

# City & Town

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE



# *How do you think new money becomes old money?*



**Glenda Dean**  
*Trust Manager  
Pine Bluff, AR*



**Richard Clark**  
*SVP, Trust Officer  
Conway, AR*



**Rena Escue**  
*Trust Officer  
Jonesboro, AR*



**Chuck Tlapek**  
*SVP, Chief Investment Officer  
Little Rock, AR*



**Alexandra Bowen**  
*VP, Trust Officer  
Jonesboro, AR*

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Cover photo by Ben Cline.



**ON THE COVER**—For the first time in more than a century, Pulaski County held a county fair, and organizers hope to make it an annual event. Check out photos of the carnival inside, along with shots from the 10th anniversary of Little Rock’s Main Street Food Truck Festival. Also in this issue, get to know Bella Vista Mayor and League 2021-2022 District 3 Vice President Peter Christie, read the latest on the opioid settlements in the League’s ongoing fight to hold drug manufacturers and distributors accountable in Arkansas, and check out highlights from the Arkansas City Management Association’s fall conference and an overview of the HR and Personnel Matters workshop, part of the League’s voluntary certification program for municipal officials and personnel.—atm

## Features

### **14 District 3 VP’s business acumen serves Bella Vista well**

With his professional experience as a successful corporate “fixer,” Bella Vista Mayor and League District 3 Vice President Peter Christie has used his skills to help manage his adopted northwest Arkansas hometown’s phenomenal growth and the demographic shifts that have come with it.

### **18 League, litigation partners announce \$216 million opioid settlements**

The League on October 7 joined with its litigation partners, the Association of Arkansas Counties and the State of Arkansas, to announce the first settlements reached against the manufacturers and distributors of the opioids responsible for the ongoing crisis in this state and the nation. To ensure Arkansas gets every dollar available, it is crucial that every city and town sign on to the settlement.

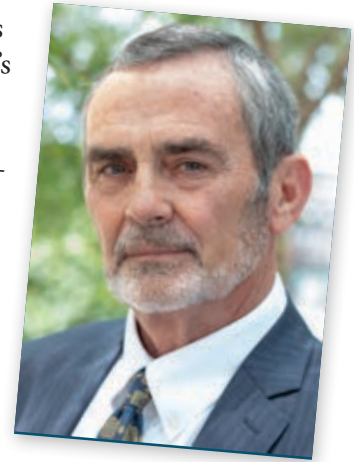
### **24 ACMA holds virtual fall conference**

The Arkansas City Management Association went virtual for its annual fall conference and business meeting in October, broadcasting from the League’s North Little Rock headquarters and covering an array of issues important to local government, including legislative updates, an overview of the 2020 census results and a look at how Opportunity Arkansas is helping cities take advantage of opportunity zones.

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Greetings, fellow municipal officials,  
Fall has arrived and the end of year will be here before we know it. This means the 2022 Winter Conference is just around the corner. This year's conference will be a hybrid event offering both virtual and in-person attendance, which gives everyone the chance to participate at whatever level they feel comfortable. Whichever you choose, registration information is in this issue. I hope everyone will register and take part in the conference, January 19-21, either online or at the Marriott Hotel and Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock.



I encourage everyone to look over the agenda for workshops and events at the conference that will be helpful to your city. I have attended sessions and wished our animal control officer, building inspector or other city personnel could have attended but could not travel the two to three hours for a two-hour workshop. The virtual aspect of our conference cures that problem. Look closely, and if there is something someone in your city needs to attend, they can now do so without traveling to Little Rock. Better employees make us better elected officials. The League gives us great tools and educational opportunities for all city employees. If you are not taking advantage of these opportunities, you are missing out.

Also, the National League of Cities' annual City Summit was going to be held in Salt Lake City, November 17-19, but the decision has been made to go virtual for safety. All Arkansas cities and towns are members of the NLC by being a member of the Arkansas Municipal League. The City Summit is always informative and full of interesting events. With it being virtual this year, it might be a great time to check it out, so consider signing up at [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).

When was the last time you reached out to your local business community to ask how well your city is meeting their needs? Most of us rely on sales tax for the revenue we need to operate, and it's our local businesses that provide this revenue and the jobs that keep our cities running. Our chamber of commerce recently held a celebration to mark Tyson Foods' 50th anniversary in Berryville. It was a huge success, and I believe it reinforced the good relationship we have with Tyson, our city's largest employer. This relationship makes it much easier to work together on many things, from wastewater treatment to traffic control around the plant. Businesses in our cities need to know we appreciate them and are here to help them grow and prosper. We need them as partners in making our cities better places to live, work and do business.

I have noticed that the businesses implementing COVID vaccine mandates are some of the most successful in our nation. They are successful because they know what they are doing, and our legislators need to let them run their businesses as they address the safety of their workers and customers. They know what works for them better than a part-time legislator.

I wish all a happy and blessed Thanksgiving and hope to see you in Little Rock in January. Be a leader and not a follower.

Best Wishes,

Tim McKinney  
Mayor, Berryville  
President, Arkansas Municipal League

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# From the Desk of the Executive Director

WAIT. WHAT?<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> Who said that? And what did they mean?

I've commented several times in this column about my love for history. My three sons<sup>3</sup> share that love. The first lieutenant local controller<sup>4</sup> does not. I also love sayings. I use them a great deal; just ask the staff. Here are some of my go-tos:

- They're crawfishing on us.
- Ballistic.
- Bummer.
- Ten-four good buddy!
- Oh man, that's way cool.
- What's the dealio?!
- All that and a bag-o-chips!
- Bada-bing! Bada-boom!
- Glad you got to see me!
- My bad!<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup>



I use that last one regularly at home. For once, while writing this column, I've coaxed a smile from the local controller! So far, no glares or toe tapping whilst she waits for me to make a point. I can also assure you that my kids are rolling their eyes at my selections. If you ask them for their favorite utterance from me, they'll say "Interesting, but irrelevant." I used that saying many, many times while listening to their teenage explanations regarding missed curfews, bad grades, beer cans in the back yard, dents in vehicles, missing shoes, broken electronics, stains on rugs and furniture ... Okay, I'll stop.

I also love historic and popular quotes. As I depart through the front door at the League I bellow to Karen Mitchell and Ricky Paladino, more times than they care to recall, "Like MacArthur, I shall return!"<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> Or a newer version: "As the Terminator noted, I'll be back!" The latter I do with my best Schwarzenegger voice. I've also been known

<sup>1</sup> My kids have used this saying for years. Shockingly, this is due to the fact they weren't listening to me until something I said toward the end of my comments appealed to them. Or they hated it. No one used it more or with more perfect timing than Wells. It was like he had radar if there was something fun, he needed to get in on or if there was something detestable like, say, yard work. In the latter instance he'd give me the "Wait. What?" and as I started my comments anew you could see his mind quickly coming up with an excuse. "No thanks, I'm good." was one of his classics. It was a thing of beauty!

<sup>2</sup> I was curious as to the origin of this saying, so I got on my Google machine and did a little searching. Like a lot of things there isn't a very clear history to it. I looked at a Reddit post that was interesting. Several people commented regarding the phrase being used in the movie *Frozen*. I haven't seen the movie (don't judge!), but those mentioning it seem to believe the saying became more popular after folks started watching *Frozen*.

<sup>3</sup> Not the TV sitcom that aired from 1960-1972 starring Fred MacMurry and William Demarest, along with teen idol Don Grady. I'm actually referring to my three sons: Franz, Colin and Wells. History aficionados all.

<sup>4</sup> For you first-time readers, the local controller is my much better half, Alison. The first lieutenant local controller is the daughter. She's had several nicknames over the years but none better than the moniker mamba. The black mamba is widely considered one of the most poisonous snakes in the world. <https://bit.ly/3n7plbQ>. My three sons dubbed her mamba during their teen years. I leave it to your imagination why.

<sup>5</sup> Most of these are outdated according to <https://bit.ly/3DMvEYY>.

<sup>6</sup> Most of these are hard to trace historically. Here a few sites that may or may not yield a good answer to the original source of these and other fan favorites. <https://bit.ly/3ITa8Ma>, <https://bit.ly/3FUGvqJ> and <https://bit.ly/3DJ8eE2>.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas MacArthur was born in Little Rock on January 26, 1880. He died April 5, 1964, two days past my fourth birthday. Incidentally, April 5 is Sheila Boyd's birthday. Can you imagine the changes MacArthur saw in our world during his lifetime? Airplanes, submarines, space travel, Elvis in his prime. Wow!

