

# NORTHEAST ARKANSAS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

2nd Quarter 2021

As we move into the second half of 2021, it is evident that Jonesboro and Craighead County are dynamic and abound with energy, commerce, and a vision for the future. We are fortunate to have committed leadership guiding our city and county to the next level of excellence. The creation of high-paying, quality jobs is essential to our continued success and investing in our infrastructure and quality of life can only reinforce our growth and enhance talent attraction. Thank you for your continued support of economic development and the Northeast Arkansas Industrial Development Commission. Please read below for details on activity in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

Sincerely,  
Al M. Heringer III, Chairman

## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE ON EXISTING PROJECTS

The Colson Group is quickly approaching completion of their new 147,000 SF facility in the Craighead Technology Park, as shown by the photo on the right. Colson plans to be in full production at this facility by the end of the first quarter 2022.



Camfil, Nice-Pak, and Nestlé are making great strides with each of their expansion projects. Camfil is pouring foundations and footings on their 254,000 SF building, expecting a completion date of third quarter 2022. Nice-Pak's \$50 million expansion should be complete and in production by mid-October this year. Nestlé is nearing completion on their expansion to add a line to produce Hot Pocket sandwiches. Construction should be complete by the end of October this year.



Spirit Fitness is a world leader in residential and commercial fitness equipment. In addition to their existing facility, Spirit recently announced they are expanding and building an additional new facility on Nestlé Road. They have since outgrown that facility and have announced plans to construct a 150,000 SF building on 20 acres in the Craighead Technology Park to house their Technical Support Department and Warranty Parts Department. When complete, Spirit's investment of \$10 million will create 40-50 new jobs.

We're excited to see our existing companies expanding in Jonesboro!  
Investment and growth by our existing industries builds on the solid foundation of our manufacturing sector.

## BUSINESS ATTRACTION VIDEO

Jonesboro recruits and competes globally for new business locations. The Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) recently asked us to submit a recruitment video that would be translated and promoted in Korea. A short video was created, highlighting Jonesboro and the value we can provide to companies locating here. It has been distributed by AEDC to target food companies in Korea.

## GET TO KNOW JONESBORO

Talent attraction is of utmost importance to companies both in Jonesboro and across our nation. Professional newcomers to Jonesboro oftentimes are unfamiliar with the city and the opportunities that abound. Hytrol Conveyor Company recently hosted a group of interns for the summer at their facility, several of whom were new to Jonesboro. Jonesboro Unlimited arranged for them to participate in “Get to Know Jonesboro,” a day-long program to familiarize them with the city and providing hands-on activities for networking and finding out a few of the cool things Jonesboro has to offer.



The 2021 TekStarz Summer Manufacturing Camp was held in June with 13 area 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Campers experienced hands-on activities and sessions geared toward inspiring career opportunities, leadership skills, entrepreneurship, and team building. The camp featured sessions with Post Consumer Products, Nabholz Construction, ASUN Workforce Training Center, Best Manufacturing, Ritter Communications, Unilever, and Hytrol; culminating with a family reception hosted by Hytrol.

## OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB) RETAINS MSA CRITERIA

As reported last quarter, the OMB had been considering changing the criteria for Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) status from a 50,000 core city population to 100,000. The proposed change would have affected 144 cities, including Jonesboro, and would have affected federal funding for projects and taken us off the radar screen for many economic development projects. Jonesboro's federal delegation and our community leadership worked hard to express our concerns by writing letters to make our concerns known. All of our delegation supported our efforts and Senator John Boozman led an effort to send a Senatorial letter expressing concerns. In July, we were happy to report that the OMB stated they won't raise the population threshold for what qualifies as a metro area.

## RAISE DISCRETIONARY GRANT

The City of Jonesboro, in partnership with Arkansas State University, has applied for a Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Nearly \$8.9 billion has been set aside by the USDOT to fund projects that have a significant local or regional impact. Our economic development partners have written letters of support for this grant, which will include funding for 26-miles of a multi-use trail that will feature cutting edge designs, rest areas, maps, emergency connections and WiFi hotspots in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. It also address flooding issues and opportunities to honor area veterans.

# **MOMENTUM** 2.0 JONESBORO

Momentum Jonesboro 2.0 – Jonesboro's next five-year economic development strategic plan is complete and we are ready to roll with implementation! The plan is bold, strategic and will take us to the next level in excellence. The plan hones in on four priorities – Business Growth & Innovation; Talent & Workforce Development; Quality of Life and Infrastructure; and Branding & Marketing. Each priority has core recommendations that will be implemented over the next five years. Jonesboro Unlimited is excited to continue strategies implemented in Momentum Jonesboro 1.0, while building on that foundation with the 2.0 plan. It's an exciting time to be in Jonesboro!

