



**ARKANSAS  
RIGHT TO LIFE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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**Statewide Safe Haven billboard campaign continues as Maumelle, Fort Smith and El Dorado increases the number of Safe Haven Baby Boxes in Arkansas to eight**

The sixth Safe Haven Baby Box in Arkansas – and 82nd in the nation – is set to go live Sunday, Oct. 10 at Maumelle’s Fire Station 1, 2000 Murphy Drive, with a public unveiling set for 2 p.m.

In addition to the Maumelle location, Safe Haven Baby Boxes will be dedicated at the Fort Smith Fire Department, Station 11, 8900 Massard Road, Monday, Oct. 11, with a public event set for 10 a.m., and at El Dorado Fire Department, Station 2, 1403 East Hillsboro St., Tuesday, Oct. 12, with a public event set for 10:30 a.m.

The Safe Haven Baby Box is a device that allows parents to surrender their newborn infants that are less than 30 days old anonymously and safely near fire stations or other first responder stations. In addition to Arkansas, Safe Haven Baby Boxes are located in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Florida and Arizona.

“Arkansas Right to Life started an aggressive billboard campaign in 2019 with a goal of placing a Safe Haven billboard in every one of Arkansas’ 75 counties,” said Rose Mimms, executive director of Arkansas Right to Life. “So far, we have placed billboards in 23 counties with two new boards set to go up in Independence County (Batesville) on Nov. 1, and Drew County (Monticello) on Nov. 29.”

Mimms said Safe Haven Baby Boxes are more important now than ever.

“As we anticipate the reversal of *Roe vs. Wade* and the need for life-affirming options for mothers unable to parent, Safe Haven Baby Boxes provide mothers a safe and anonymous surrender of their newborn for adoption into forever families,” said Mimms.

The first Safe Haven Baby Box in Arkansas was dedicated in September 2019 at Fire Station 3, 2717 Edison Ave., Benton, where the first newborn was surrendered at the location on May 24, 2020. Other Safe Haven Baby Box locations in Arkansas are located at Jonesboro Fire Station 3, 2212 Brazos St.; Springdale Fire Station 6, 1623 S. 48th St., Rogers Fire Station 5, 2525 South Pinnacle Hills Parkway, and Conway’s Central Fire Station 1, 1401 Caldwell St. Hospitals and law enforcement agencies also serve as surrender locations.

Mimms said the Arkansas Right to Life Safe Haven billboard campaign is funded through donations, adding that the Knights of Columbus organization has been instrumental in providing sponsorship and funding for several billboard locations.

The Safe Haven Law, enacted in Arkansas in 2001, is designed to protect babies from being hurt or killed from abandonment by parents who are unwilling or unable to provide parenting. Under the law, a parent may surrender an infant 30 days or younger anonymously at a hospital emergency room or law enforcement agency, but in 2019 the law was amended to include manned fire stations as a surrender location. The amended law sponsored by Arkansas Sen. Cecile Bledsoe and Rep. Rebecca Petty also approved the installation of safety devices at surrender locations.

Mimms said the billboard campaign's purpose is threefold: 1) to educate the general public and parents about the Safe Haven Law, 2) to advise manned fire departments that they are now an official surrender location and 3) to promote the option of Safe Haven Baby Boxes for parents who want or need total anonymity in the safe surrender of their baby.

Every state has a Safe Haven Law, but provisions vary from state to state, said Mimms. The Arkansas Safe Haven Law allows a parent to bring a child 30 days old or younger to an official surrender location without facing prosecution of endangerment and abandonment of a child. The law does not prohibit prosecution for abuse or neglect of the child that occurred before the child was given up to a medical provider or law enforcement agency.

Once a baby is surrendered, the Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is contacted immediately and the child is treated medically. DCFS will assume responsibility for the child and place the child with a "forever" family.

The DCFS maintains a website, public service announcements, and materials in both English and Spanish to help educate the public about the Arkansas Safe Haven Law.

"Arkansas Right to Life joins the effort with our support of the law to add manned fire departments and the installation of safety devices in Arkansas through our educational billboard campaign," said Mimms.

Organizations or individuals wishing to support the Safe Haven billboard campaign may visit [artl.org/donate](http://artl.org/donate) or mail a tax-deductible gift to Arkansas Right to Life Educational Trust Fund (note Billboard Campaign in check or online), Box 1697, Little Rock, AR 72203-1697.

For more information or questions about the campaign contact Mimms at (501) 663-4237 or email [artl@artl.org](mailto:artl@artl.org).

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*Arkansas Right to Life is the state affiliate of the National Right to Life Committee the oldest and largest pro-life organization. For more information visit <https://artl.org/>.*