<sup>8</sup> There is some debate about what MacArthur said on that famous day in 1942 when he and his family fled the Philippines and Bataan from nearby Corregidor Island. The debate is over the use of the word shall. Initial reports quoted him as saying "I will return" and later reference materials cite the more famous quote "I shall return." <https://nyti.ms/3jdHLQ6>. Regardless, he did return two years later leading our military forces to victory in the Pacific thus ending WWII.

to reference a certain helmeted villain of *Star Wars* fame when my ideas are questioned by staff: “I find your lack of faith ... disturbing.”<sup>9</sup> And yes, the staff laughs at me. Not *with* me, *at* me. Now the local controller is getting antsy.

We can convey a lot of things with short statements, quotes and sayings. To prove my point, think of this: “I do.” Yep, those two words usually come with a whole bunch of commitment! You see what I mean I’m sure. Let’s look at a few more. Here’s some comedy from the great baseball player Yogi Berra:<sup>10 11</sup>

- You can observe a lot just by watching.
- A nickel ain’t worth a dime anymore.
- Always go to other people’s funerals, otherwise they won’t come to yours.
- No one goes there nowadays, it’s too crowded.

I still laugh when I read these, and I’ve seen them a hundred times. He was funny without meaning to be. More importantly, butchered though the words were, you immediately understood precisely what he meant. The local controller is now arm crossing, toe tapping, staring and giving me the get-to-the-point message through telepathy.

I’m getting to the point, I promise. There are so many quotes that make great impact in a matter of seconds, and that impact stays and grows in us. From Aristotle to Maya Angelou, Martin Luther King Jr. to Vincent Van Gogh, we are richer in thought and deed because of their words. See these for what they are. Motivational. Emotional. Uplifting. Thought-provoking.

- “Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”—Leonardo da Vinci
- “All limitations are self-imposed.”—Oliver Wendell Holmes
- “Oh, the things you can find, if you don’t stay behind.”—Dr. Seuss
- “I don’t need it to be easy, I need it to be worth it.”—Lil Wayne
- “May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears.”—Nelson Mandela
- “Be a rainbow in somebody else’s cloud.”—Maya Angelou
- “When words fail, music speaks.”—Hans Christian Andersen

So much is contained in those few words. There are lessons for all of us. I cannot help but believe that when we all slow down and listen or read or both we become better. You of the mayoral or council type by your very nature must listen. You must hear what your constituents say. You must act upon those statements and requests. You must act from confidence, not confusion. You must be yourselves and not set artificial limits or boundaries. You must have clear and simple plans. You must take the worthy path, which as you know is not always the easiest thing to do.

Michael Nutter<sup>12</sup> was elected as the 98th mayor of Philadelphia in 2007 and re-elected in 2011. Never were truer words spoken about municipal government than when he said, “Mayors could never get away with the kind of nonsense that goes on in Washington. In our world, you either picked up the trash or you didn’t. You either moved an abandoned car or you didn’t. You either filled a pothole or you didn’t. That’s what we do every day. And we know how to get this stuff done.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> I speak of course of Darth Vader, one of the most famous movie characters of all time. In *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*, Vader’s authority and powers are questioned by Admiral Motti at which point Vader pinches his fingers together and Motti starts to choke. Vader then utters the famous line regarding faith. Ahh ... I do love movies. <https://imdb.to/3n3Eye6>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://bit.ly/2Z9ZsJA>.

<sup>11</sup> Yogi the baseball player is not to be confused with Yogi Bear the cartoon character, although *that* Yogi had some pretty good sayings as well! “A goodly bunch having lunch.” “Hey, hey, hey! Pic-a-nic baskets!” “Hey, Boo-Boo! I’m smarter than the av-er-age bear!” <https://bit.ly/3C5vLyk>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://bit.ly/3lSpdNX>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://bit.ly/3DTe9q0>.

Boom. I call that a mic drop<sup>14</sup> moment. It summarizes what cities and towns are and what they do. Not just once or twice, but all the time. Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg,<sup>15</sup> in his own mic drop moment, once noted, “I’ve got the greatest job in the world. There’s no other job in government where cause and effect is so tightly coupled where you can make a difference every day in so many ways and in so many people’s lives. It’s a great challenge.”<sup>16</sup>

While outlining this month’s column, I ran across a quote that solidified my thoughts as to how to proceed. The AML receives magazines from other leagues around the country. I routinely pore over them<sup>17</sup> to keep up with activities around the country, get ideas and generally find out what the scoop is in other states. The New Jersey League has a monthly magazine titled *nj-municipalities*. My friend Michael Cerra is the executive director of the NJLM<sup>18</sup> and he too writes monthly for their magazine. I’m sure this will shock you, but his columns are a tad more serious than mine! In any event, he wrote something quite profound. After a review of the damages caused by Tropical Storm Ida, municipalities began the arduous job of flood and tornado repair and clean up. Add to that being in the middle of a pandemic and New Jersey’s municipalities had their hands full. Michael wrote, “Times like these beg the question: How much can we endure? And municipalities continually answer: Whatever we must.”<sup>19</sup>

Mic drop, Obama style! Indeed, like our sisters and brothers in New Jersey, Arkansas’ municipal officials have been nothing but stellar during these very trying times. Always. Every day you do what you must. Why? It’s the job you signed up for, but more importantly it’s the calling you answered. Municipal public service is noble, honorable and meaningful. To all of you who take this mission on I say: HIP! HIP! HOORAY!<sup>20</sup>

Until next month, Peace.



Mark R. Hayes  
Executive Director  
Arkansas Municipal League

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<sup>14</sup> Mic drop history is fascinating. Well, for a history nerd like me it’s fascinating. Rappers and comedians began using the mic drop in the 1980s. While others adopted it, it wasn’t until April 2013 that the act of dropping the mic hit full mainstream. It occurred on *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon* and none other than President Barack Obama “Slow Jammed the News” and completed it with a mic drop. It then took off like wildfire. <https://bit.ly/3j9WHpd>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://bit.ly/3j9WPoH>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://bit.ly/3n3ZYrl>.

<sup>17</sup> Yikes! Another saying! The history of which is a tad murky but it appears to stem from the 13th Century Middle English “pouren.” Others however say its origin is unclear. <https://bit.ly/3DVB7BU>.

<sup>18</sup> [www.njlm.org](http://www.njlm.org).

<sup>19</sup> <https://bit.ly/3jdjDUM>.

<sup>20</sup> And yet another saying! This one tracks back to England and an 1803 poem titled *Hip, Hip, Hip Hurrah!* “Hip” was used as early as 1752. Think of it as today’s “hey” or “yo!” “Hurrah,” well, it’s really old. In its original form it was “huzza,” recorded as early as 1573. Almost as old as I am! <https://bit.ly/3jfXGnU>.





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# City&Town

## **Publisher**

Mark R. Hayes

## **Deputy Director**

Whitnee V. Bullerwell

## **Communications & Creative Manager**

Mel Jones

## **Editor**

Andrew T. Morgan

## **Graphic Designer**

Mark R. Potter

## **Communications Coordinator**

Ben Cline

## **Advertising Assistant**

Tricia Zello

## **Contributors**

Dylan Edgell

Leslie Foster

Allen Green

Susan Long, Ed.D.

Jennifer Thompson

Jim von Tungeln

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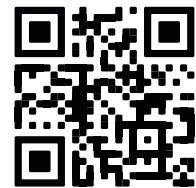
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## Deadline extended for 2021 Volunteer Community of the Year nominations

The Arkansas Department of Human Services Office of Communications and Community Engagement has extended the nomination deadline for the 2021 Arkansas Volunteer Community of the Year Awards. The new deadline to apply is November 17.

Each year DHS partners with the Governor's Office and the Arkansas Municipal League, along with Little Rock's Channel 4 and the Governor's Advisory Commission on National Service and Volunteerism to recognize cities and towns that seek to address challenges within their communities through volunteerism. A panel of judges from across the state will select the communities, which will be honored at the League's 2022 Winter Conference. Winners also receive two signs donated by the Arkansas Highway Commission designating the city or town as a Volunteer Community of the Year. For more information and support materials, visit [www.volunteer.org/COY](http://www.volunteer.org/COY).

## Turnback reporting requirement repealed

Act 517 of the 2021 regular session of the Arkansas legislature has repealed the requirement in A.C.A. § 27-70-207 that municipalities receiving \$2 million or more in total highway revenues and highway severance turnback must submit reporting for the previous year's projects to the House Committee on Public Transportation and the Senate Committee on Public Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs. The act went into effect on July 29.

**Note:** Reporting requirements related to the wholesale sales tax on motor fuel and distillate special fuel under Act 91 of 2020, which amended Arkansas Code § 26-64-104(a)(1), remain in effect. Under Section 13:

(a)(1) *Each city and county that expends revenues distributed under this chapter shall submit a report to the Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration no later than June 30 March 15 of each year detailing the following for the previous calendar year:*

- (B) *Expenditures made from the revenues received under this chapter; and*
- (C) *Projects funded using revenues received under this chapter.*

## Bridge-load posting certification deadline set for Dec. 31

To promote safe travel over bridges on city streets and ensure eligibility for federal highway funding, cities and towns with bridge-length structures must submit a properly endorsed bridge-load posting certification by December 31.