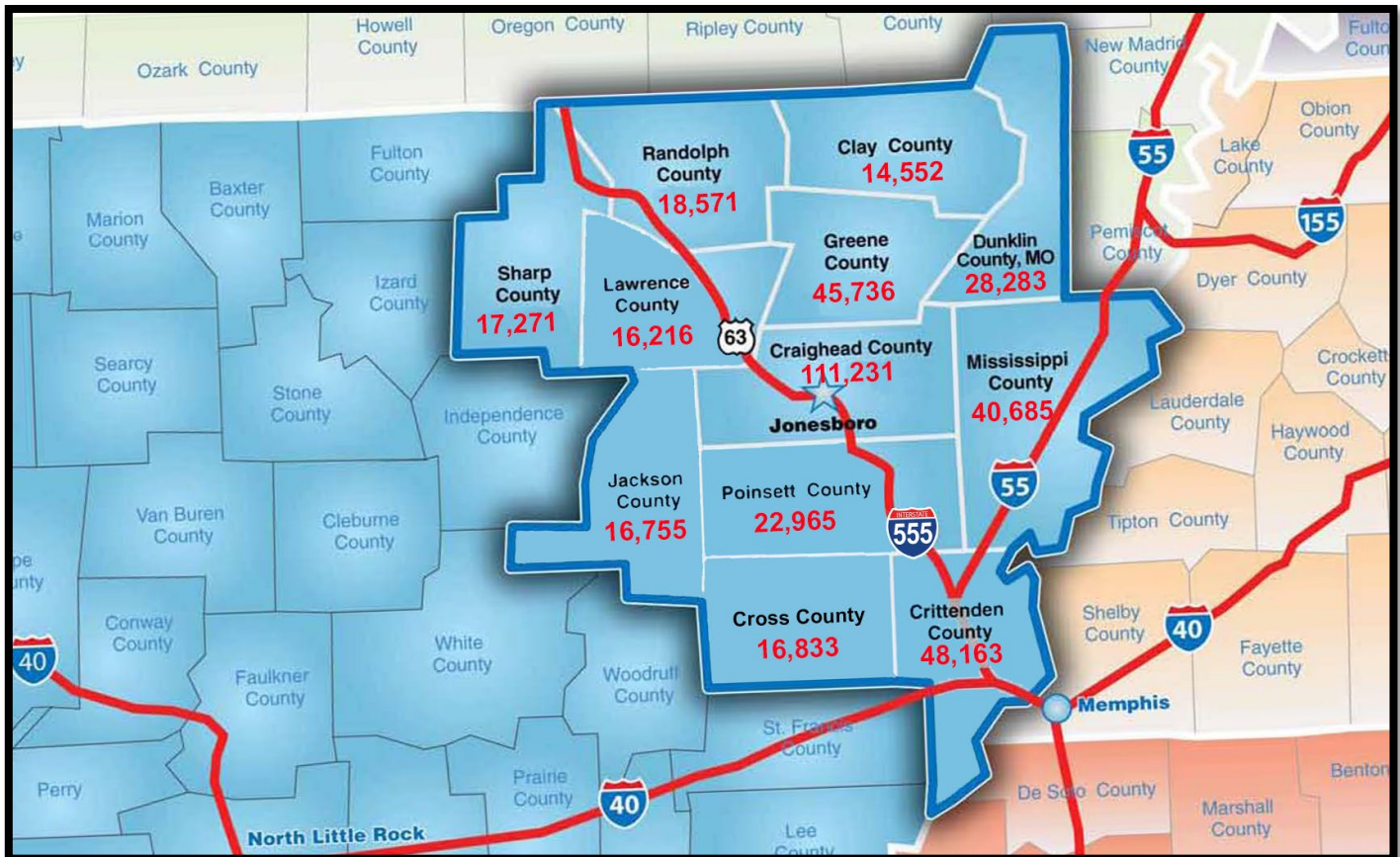
## 2ND QUARTER ACTIVITY

2nd quarter activity included 12 inquiries and two prospect visits, as companies are still wary about traveling with the upsurge in COVID-19 cases. There were also 13 business retention and expansion activities with our existing companies and 3 market research requests April – June 2021.

## U.S. CENSUS 2020 POPULATION

The U.S. Census Bureau recently released population numbers for 2020 as shown below. Craighead County's 2020 population was 111,231, an increase of 15.3% from the 2010 census of 96,443. Statewide, Craighead County was one of only four counties that had double digit growth from 2010-2020 as follows:

Benton County:	28.5%
Washington County:	21.1%
Craighead County:	15.3%
Saline County:	15.2%



## EMPLOYMENT

### JONESBORO LABOR SHED JUNE 2021

County	Civilian Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Clay	5,544	5,276	268	4.8%
<b>Craighead</b>	<b>56,800</b>	<b>54,478</b>	<b>2,322</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
Crittenden	21,778	20,354	1,424	6.5%
Cross	7,205	6,811	394	5.5%
Greene	19,272	18,407	865	4.5%
Jackson	5,858	5,484	374	6.4%
Lawrence	6,643	6,260	383	5.8%
Mississippi	16,780	15,208	1,572	9.4%
Poinsett	10,098	9,591	507	5.0%
Randolph	7,501	7,122	379	5.1%
Sharp	5,830	5,475	355	6.1%
Dunklin, MO	12,070	11,284	786	6.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>175,379</b>	<b>165,750</b>	<b>9,629</b>	<b>5.5%</b>

*Source: "Arkansas Labor Market," Department of Workforce Services, June 2021; Local Area Unemployment Statistics," Missouri Economic Research & Information Center, June 2021; Data provided August 19, 2021.*

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYED JONESBORO MSA JUNE: 2001 - 2021

