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Dockery to retire after nearly 54 years at KDOT

Pittsburg Area Engineer George Dockery has decided it is time to retire after nearly 54 years at KDOT.

"I found that I've been working longer than a lot of my Area employees are old," he joked.

He was recruited by KDOT while at the University of Arkansas and started on Feb. 1, 1967. Dockery's first assignment in the engineer training program was in construction at Ft. Scott. He was engaged at the time and didn't want to get married until he got a job and a paycheck. His first paycheck was in March, so Cheri set the date for March 24 and they have been together ever since.

After nine years as Projects Engineer in Iola, he was promoted to Resident Engineer in Pittsburg. Soon after, the Area Engineer concept began and he was selected.

Dockery had opportunities for promotion, "but we like Pittsburg and it's close to family in Arkansas." He and Cheri's family has grown over the years as they have three kids, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Dockery is proud that during his time in Pittsburg, almost 95 percent of the bridges have been replaced, in addition to the first bridge he was Project Manager on while in Iola. "I'm older than the bridges," he said.

He also has served on the board of advisors for 30 years with Pittsburg State University's construction technology department. "It started with one fulltime professor, a part-time instructor and six to eight students, and now it's the largest department at Pitt State," Dockery said. "I like to think I helped it grow."

His last day in the office is Sept. 4, and he has spent the last three weeks cleaning, "and I may have to bring in a bulldozer to get all of my personal belongings."

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