The Federal Highway Administration and the Arkansas Department of Transportation administer the requirements of the National Bridge Inspection Standards, and the regulations implementing this federal law place the compliance responsibility on the official with jurisdiction over each bridge. In addition to identifying structural deficiencies during the inspection process, the official must also advise the traveling public of any weight restrictions if a bridge is found to not be capable of safely supporting legal-load vehicles. If the bridge is determined to not be capable of safely supporting a minimum of a three-ton vehicle, it is the official's responsibility to close the bridge until it is adequately strengthened or replaced.

Arkansas law A.C.A. § 27-85-101, Conservation of Bridges, requires the "administrators of the various public highway, road and street systems shall make every effort to conserve the safe function of the bridges under their jurisdiction pursuant to the findings and recommendations of the bridge safety inspections by the bridge inspection teams of the Arkansas Department of Transportation in accord with the national bridge inspection standards published in the Federal Register."


Copies of required documents, as well as the Local Government Procedures for Compliance with the National Bridge Inspection Standards manual, can be downloaded at [www.ardot.gov/divisions/bridge/bridge-rating-and-inventory](http://www.ardot.gov/divisions/bridge/bridge-rating-and-inventory). For questions or additional assistance, contact Todd Russell, district construction engineer, at [todd.russell@ardot.gov](mailto:todd.russell@ardot.gov) or 870-836-6401.

## Meeting Calendar

**November 18-20, 2021**, National League of Cities City Summit

**January 19-21, 2022**, Arkansas Municipal League Winter Conference


## Bailey, Hawkins achieve Master Municipal Clerk status

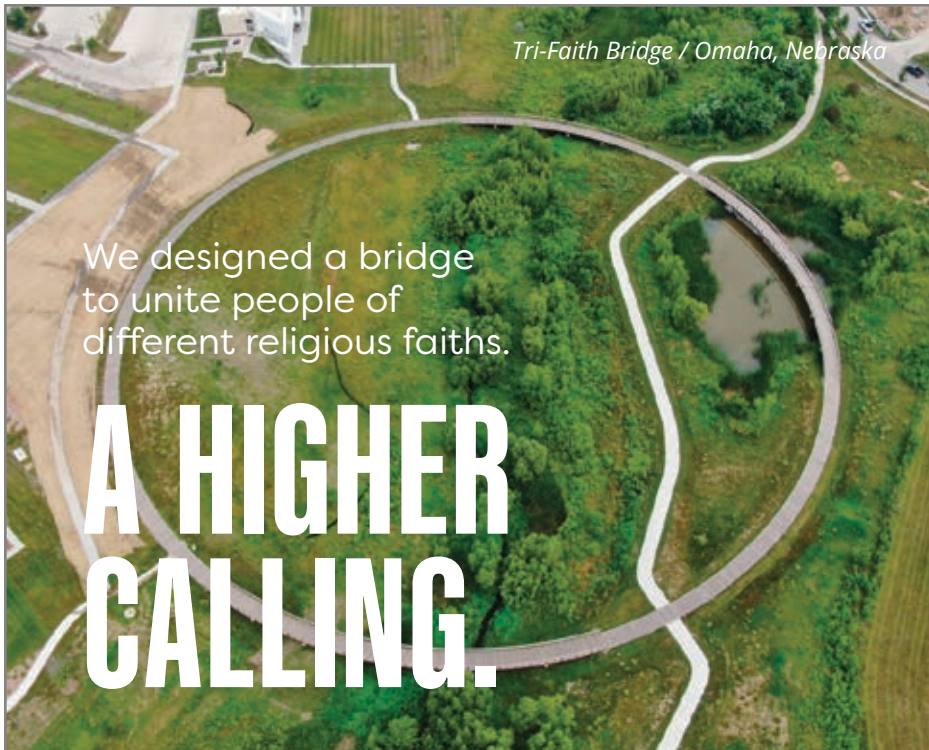
Bull Shoals Recorder/Treasurer Tina Bailey and Star City Recorder/Treasurer Alicia Hawkins have earned the Municipal Master Clerk designation from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, the organization has announced. MMC is one of two professional designations granted by the IIMC. To qualify, one must first earn the Certified Municipal Clerk designation. Those who achieve the MMC designation have demonstrated that they have pursued continuing education opportunities and have remained informed of the socio-political, cultural and economic issues that affect local government. For more information on the IIMC, visit [www.iimc.com](http://www.iimc.com). 

## Obituaries

**BOBBY L. GLOVER**, 85, who started his political career in 1963 as mayor of Carlisle and went on to serve 28 years in the Arkansas General Assembly as a state representative and state senator before being appointed to the Board of Corrections in 2011, died October 27.

**LUCAS BRIAN STEPHENSON**, 25, assistant chief of the Mandeville Volunteer Fire Department, died in the line of duty October 26. He served the citizens of Mandeville and Miller County since 2013 and was promoted to assistant chief in 2019.

**TINA S. WOODS**, 68, who served two terms as city clerk for the city of Corning, died October 6. 



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Bella Vista Mayor and League 2021-2022 District 3 Vice President Peter Christie at one of his favorite spots in the city, the falls below Lake Ann along the Back 40 Trail System.

## Career corporate fixer applies skills to Bella Vista

By Andrew Morgan, League staff

**A** Canadian by birth and a corporate accounts “fixer” by trade, Bella Vista Mayor and 2021-2022 League District 3 Vice President Peter Christie’s career has taken him to many unexpected places over the past four decades. When it landed him in northwest Arkansas, he ended up being the right person at the right time to lead the still-new city of Bella Vista. “It’s almost as if the last 40 years in the corporate world had been grooming me for this job and I never knew it,” he says.

Christie was born and raised in Ottawa, Canada, the nation’s capital. Being a PK (preacher’s kid) meant he and his family moved around quite a bit, so he says he’s from the Greater Ottawa Area. His father, an Anglican clergyman, served in numerous churches across the Ottawa Valley region, Christie says. “I grew up singing in choirs, joining Cub Scouts and learning I probably

shouldn’t make friends because dad’s going to get moved again.”

He didn’t set out to be a corporate number cruncher. “I was one of those who thoroughly enjoyed the arts. Math was not one of my strong points,” Christie says. After high school he pursued an arts degree at Carleton University in Ottawa. He then went to Algonquin College, also in Ottawa, to study business.

It was while in school in Ottawa that Christie met his wife, Connie. “I worked in a fish store while I was going to school, and I went into the bank one day and she served me at the side counter. I asked her out and she said yes. And the rest is history,” he says. They have been married for over 43 years and have two sons, both of whom live in Florida. The Christies have four grandchildren, two boys and two girls. “We have a timeshare now in Florida so we can go down and visit them.”

He majored in marketing at Algonquin, which led him to the world of sales. “I ended up moving to Toronto because I got hired by Carnation Foods, which is now part of Nestle.” He worked there for three years, and then did a stint in banking. “I was always fascinated by the flow of money, and I needed to know how that works.”

From there he went to work for Bell Canada, becoming an entry-level manager in the controller’s division. He spent 17 years with Bell, including four years in Saudi Arabia. It was Bell that first sent him “down here,” to the U.S., he says. Beginning December 31, 1993, the Christies spent 12 years in the Chicago area, and he and Connie applied for Green Cards. After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and with the passage of the Patriot Act, it became a better idea to become full-fledged citizens, Christie says, and he and his family went through the process. “On June 22, 2004, we took the oath, and here we are.”

Christie retired from Bell and for the next several years took jobs with various telecommunications firms, including British Telecom and Singapore Telecom. He even got into the “fast and furious world of startups with voice over IP,” he says. “That all crashed in 2001.”

He was then hired by NCR, formerly known as National Cash Register, which took him back to Canada and then to Phoenix. It was there that he ran a services team, became a vice president of services and took on the role of a fixer. “I would go in and fix broken accounts, quite frankly.” Christie had been commuting

back and forth to San Francisco for about a year, fixing the accounts of a major bank, when he received a tap on the shoulder: “We need you to go to Bentonville and fix Walmart,” he says. “So out I came.”

Christie was responsible for the performance of about 2,000 employees and a nine-digit profit-and-loss statement. “A lot of people say Walmart is a tough customer. It was probably the best customer I had ever worked with in my life,” he says.

Christie discovered nearby Bella Vista by accident. “It was a Saturday, late in the day. For some strange reason, I came out of the parking lot and instead of going left I went right and I ended up in Bella Vista. And I just fell in love with the place,” he says. “I looked around and thought, my God this place is gorgeous. After traveling all over the world and living in sort of odd places at times, I was just captivated. I called Connie and said you’re not going to believe what I found.”

