

NORTHEAST ARKANSAS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

1st Quarter 2024

We appreciate your continued support of economic development in Jonesboro and Craighead County. This report highlights activity in the first quarter of this year. Our economic development partners have been busy and we're excited to see the growth and advancements that will be made for our city and county this year.

Sincerely,

Al M. Heringer III, Chairman

INFRASTRUCTURE

JONESBORO MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

The Jonesboro Municipal Airport will soon have a new terminal building in which to welcome visitors to Jonesboro. The federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) has awarded a \$5 million grant to support this construction, and it will be supported with a \$1.3 million local fund match, demonstrating the power of partnerships between federal and local governments. Our federal delegation, the Airport Commission, the City, East Arkansas Planning & Development, and Jonesboro Unlimited are all to be commended for their efforts

in securing the grant. The new terminal building will enhance the airport's functionality, providing a contemporary space for the future. Additionally, new lighting and runway strengthening have been completed, as part of the airport's Master Plan.



RAISE GRANT FOR TRAILS

The City of Jonesboro applied for a \$25 million RAISE Grant (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The application was submitted in partnership with the city of Paragould and would stretch the pedestrian infrastructure to the edge of the city limits to the Northeast in Jonesboro and to the Southeast in Paragould. Long-term plans are to connect them regionally. Trail connections are vital to support connectivity for those without vehicles and to support a healthy community. The trail will add 10.7 miles of trails and shared-use paths through Jonesboro and 4.75 miles of new trails in Paragould.



CRAIGHEAD TECHNOLOGY PARK SOUTH (CTP SOUTH)

Through the efforts of U.S. Congressman Rick Crawford, the City of Jonesboro will receive a \$500,000 grant from the 2024 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill. Funds will be used to assist in building the water infrastructure system in the newly purchased Craighead Technology Park South property.

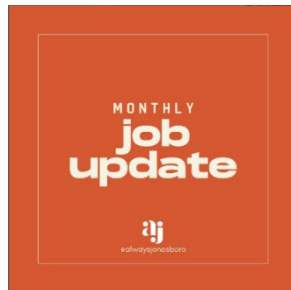
TALENT DEVELOPMENT & ATTRACTION

ALWAYS JONESBORO CAMPAIGN



Always Jonesboro is a new, energized, dynamic focal point for Jonesboro Unlimited’s Talent Attraction strategy. Featuring social media, a forthcoming website, and Ambassador recruitment, Always Jonesboro will unveil the essence of living well in Jonesboro and the region! Designed for new residents, long-time natives, and anyone considering a move to Jonesboro, Always Jonesboro will showcase our high quality of place and connect you with Ambassadors who share your interests. Additionally, it will highlight job opportunities available on the My Jonesboro Jobs website. Be sure to follow Always Jonesboro on Facebook! The website will be available in the second quarter.

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MY JONESBORO JOBS & INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The My Jonesboro Jobs website, with the newly added Internship tab, continues to expand. Year-to-date, there have been approximately 26,000 visitors to the site. The marketing campaign through social media is reaching the right audiences, as for every 100 views, 91 people are clicking through to myjonesborojobs.com. That’s a great incentive for companies to post their available jobs and internships! Jonesboro Unlimited has been meeting with A-State College of Business and College of Engineering and Computer Science faculty and staff members to educate them about the Internship program. They are also meeting with



students and companies to encourage participation and had a booth at the Chamber’s Business Expo to showcase the program. It’s all about recruiting talent and connecting students with employers – Making a difference! Check out MYJONESBOROJOBS.COM!



Future entrepreneurs pitched their business ideas at the Thrown to the Wolves competition, held in February. Hosted by the A-State Delta Center for Economic Development, the competition is built around high school student teams submitting a business plan prior to the competition and then pitching their product or idea to judges at the event. This helps build the entrepreneurial culture and skillset among the students and builds their connection with Arkansas State University.



ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY



LEADERSHIP IN BANKING SERIES

Jonesboro Unlimited’s Strategic Plan identified a need for leadership training in the financial sector. Led by the Delta Center for Economic Development, a curriculum was designed to strengthen and build on leadership skills for this sector. The first class completed the course in February of this year.



Jonesboro’s newly developed Women in Manufacturing group is preparing to become an official chapter of the national organization. In the first quarter they met to make plans to host a reception for the A-State Women’s Leadership Conference.



Draft Day 2024 was a huge success, with 18 schools participating and 147 students confirmed to interview with companies. Students were prepared for interviewing and resume building prior to the event. Several hundred students attended the job fair in conjunction with the event.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION & DEVELOPMENT

Hytrol Conveyor Company celebrated the grand opening of their new distribution center in February. Located on Moore Road, the 150,000 square foot distribution center will be Hytrol's main hub for distributing products to their customers. The new warehouse provides a centralized locale for shipping processes and a streamlined approach to completing orders swiftly.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Jonesboro's economic development partners have a network of relationships that enhance our city, county and region. The first quarter was busy, with Mark Young speaking at the **Delta Women's Leadership Academy** and Shelle Randall participating in the **Credentials of Value** meeting in Little Rock. She also assisted with planning for **ASUN's CAMPP (Creating Advanced Manufacturing Pathways Program)**. This camp exposes students to skills that are utilized in manufacturing and is intended for 8th and 9th grade students. Additionally, Jonesboro Unlimited hosted the **Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions' (AMS) Workforce Best Practices: Manufacturing & Education Partnerships** meeting.

MARKETING & BRANDING

MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS



Mountain Bike enthusiasts were excited to cut the ribbon on the completion of the soft surface trails at Craighead Forest Park in April. There are now 13 miles of updated mountain bike trails at the park, 2.5 miles of gravel track, and 3.2 miles of hard surface track. First Gentleman, Bryan Sanders, was present for the ribbon cutting, as were other state and local dignitaries. The improved and expanded trail system is part of a design study completed by studioDRIFT and funded by the City of Jonesboro and Jonesboro Unlimited.

BY THE NUMBERS

Our economic development partners had five inquiries, two prospect visits, seven business retention and expansion activities, and six market research requests in the first quarter.

POPULATION ESTIMATES

Jonesboro and Craighead County’s population continues to show the steady and stable growth that we’ve had for decades. Since 1970, Jonesboro’s population growth per decade has ranged from 14.3% to a high of 32.2%. From 2020 to 2023, a short three-year timespan, our growth at 2.6% and 2.4% respectively, has outpaced both the state and the U.S. It is also interesting to note that growth in the Southern United States is outpacing all other regions.

The Census Bureau considers the Southern region to be made up of the South Atlantic Division - Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia; the East South Central Division - Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee; and the West South Central Division - Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas.

LOCATION	APRIL 1, 2020	APRIL 1, 2023	NUMBER	PERCENT CHANGE
Jonesboro	78,579	80,650	2,071	2.6%
Craighead County	111,242	113,993	2,751	2.4%
Jonesboro MSA	134,207	136,390	2,183	1.6%
Arkansas	3,011,490	3,067,732	56,242	1.8%
United States	331,464,948	334,914,895	3,449,947	1.0%
Northeast U.S.	57,614,141	56,983,517	-630,624	-1.1%
Midwest U.S.	68,987,296	68,909,283	-78,013	-0.1%
South U.S.	126,268,529	130,125,290	3,856,761	3.0%
West U.S.	78,594,982	78,896,805	301,823	0.4%

Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for the United States, Regions, States, District of Columbia, Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Counties in Arkansas; Incorporated Places of 20,000 or More in 2020, and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023 (NST-EST2023-POP; CBSA-MET-EST2023-POP; CO-EST2023-POP-05; SUB-IP-EST2023-CUMCHG). U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Release Dates: December 2023; March 2024; May 2024.