invest in the multimodal transportation system to improve mobility, connectivity, accessibility, and reliability for people and goods.

- » Continue to invest in Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).
- » Deploy a truck parking availability system along Interstates.
- » Update the statewide travel demand model, including freight module.
- » Identify critical freight corridors.
- » Support dredging of MKARNS to 12 feet.
- » Coordinate with Class I/III railroads to identify opportunities for enhanced rail access and service.
- » Integrate multimodal freight with regional planning activities.

5

Environmental Sustainability:
Enhance the performance of the transportation system while avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating impacts to natural and cultural resources.

- » When developing system improvement alternatives or selecting operations/management strategies, consider approaches that minimize freight impacts on local air and noise pollution, flooding, stormwater runoff, and wildlife habitats.
- » Promote equitable outcomes in the development of the freight system by considering the distribution of benefits and burdens on communities (including access, mobility, options, affordability, safety, employment opportunities, involvement, noise and other forms of pollution), with emphasis on historically marginalized or disadvantaged communities.



Highway 64 (Midland Bridge) facing Van Buren
(circa 2019 Arkansas River Flood event)

Implementing the Plan

As the demand for the movement of freight into, out of, within and through Arkansas grows, it is increasingly important to invest in our freight system (including highways, railroads, ports and waterways, airports, and multimodal and intermodal assets) to ensure that the state's freight network can meet the needs of industry and consumers.

The Federal Highway Administration's National Highway Freight Program provides funding (approx. \$18 million per year over the next five years) for freight projects. However, designated program funding for freight projects is limited relative to the many priority freight needs (across all modes) in Arkansas. Recognizing this challenge, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) maintained and created numerous discretionary grant programs with eligibilities for multimodal freight projects:

- » Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)
- » Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA)
- » Mega projects
- » Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Savings Transportation (PROTECT)
- » Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program (CRISI)
- » Bridge Investment Program
- » Port Infrastructure Development Program
- » America's Marine Highways
- » Airport Improvement Program
- » Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program
- » Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program

Arkansas has had past success with some of these programs, and ARDOT will continue to support future efforts and leverage its available resources when feasible.

Successful implementation of this State Freight Plan can only be achieved with the participation and collaboration of public- and private-sector users and owners of the transportation system, including freight industry stakeholders and federal, state, regional, and local agencies.



View from Clinton Pedestrian Bridge, across the Arkansas River in downtown Little Rock

State Freight Advisory Committee Participants

- » Arkansas Department of Aeronautics
 - » Arkansas Department of Agriculture
 - » Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment, Division of Environmental Quality
 - » Arkansas Department of Transportation
 - » Arkansas Economic Development Commission
 - » Arkansas Farm Bureau
 - » Arkansas Forestry Association
 - » Arkansas Good Roads and Transportation Council
 - » Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce
 - » Arkansas Trucking Association
 - » Arkansas Waterways Commission
 - » Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration – Arkansas Division
 - » Helena Harbor
 - » Monticello Economic Development Commission
 - » Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission
 - » Nucor-Yamato Steel
 - » Port of Little Rock
 - » Riceland Foods
 - » Union Pacific Railroad
 - » Western Arkansas Planning and Development District
- Ex-Officio**
- » Federal Highway Administration – Arkansas Division
 - » U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Little Rock District



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