Incorporated in 2006, Bella Vista is one of Arkansas’ youngest cities. Created in 1965 by Cooper Communities, Inc., as a planned recreational/retirement community on the site of an existing summer resort, the former Bella Vista Village was once the largest unincorporated community in the state. The 2000 census showed a population of 16,582. As the demographics of the area changed and the need for services that could grow with the community became apparent, residents voted in November 2006 to incorporate and elected the new city’s first slate of officers.



Originally a planned resort community run by a POA, Bella Vista features seven man-made lakes spread across its numerous scenic neighborhoods.

In 2013 Christie wrapped up his work on the Walmart account and retired—again—from NCR. Naturally, he received another tap on the shoulder. “Somebody at our church said, ‘Why don’t you look at running for mayor, because [then-mayor Frank Anderson] isn’t going to run again.’” The idea intrigued him. “I’ve always thought there must be a way I could take 40 years of corporate experience and give something back, and that’s what I really wanted to do,” he says.

He began to attend every council and commission meeting he could “get his hands on,” he introduced himself to the leadership at Cooper and the property owners’ association, and he met with the mayors of neighboring cities to learn about the issues facing them. He told Connie, “From what I’ve seen so far, this is right up my alley, because it’s another fix-it situation.” Christie took office in January 2015 and the transition was smooth. Anderson, the city’s first mayor, had done “a lot of the heavy lifting, setting the foundation,” Christie says. “My goal was to build the house. That’s what I’ve been concentrating on.”

Now in his second term, Christie’s top priority has been managing the young city’s phenomenal growth. The city has hired more firefighters and police officers, modernized their department structures and updated their equipment. The previous mayor had gotten the ball rolling on a new fire station by purchasing land, and it has since been built. Another new station, complete with a fire training tower, is on the way. Bella Vista will soon also have its very first dedicated police station. The one now housing the department is an old POA office. The city’s court, now operating out of a strip mall, will have a home in the new station as well. Christie credits the citizens for recognizing the city’s needs and overwhelmingly passing the bond measure that has helped fund all these projects. “I have a mantra: We need to manage the growth; we cannot let the growth manage us. If not, you never, ever get out of it. You’ve got to stay ahead of it, and we’ve been very successful in doing that.”

Due to its history as a planned community led by a POA, governance in Bella Vista is unique, and the city remains partners with the POA—one of the largest in the country—and with original developer Cooper Communities, Inc. The city provides public works and safety. The utilities are private. The POA acts as a parks and recreation department and also provides water service to many residents. Cooper Communities, Inc., guides the POA’s declarations and covenants. “I call it a three-legged stool, and we all must work together or the stool is gonna fall over,” Christie says. The three entities have collaborated on major projects, like the city’s extensive trails system, which connects to the 37.5-mile Razorback Greenway that runs from Fayetteville to Bella Vista. Cooperation among the three entities and



The groundwork is underway at the site of Bella Vista’s new police station and court complex, a first for the city, which incorporated in 2006.

the citizens was also essential in developing the city’s 20-year master plan.

The 2020 census puts the city’s growth over the decade at about 13.5 percent. “I thought it would be a little higher, but we’re now over 30,000 people.” And the growth doesn’t appear to be stopping. “We track all new residential housing permits. To put it into perspective, at the end of 2013 we had issued 35. Last year it was 417. We hit 417 this year at the end of August.” Christie expects it to hit 600 by the end of the year.

Much of that growth has been infill within existing subdivisions, and lots can be had for a decent price, Christie says. “Homes in our sister cities to the south of us have just become so expensive. A lot of young families are now moving here. So we’ve seen an interesting transition from being a retirement community to just the reverse. We now have more young families here than we have retired folks.”

Christie had some concern that the demographic shift would result in a generational clash of sorts. His fears turned out to be largely unfounded, he says. He recalls a band playing as part of the POA’s 50th anniversary celebration. “A lot of the older people came out and brought their chairs, but then a whole contingent of young families came in. It was at that point where some of the older folks went over and spoke to the parents and asked if they could dance with the kids because they missed their grandchildren.”

One side effect of that shift is that golf has taken a dip as the main recreational activity, and the city has turned its focus to developing its extensive trails system





Mayor Christie talks up the city's world-class trails with a vacationing family from Michigan.

with crucial assistance from the Walton Foundation. In 2015 the city developed a trails and greenway master plan that includes 115 miles of trails. “It’s been so exciting to see that growth and seeing folks coming from all over the world here to run and bike the trails. I just wish we could get a hotel,” Christie says. There’s plenty of land for it, he says, but for now “they lay their heads in another city.”

There is no large industry in Bella Vista. The POA remains the largest employer, with about 450 employees. The city employs about 178. The city has two grocery stores and numerous restaurants and small businesses, and Christie would love to recruit more. “We ping the residents about every two years with a survey asking what they want to see, and top of the list is always more restaurants.”

In the meantime, the ability to collect sales tax on internet sales has been a boon for the city, like it has for so many across the state, Christie says, especially since growth has outpaced commercial retail development. “It was a godsend for us, because as you’re growing, there’s more demand for services—police, fire, streets. But you’re still trying to do it with the same commercial base.”

Christie has relished the opportunity to apply his acumen as a fixer to the challenges facing Bella Vista, but

as the fourth year of his second term approaches, it will be his last, he says. He’s confident he’s leaving the house in good order for his successor. “The metric I’ve always used, even in the corporate world, was when I go on vacation, how much does my phone ring? At the end of the first year in this job, it didn’t stop.” The last time he visited family in Canada, however, it never rang. “It was as if they didn’t even miss me. Then I know I’ve got it.” 🇺🇸



Public art created by Arkansas artist Stephen Feilbach adorns one of the tunnels that allow users of the city’s more than 100 miles of trails to cross safely under the street.



League Executive Director Mark R. Hayes, flanked by Association of Arkansas Counties Executive Director Chris Villines, left, and Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, right, pledges to continue to work with the counties and the state to use the settlement money to fight the opioid crisis.

## With opioid settlements reached, time for cities to sign on

Two settlements have been reached in Arkansas' joint litigation against opioid makers and distributors, Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, Arkansas Municipal League Executive Director Mark R. Hayes and Association of Arkansas Counties Executive Director Chris Villines announced in a media event on October 7 at the attorney general's Little Rock office. The League joined forces with the counties in 2018 to file the historic legislation, and the state later joined their efforts to hold drug manufacturers and distributors accountable and provide resources to fight the opioid crisis in Arkansas.

"We would not be able to make these settlements happen were it not for the partnership among the cities, counties and the state," Hayes said. "We are stronger together, and we can fix a problem that has touched many of us in this room very personally."

The three entities announced a memorandum of understanding to evenly split the \$216 million the state will receive from the settlements in order to first pay attorneys' fees, then pool the remainder, where a state commission will divvy the funding among the cities, counties and state. The specifics have yet to be decided, but the funds will be used for several purposes, including drug education, prevention and outreach programs, and naloxone, an emergency overdose treatment.

"We cannot fix this problem with just money," Hayes said. "We have to have a plan of action, united across this entire state, and an understanding that it is a broad scale problem, not just of addiction but of education and rehabilitation."

Hayes said Arkansas cities and towns remain committed to working together with counties and the state as other lawsuits move forward. "We have a long

road in front of us. I'm hopeful, as we continue to work together, we solidify those agreements under additional MOUs and continue to fight the fight across the state. No individual government can do this alone. It's just simply not possible."

Rutledge has, on behalf of the state, signed onto the two settlements—one with McKesson, Cardinal Health and AmerisourceBergen (the distributors), and the other with Johnson & Johnson. It is now time for the cities, towns and counties to sign on as well, said League General Counsel John Wilkerson.

"To ensure Arkansas receives every dollar available, 100 percent of the counties, cities and towns need to sign on to this document," Wilkerson said. "For every city or town that does not sign on, there is that much less money coming to Arkansas. Plus, if we can show other opioid manufacturers that 100 percent of Arkansas' cities, towns and counties are united, this will showcase our 'United Arkansas' strategy and will certainly help in further negotiations and further litigation."

These two settlements are not the end. The League and its partners have brought suit against several other defendants as well, and whether they will settle or

whether we'll have to litigate for years to come is yet to be determined, Wilkerson said.

For cities and towns, there are two forms to sign—both are titled "Exhibit K" and both are nearly identical. The only difference is that one is for the "Distributor Settlement" and one is for the "Janssen Settlement." The League's litigation team has already shared the two forms with cities and towns via email, but if you have not yet received them, please email Wilkerson at [jwilkerson@arml.org](mailto:jwilkerson@arml.org). Sign and return them to the same email, fax to 501-537-7268, or mail them to 301 W. 2nd Street, North Little Rock, AR 72115.

"Showing that 100 percent of Arkansas' cities and towns are united in these two settlements will ensure our voices are always heard," Wilkerson said.

While the formal deadline is January 2, 2022, he encourages cities and towns to return the forms as soon as possible. "We'll need these forms soon to help us showcase our unity as we head into the next stage—passing opioid legislation to help us best utilize the resources coming to Arkansas." 🍷



Mayors, police chiefs and other city officials joined League, county and state leadership at the October 7 media event in Little Rock.



## Voluntary Certification Program

<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Continuing Education</b>	<b>Advanced Level 2</b>	<b>Advanced Level 3</b>
City Government 101 Municipal Finance 101 Human Resources	Various topics of interest to municipalities	Municipal Finance 201 Disaster Preparedness Leadership 101 at the Local Level	Personnel Management Technology/ Cybersecurity Conflict Management Leadership 201 at the Local Level
<b>15 hours</b>	<b>6 hours</b>	<b>15 hours</b>	<b>20 hours</b>

## Voluntary Certification Class Schedule

<b>Month</b>	<b>Even Year - Level 2</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Odd Year - Level 3</b>
<b>Jan.</b>	Winter Conference (3 Hours of Continuing Education)	<b>Jan.</b>	Winter Conference City Gov't 101 (5 hours of Level 1) plus (3 Hours of Continuing Education)
<b>Feb.</b>	Municipal Finance 201 (5 hours of Advanced Level 2)	<b>Feb.</b>	Personnel Management (5 hours of Advanced Level 3)
<b>Mar.</b>	Disaster Preparedness (5 hours of Advanced Level 2)	<b>Mar.</b>	Technology/Cybersecurity (5 hours of Advanced Level 3)
<b>April</b>	City Government 101 (5 hours of Level 1)	<b>April</b>	Planning & Zoning (5 hours of Continuing Education)
<b>May</b>	Leadership 101 (5 hours of Advanced Level 2)	<b>May</b>	Conflict Management (5 hours of Advanced Level 3)
<b>June</b>	June Convention (3 Hours of Continuing Education)	<b>June</b>	June Convention (3 Hours of Continuing Education)
<b>July</b>		<b>July</b>	
<b>Aug.</b>		<b>Aug.</b>	
<b>Sept.</b>	Municipal Finance 101 Workshop (5 hours of Level 1)	<b>Sept.</b>	Municipal Finance 101 Workshop (5 hours of Level 1)
<b>Oct.</b>	Human Resources (5 hours of Level 1)	<b>Oct.</b>	Human Resources (5 hours of Level 1)
<b>Nov.</b>	MHBP/MLWCP	<b>Nov.</b>	Leadership 201 (5 hours of Advanced Level 3)
<b>Dec.</b>		<b>Dec.</b>	



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# HR certification workshop homes in on workplace challenges

**A**s employers, it's essential for cities and towns to stay abreast of the latest updates to employment law and to utilize best practices in hiring, retention and other aspects of human resources management. Providing training and resources in these areas is a League priority. The League's voluntary certification program for municipal officials and personnel continued last month with the Human Resources and Personnel Matters workshop, held October 13. A mix of live and pre-recorded sessions, the workshop was broadcast from the assembly hall-turned

studio at the League's North Little Rock headquarters. The Level 1 certification course counted as five core credit hours for certification program participants.

The workshop covered an array of issues facing the municipal workplace, led by the League's HR and legal team and featuring guest sessions from League partners. The COVID-19 pandemic remains a challenge for municipal employers, affecting both the physical and mental well-being of employees, and League Senior Legal Counsel Lanny Richmond and Director of Human Resources Tracey Cline-Pew discussed its ongoing



impact. Maggie Young, president of SWEAP Connections—a benefit available through the Municipal Health Benefit Program—offered tips for coping with the resultant higher anxiety levels at work. League IT General Manager Jeff Melton joined Cline-Pew to discuss cybersecurity issues, and Jeff Sims, president of Xpert Diagnostics shared the latest updates from the world of drug testing for safety sensitive positions. The workshop also featured a session on resources available to employers through the American Rescue Plan Act.

Participation in the virtual workshop was strong, with 292 total viewers and 216 viewing the required amount of time to receive the five hours of credit.

“Once again, we set an attendance record for the HR and Personnel Matters workshop and armed more League members with useful and timely information,” League Deputy Director Whitnee V. Bullerwell said. “The HR arena, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has vastly increased the importance and role of personnel professionals. Based on feedback and analytics we received, the HR and Personnel Matters certification workshop proved to be very beneficial to our members.”



For those who were unable to participate on October 13, members may register to view an on-demand recording of the workshop. The cost is \$25 and the deadline to complete the on-demand workshop and receive five core hours of certification credit is November 22. To register, visit [cvent.me/5a2vdL](https://cvent.me/5a2vdL). For assistance, please contact Tricia Zello at 501-374-3484, ext. 285, or email [tzello@arml.org](mailto:tzello@arml.org).

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Barry McCormick joined Hawkins-Weir Engineers in 1986 and has served as the firm's Chief Financial Officer since 2009. He received his BSCE degree from the University of Arkansas, and is a licensed Professional Engineer in Arkansas and Oklahoma.

While not a native of the Arkansas River Valley, Barry has made it his home where he raised three boys with his wife, Sheila, who is a nurse. All three boys are now grown and have moved away from home to pursue their own careers. Their oldest son works in Little Rock, their middle son just recently moved to the Netherlands, and their youngest son lives and works in California.

Barry and Sheila enjoy day hiking and traveling around the country to National Parks and to visit their boys. Barry's interests include American History and messing around in the kitchen baking and cooking Cajun food. Despite the occasional "train engineer" joke, Barry also enjoys being a steam locomotive buff.




Barry K. McCormick, P.E.  
Chief Financial Officer

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# ACMA takes the virtual stage for fall meeting

By Mel Jones, League staff

The Arkansas City Management Association took the virtual route for its 2021 fall conference, which was broadcast from the League October 21-22. League Deputy Director Whitnee V. Bullerwell welcomed attendees to the opening day of the conference. “It is such a privilege and an honor to work with you all as the liaison to ACMA,” she said. “The work that you all do across the state is absolutely wonderful and impactful and we are grateful for the city managers and administrators throughout Arkansas, as well as your administrations.”



Brinkley

Arkadelphia City Manager and ACMA President Gary Brinkley emceed the events, which kicked off Thursday morning with a legislative update from League General Counsel John L. Wilkerson. Wilkerson covered some of the more prominent legislation affecting cities and towns, including several bidding laws. Act 440, which increases the bid threshold for public improvement contracts, and Act 435, which increases the bid threshold for commodities, are both good news for municipalities. He also reviewed the various gun bills that could potentially create problems and confusion for police officers. Wilkerson specifically mentioned bills that allow for open carry at a municipal park and that allow for “enhanced” carry in municipal buildings. A primary point of concern is that the laws become even more vague as they are combined with other gun laws, he said.

Wilkerson wrapped up his time with an update on the opioid litigation settlements, reminding attendees of



PHOTOS BY ANDREW MORGAN

Perez

the need to submit the forms required to take advantage of the settlement dollars—an estimated \$216 million that is expected to come to Arkansas.

Michelle Perez, a program officer with Winrock International's U.S. Programs, updated attendees on Opportunity Arkansas. Perez, who previously presented at the 87th Annual Convention in June, took attendees on a tour of OpportunityArkansas.com, which offers a wealth of resources for community leaders, investors and others about the advantages of opportunity zone projects. Read about Siloam Springs' success with opportunity zones on page 29.

After lunch, Arkansas Economic Development Institute's Chief Economist and State Economic Forecaster Dr. Michael R. Pakko and Regional Economist Dr. Carlos Silva introduced the organization's new online system for extracting local sales tax data. Accessible at [tools.youraedi.com](https://tools.youraedi.com), AEDI's data visualization tools allow users to customize downloadable reports of current and historical local sales tax data across dozens of categories defined by the North American Industry Classification System.

The results of the 2020 census have left many municipal leaders in search of clarification on their population numbers, and Craig Best, a geographer for the U.S. Census Bureau, laid out the process in which those questions could be answered. The 2020 Census Count Question Resolution Operation, or CQR, allows the highest elected or appointed official in each tribal, state and local governmental unit to request that the U.S. Census Bureau review the 2020 census counts of housing



and associated population with enumeration records and correct any errors discovered in the census results.


U.S. Census Bureau Assistant Division Chief for Public Sector Programs Raemeka Mayo and Section Chief for State and Local Finance Stats Kristen Ricks closed out the day with a session on the upcoming 2022 Census of Governments, which is used to identify the scope and nature of the nation's state and local government sector.



Silva, left, and Pakko

Friday's events switched to a more interactive format, allowing attendees to participate in real-time discussions, including International City/County Management Association Mountain Plains Regional Director Karen Daly's presentation, "Exploring Ethics Through Real World Scenarios." Daly took attendees through a variety of questionable ethical situations, from endorsing a colleague's book to handling a long-time employee caught "borrowing" money. Bullerwell and League Director of Human Resources Tracey Cline-Pew followed Daly's ethics session with "Civility in the Workplace During Trying Times." The duo discussed not only how to identify incivility in the workplace, but also its effects on the entire workforce.

Following an update on the ICMA student chapter at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Brinkley presented the Henry Alexander Scholarship Awards to three MPA students, beginning with Jennifer Park, ICMA student chapter president at the U of A. Christel Keller from A-State in Jonesboro and Tyler Riley from UA Little Rock rounded out the annual recipients.

Brinkley and Bullerwell closed the conference with the annual business meeting, approving minutes from April's spring conference and ratifying the June decision to move from a fiscal year to a calendar year. Bullerwell discussed ACMA's presence at the upcoming 2022 Winter Conference, as well as the development of new marketing materials for the organization. ACMA's membership drive kicks off in December. For more information, visit [arml.org/acma](http://arml.org/acma). 

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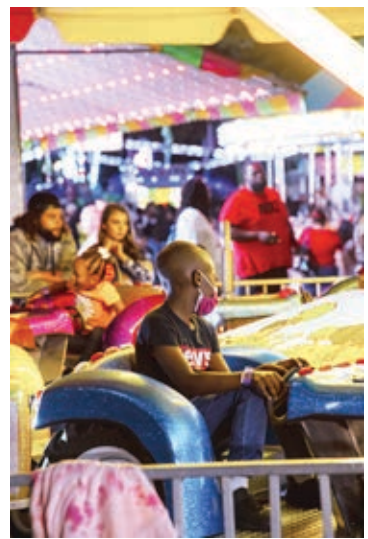
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# NLR hosts second, first-annual Pulaski County Fair

In a modern first, North Little Rock hosted what was billed as the inaugural Pulaski County Fair September 29-October 3. It was the first since the Pulaski County Fair of 1912, which billed itself as “the first annual,” though that didn’t come to pass. Organizers aim to keep the new one rolling. While there were no rodeos, livestock shows or canned food competitions this year, the fair packed a whole lot of carnival fun into the narrow Riverfront Park on the north shore of the Arkansas River. Additionally, a portion of the proceeds will go to the North Little Rock Parks & Recreation. 🍷



# Food Truck Fest celebrates 10 years

The Downtown Little Rock Partnership's Main Street Food Truck Festival celebrated its 10th anniversary October 2 in delicious style, with nine blocks of food, music, axe throwing and other entertainment. According to the Partnership's Gabe Holmstrom, more than 20,000 people joined the festivities over the course of the day to enjoy eats from 57 food trucks. This year's festival also featured a major sustainability initiative, and they were able to collect over 2 tons of recyclable material that normally would have been thrown in the trash, Holmstrom said. ♻️



PHOTOS BY ELLEN LAMPE COULTER



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# Siloam Springs named BDO Zone



PHOTO BY ANDREW MORGAN

**S**iloam Springs has been designated a Bioeconomy Development Opportunity Zone (BDO Zone), earning an “A” rating for poultry litter supply that is expected to drive new market development for bioeconomy projects that can utilize the region’s more than 1.5 million tons per year of reliably produced poultry litter. The city shared the announcement from the BDO Zone Initiative on October 18. Siloam Springs is the second city in North America to be named a BDO Zone. Melville in Saskatchewan, Canada, was the first, achieving BDO Zone status in November 2020.


“The BDO Zone designation is an additional tool in the city’s economic development toolbox,” Siloam Springs City Administrator Phillip Patterson said. “The ‘A’ BDO Zone rating signifies to the biomass investment and development community that there is abundant feedstock and efficient infrastructure to support investment in a bioeconomic project and reduces the risk of such investments. In addition, our region’s poultry industries have been implementing successful nutrient-reduction strategies for a number of years, and the development of a biomass project will provide those industries with another valuable outlet for the byproduct, which will, in turn, reduce nutrient runoff to our waterways from the land application of the poultry litter.”

A BDO Zone rating signals that the region has undergone rigorous and extensive due diligence using over 100 standardized, transparent and validated risk indicators based on the BSCR Standards for biobased investment. “A” and “AA” BDO Zone ratings identify

areas in the country best positioned for low-risk bioeconomy project development.

Siloam Springs also offers a Federal Opportunity Zone on the northeast side of the city where eligible new investments can take advantage of preferential tax benefits. According to Michelle Perez, program officer at Winrock International, “Through the BDO designation, Siloam Springs is using an innovative and sustainable approach to leverage the value of its Opportunity Zone and of the assets generated in the region for community and economic development. Winrock International, through our Opportunity Arkansas project, is excited to continue working with Siloam Springs to develop investable projects that revitalize the local community.”

Investors and developers interested in siting a project in the Siloam Springs BDO Zone can tap into the Arkansas Opportunity Zone Fund to provide powerful tax incentives for new capital in eligible projects located in the OZ. American biomass provides an economic development engine with the potential to create 160,000 jobs and nearly \$15 billion in economic benefit. The BDO Zone Initiative can help the U.S. realize this potential by supporting new market development for American bioenergy, advanced biofuels, biobased heat and power, biomaterials, and clean hydrogen.

Visit [www.bdozone.org](http://www.bdozone.org) for more information on the Siloam Springs BDO Zone or to read the full risk rating report. For more information about Opportunity Arkansas, email Michelle Perez at [michelle.perez@winrock.org](mailto:michelle.perez@winrock.org) or visit [www.opportunityarkansas.com](http://www.opportunityarkansas.com). 



# 2022 WINTER CONFERENCE

Statehouse Convention Center | Little Rock | January 19-21, 2022

The Arkansas Municipal League 2022 Winter Conference will be a hybrid event—you may choose to attend in person or virtually. **Online registration for both options will open on Friday, Oct. 15, at 8 a.m. at [www.arml.org/reg](http://www.arml.org/reg).**

## REGISTRATION

**PLEASE NOTE:** Registration *must* be done online. Telephone registration will *not* be accepted. **On-site registration is not available.** No refunds will be given for either attendee type after Monday, Jan. 3, 2022, at 5 p.m.

### IN-PERSON Attendee

#### MEMBERS

Advanced Registration—**\$185**

*Must register before Friday, Jan. 7, 2022, at 5 p.m.*

After Friday, Jan. 7, 2022—**\$200**

Guest—**\$125**

Non-Member/Other—**\$250**

In-person attendee registration includes meals, activities and a printed or digital version of the *Handbook for Arkansas Municipal Officials, 2021-2022*.

**IN-PERSON ATTENDEE ONLINE REGISTRATION DEADLINE:  
FRIDAY, JAN. 7, 2022, AT 5 P.M.**

### VIRTUAL Attendee

Registration for *all* Virtual Attendees—**\$185**

**VIRTUAL ATTENDEE ONLINE REGISTRATION DEADLINE:  
MONDAY, JAN. 17, 2022, AT 5 P.M.**



# 2022 WINTER CONFERENCE

Statehouse Convention Center | Little Rock | January 19-21, 2022

## RESERVATIONS

Room blocks at participating hotels will open on Friday, Oct. 15, at 8 a.m. Please identify yourself as being with the Arkansas Municipal League to receive the reduced room rate listed below.

- Check in at 3 p.m.
- Cut-off date for hotel reservations is Jan. 1, 2022.
- Rooms in Little Rock are subject to a 13-15% tax.
- Rooms will be held until 6 p.m. and then released unless guaranteed by credit card.
- Contact the hotel directly to make changes or cancellations in accommodations.
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**Meet Brian Golden, League IT support technician.**

**City & Town: What are your duties at the Arkansas Municipal League?**



**Brian:** I manage the help desk here at the League. I resolve issues with users' desktop/laptop PCs and provide help with software issues.

**How long have you been working at the League? How did you get started?** I started with the League in February of this year, so eight months.

**How has the League changed since you started? What has stayed the same?** It has only been eight months, but we are rapidly moving forward with technology to make our services even faster, safer and more efficient for our members. What has remained the same is the focus of every function here at the League: "How can/will this help our members?" That seems to be the theme and purpose driving everything we do here.

**What advice would you have for someone just getting into public service?** I would advise them to listen to their people. If you do, they will tell you what is important to them and what they need so that you can spend your energy trying to help fulfill the need rather than trying to figure out what they need.

**Where did you grow up? How has it changed? Stayed the same?** I was born and raised right here in North Little Rock, not 10 blocks from the League! Couldn't wait to go to Ole Main High School but moved to Sherwood the summer before my sophomore year and graduated from Sylvan Hills. The neighborhood I grew up in has changed drastically. The big grass field behind my house is now the home of North Little Rock Electric, and beautiful apartment complexes have been built where the old Yummy Drive-in was, home of the best burgers in town for many years. I drive through the area every day on my way to work, and, well, it's still home!

**What is your favorite spot in your hometown? Why?** My favorite spot was in Levy. The place is no longer there, but it was The Electric Cowboy, an arcade. Met friends there every weekend and spent lots of quarters playing the old classics Asteroids, Pac-Man and Galaga. A close second would be Burns Park. Still a favorite today as you can see driving through any weekend!

**What is your favorite part about working for the League and the cities and towns of Arkansas?** Helping people solve problems here at the League. The people here are so very wonderful and being able to help them solve problems is very rewarding. Being in IT, we are a more behind-the-scenes function, but if things don't work right for our staff, they can't efficiently help our great membership, so I take great pride in resolving issues as quickly as possible. 🍷



## Meet Barbara Burnett, communication sergeant and 911 supervisor for the city of Marianna.

### City & Town: What are your duties and responsibilities in Marianna?

**Barbara:** I am the communication sergeant, 911 supervisor and HR and payroll clerk for the Marianna Police Department and Internal Affairs. I monitor telephones and radio in the dispatch center, answer all incoming calls, gather necessary information to transmit or relay, dispatch police and other emergency response vehicles, maintain the log on radio and telephone communications, and make sure dispatch equipment is in proper working condition. I am also responsible for setting up training for dispatchers and employees through the Arkansas Crime Information Center and Criminal Justice Information Services.



**Why did you choose your profession? Did it choose you?** This profession chose me after I developed a love for helping all types of people—black or white, rich or poor—and knowing the impact that I might have on their everyday lives.

**What's your favorite aspect of your job? What's the biggest challenge?** My favorite aspect of the job is getting to know people, being able to assist them with their problems and communicate with them on a positive level. My biggest challenge is making sure I choose the right solution to help others have a positive outlook on life and the best decision to help them solve their problems.

**What's your favorite spot in Marianna? Why?** My favorite spot is Bear Creek Lake, which is located about eight miles east of the city. It is a place where you can go and relax the mind.

**What is the public perception of your job versus the reality of your job?** The public perception is that they can depend on the 911 dispatchers to assist them when they are faced with an emergency or non-emergency situation. The reality of the job is that we must make sure we stay focused so we can get the best help to all citizens in both emergency and non-emergency situations.

### In what season does Marianna shine the most?

**Why?** Marianna shines the most around the summer months. It's the time of year when most people travel back home, which also boosts the economy.

**What's the biggest lesson you've learned working for a city government?** I have learned that in order to be successful on the job you have to be passionate, understanding and helpful to any and all citizens.

**What advice do you have for someone who would like to follow your footsteps into this job?** I would advise them that it's okay to start with one career and change careers later in life. Also, they have to be passionate about the job. Be patient. Listen and be understanding and helpful to all citizens and their problems.

**What are three "can't miss" things that someone can do if they visit Marianna?** Visit the Marianna City Park in front of the old police department. Visit Bear Creek Lake. Visit Jones' Bar-B-Q and take a bite out of his tasty sandwiches. 🍷



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# Don't lag, lead: 4 steps to creating effective safety goals

By Allen Green, League staff

It's that time of year—time to start setting goals and objectives for next year. Hopefully loss control and safety performance are key metrics on which you are focused, so let's talk about creating effective safety goals. If you think “reduce the recordable incident rate 5 percent by the end of the year” is effective, think again. Setting safety goals without a detailed plan of action is not only ineffective but can have powerful, negative side effects, such as hiding or under-reporting injuries, undermining your efforts to build a solid safety culture.

Focused, well-defined and challenging goals create alignment, clarity, job satisfaction and enhanced productivity. Unfortunately, the most common goals seen in safety and health programs only include traditional lagging indicators such as injury rates, lost time and workers' compensation costs. Although lagging indicators describe performance over time, they do not communicate why specific levels of performance are occurring. To use a sports analogy, they tell the score at the end of the game, but they do not help players and coaches understand the strengths and weaknesses of their performance during the game. They do not measure safety activities that lead to a safer work environment.

Unlike lagging indicators, leading indicators measure the presence of safety, not the absence thereof. In other words, they measure the positives, what employees are doing right on a regular basis to prevent injuries. Leading indicators allow workers to see small improvements in performance over time. They make safety success a far more regular occurrence (daily or weekly), not a yearly outcome or occurrence. Leading indicators result in actions that help workers reinforce safe behaviors. Some examples of leading indicators for safety performance might include the number of employees adequately trained in hazard identification, the percentage of employees actively participating in behavior-based safety observations, and the number of employees trained in first aid/CPR.

For supervisors, managers and other leadership positions, lagging indicators can help evaluate overall organizational safety performance. For hourly employees, however, they are not the best choice and may have harmful side effects. First, safety goals based on lagging indicators may be difficult for employees to grasp. What does it mean to the individual employee to reduce the injury rate by 5 percent? If an employee does not remember or understand a goal, it is difficult to work toward its achievement.

Second, safety goals based on lagging indicators may create an environment of stress rooted in a fear of being the person who gets injured and ruins the goal. Employees could even hide injuries to keep the goal in reach. Setting goals based on lagging indicators may send the wrong message that the leadership cares more about numbers than it cares about its people.

To be more successful, create safety goals based on leading indicators and draft them in terms all employees can understand. Develop goals that are meaningful and appropriate for each level of the organization. Consider the following steps when developing next year's safety goals.

## Step 1: Keep the affected group or individual in mind

When developing safety goals, avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. Write safety goals with the end user in mind. Use simple, direct sentence structure. Use action verbs for clarity. While developing the goals, ask the following questions:

- How will hourly workers perceive the goals?
- Can the goals help illustrate to hourly workers that management thinks they are important?
- Will these goals or objectives be retained?
- What type of work environment could these goals unintentionally create?
- Could these goals or objectives inspire and motivate workers to embrace a personal motivation for safety?

## Step 2: Goals based on lagging indicators should only be used with managers and supervisors

Safety goals based on lagging indicators are not completely useless or bad, but they are not intended for everyone in the organization. For example, they are handy for middle and upper management, but they are not useful to the hourly worker. Safety goals based on lagging indicators should only be assigned to supervisors, managers and others in leadership positions.

## Step 3: Create safety objectives for employees that are based on leading indicators

Develop safety objectives based on leading indicators that focus on both the prevention of injuries and the pursuit of a strong safety culture. The objectives should be clear, and they should be developed with feedback from hourly workers.

Utilize the objectives and key results (OKR) approach for writing proactive safety objectives. The OKR approach helps to ensure that the focus stays fixed on important issues. As the name implies, OKR has two components: the objective and the key results. OKR is simply stated as: I will [objective] as measured by [key results]. The objectives should be significant and action oriented. Key results are a set of specific metrics that measure progress toward the objective. For each objective, there should be two or three key results.

Here are a couple of examples of proactive safety objectives based on leading indicators using the OKR approach:

**Objective—Create a work environment where people are encouraged to report safety hazards, unsafe acts, unsafe conditions and near misses without repercussion.**

- \* Key Result—Develop and roll out an incentivized safety reporting/tracking program.
- \* Key Result—Develop and conduct employee training.
- \* Key Result—Start each shift with a 5-minute safety/planning meeting that includes a review of any hazards or incidents recently reported.

**Objective—Give employees the resources needed to do their jobs productively and safely.**

- \* Key Result—Conduct at least one job hazard analysis per week involving relevant people from all shifts.
- \* Key Result—Conduct at least one safety audit or inspection per month involving relevant people from all shifts.
- \* Key Result—Train employees on a relevant safety topic at least once per month.

## Step 4: Conduct periodic progress meetings with employees

After communicating the goals and objectives to the entire workforce, make it a priority to keep them updated on progress. For employees to be fully engaged, they must understand how they contribute to the safety mission and feel that they are making progress. The idea is to show employees how their daily actions influence progress toward an objective. It also shows employees that management is serious about safety and is investing time, effort and resources on safety improvements.

By utilizing these four steps, your safety goals will be more meaningful and effective, and employees will be more engaged in the safety effort. They will likely feel more valued, remember the goals and take ownership of them. You can't achieve a 5-percent reduction in injuries just by hoping that it happens. Focus on leading indicators to create safe behaviors and work practices that lead to a reduction in incidents and injuries. Make sure your goals and objectives reflect the actions necessary to move the needle toward the desired outcome. 🏠



Allen Green is the League's loss control liaison. Contact Allen at 501-374-3484, ext. 122, or email him at [agreen@arml.org](mailto:agreen@arml.org).



PHOTO BY JIM VON TUNGELN

Instructors such as Krista Evans, Ph.D. (second from left), can teach students like these the positive aspects of planning. Only hard-earned experience will teach them its pitfalls.

# The perils of planning: Losing control

By Jim von Tungeln

One of our state’s legendary mayors often told opponents of land development proposals, “If you want to control land, you need to own it.” That is sound advice in most but not all cases. Sometimes government controls portions of private land without ownership.

Precedence and custom allow governments to take or reduce some of a property owner’s “bundle of rights.” Partial takings, accomplished by regulation, can even occur without monetary compensation. In our state, however, local governments might find themselves compensating property owners for regulatory takings exacted beyond the umbrella of the so-called “police power.” (Ask your city attorney.)

But what happens when city government itself loses control over its land development processes? Preemptions, mandates and statutory restrictions can alter or limit a city’s ability to carry out planning proposals. These represent vital, but not always apparent, roadblocks in public administration.

Preemptions attracted authors Benjamin D. Winig and Saneta deVuono-Powell, who wrote in the April 2016 of the American Planning Association’s Planning magazine that “On its face, preemption—when the law

of a higher level of government limits or even eliminates the power of a lower level to regulate a particular issue—is not inherently good or bad. It is merely an articulation of the exercise of powers between federal, state, and local governments.”

In other words, sometimes state or federal bodies say, “We have this covered, Mayor. Butt out.” In these cases, the higher authority prevents cities from enacting regulations. This may prove positive or negative. Preemption often involves sticky issues that local governments would just as soon avoid.

The authors point out that “More recently, however, preemption has become the tool of choice among some state legislatures seeking to strip local governments of their power to innovate and create laws across a wide range of issues, including laws that significantly affect housing.”

One of the more familiar forms of preemption for local government, though, comes from the federal government. As most local officials know, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) assumed control of the design of manufactured homes in 1976. Since then, those homes have enjoyed specific building codes approved by HUD only.

What would happen should a city seek to impose restrictions on the placement of manufactured homes through its own building code? Said city would receive a letter from the federal agency stating that it alone controls building codes for manufactured homes and that it preempts the city from meddling with those codes.

Does this mean the city has no control over the placement? Hardly. If HUD doesn't regulate an item, local government might be able to do so. For example, the federal regulations don't prohibit requirements for skirting, setbacks, parking and other typical requirements of zoning codes. Additionally, when a manufactured home is not used as a residence (if it becomes a commercial building, for example), the city may be able to inspect it according to local or state codes. Seek legal advice on this, however.

Regarding manufactured homes, the topic of mandates arises. The state's 2003 Affordable Housing Accessibility Act (beginning at A.C.A. § 14-54-1601) mandates a number of things required of cities that enact zoning codes. Primarily, it states, "Municipalities that have zoning ordinances shall allow the placement of manufactured homes on individually owned lots in at least one or more residential districts or zones within the municipality."

Accordingly, a city cannot limit manufactured homes to "land-lease communities," i.e., manufactured home parks. Instead, they must allow property owners to place them on individual lots somewhere within the zoning jurisdiction. The statute also states, "Municipalities shall not impose regulations or conditions on manufactured homes ... that are inconsistent with the regulations or conditions imposed on other single-family dwellings permitted in the same residential district or zone."

That statute represents a simple mandate. A more problematic one occurs under the common name of an unfunded mandate. That happens when the federal or state government mandates action by local government but does not provide funds for carrying out the mandate. Although federal laws exist that either restrict or more carefully define unfunded mandates, they remain an ever-present problem.

The most familiar barriers in our state within recent years have been simple restrictions on the planning, zoning and development control generally allowed in the planning statutes. For example, over the course of several legislative sessions, restrictions have passed into law concerning such issues as:

- Selection of a planning area boundary.
- Design standards of single-family residences.
- Approval of home occupations.
- Annexation of adjacent areas.

In addition to the preemptions, mandates and restrictions themselves, there are other considerations for local governments. Among these is the fact that these limitations are not usually found in familiar places. The most familiar statutes involving a city's authority to plan are found in A.C.A. §§ 14-56-401 through 426. Those are the statutes originally enacted as Act 186 of 1957. Amended over the years, they cover items from forming a planning commission to approval of plans and regulations enacted or recommended by the commission. Most planners, commissioners and elected officials know, at the least, of their existence.

Other restrictions don't possess that familiarity, including the aforementioned manufactured home statute. For example, a planner scanning statutes involving municipal government may encounter "Title 20, Public Health and Welfare." Deciding that the section doesn't deal with planning, the reader may ignore it. Imagine the surprise later to see the following: "A Family Home ... is a residential use [for the developmentally disabled] of property for the purposes of zoning and shall be treated as a permitted use in all residential zones or districts, including all single-family residential zones or districts of all political subdivisions. No political subdivision may require that a Family Home ... or its owner or operator obtain a conditional use permit, special use permit, special exception, or variance." The statute also includes a similar provision for multi-family residential.

Planners refer to such phenomena as "hidden regs," and they pose a tricky problem. Only seasoned planners or administrators may know of their existence and location. It remains a certainty, however, that special interests associated with the regulations—and their attorneys—know where to find them. Being "blindsided" is not the most appealing aspect of public administration.

The most apparent solution to dealing with the above resides in training. Training not only acquaints attendees with information but also places them in contact with those who may know important facts. What someone learns during break time at training sessions may save their city from major problems later. For sure, restrictions upon a city's ability to carry out planning will not disappear. 🍷



*Jim von Tungeln is staff planning consultant and available for consultation as a service of the Arkansas Municipal League. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. Persons having comments or questions may reach him at 501-944-3649. His email is [uplan@swbell.net](mailto:uplan@swbell.net).*



PHOTO COURTESY TRANSFR

Students learn to manipulate tools in a virtual environment, which can be a cost-effective way to prepare them to transfer the skills to the real-life workplace.

## Virtual reality and the future of workforce development

By Dylan Edgell

**T**here is a widening skills gap in the United States workforce. According to a 2018 Deloitte report, the skills gap in the manufacturing sector alone will leave an estimated 2.4 million positions unfilled in the next decade with a potential economic impact of \$2.5 trillion. There is increased demand for skilled labor in manufacturing, infrastructure and other important industries requiring a specific skill set, and our qualified labor supply is not keeping pace with labor demands.

Traditionally, workforce development training for these roles required physical training facilities with a hefty price tag. With the advent of new technologies, including virtual reality technologies, some of the hurdles of traditional workforce development could be a thing of the past. VR is a tool that is already being utilized for workforce development training and can increase access to training while keeping costs lower.

The Arkansas Office of Skills Development recently partnered with VR training company TRANSFR to offer VR workforce training to 15 K-12 workforce development centers across the state. This is an exciting peek into the potential future of workforce development. I spoke with TRANSFR to learn more about VR workforce development training and how trainees and communities can

benefit from decreased costs and greater accessibility in immersive VR job training.

### Cost benefits

Historically, investments in workforce development have been a costly endeavor for communities looking to provide these educational opportunities. Traditional workforce development training centers could cost up to \$1 million or more depending on the size and scope of the facility. That doesn't include the additional maintenance and utility costs over the course of the life of the building.

In contrast, virtual workforce development training can offer much lower initial costs and maintenance costs. For example, TRANSFR offers industry-specific VR training packages for as little as \$10,000 per industry with an option to purchase their entire set of training industries for \$25,000. The space requirements for this technology are minimal and usually only require a 6-by-6-foot space to complete the training.

### Accessibility

One of the biggest benefits of VR training is the increased accessibility provided by its lower costs and portable equipment. For folks in communities without a traditional training facility, getting training for the job

they want may involve travel and other expenses that can serve as barriers to these opportunities. VR training's mobility offers an opportunity for educational institutions and other workforce development organizations to offer targeted workforce development training tailored to the specific workforce needs of an area. It also allows those who may be searching for a suitable career path a way to "try on" different skilled workforce careers.


The "Be Pro Be Proud" initiative led by the Associated Industries of Arkansas offers a mobile VR workshop that allows high school students to explore skilled labor careers through VR experiences. This exposure to new career opportunities and career pathways in 12 different in-demand professions is another benefit of utilizing VR technologies in workforce development training and outreach.

### Skills transfer

The most important consideration for VR workforce development training is how prepared the trainee is for the job they are preparing for. According to the director of Stanford University's Virtual Human Interaction Lab, Jeremy Bailenson, the sensory immersion facilitated by VR is the key to its effectiveness. "The brain tends to treat the experience as if it were real," he said during a 2018 NPR interview. This leads to VR training's effectiveness

once you move from the virtual world into the actual workplace.

This transfer of skills was borne out in a case study from TRANSFR. According to the study with one of TRANSFR's organizational partners, 93 percent of those who utilized VR training and secured a job were still employed after six months. While this is an isolated case, the job retention rate is impressive and will lead to cost savings by the company and long-term gainful employment for those holding these jobs.

VR workforce development training is just getting started in Arkansas, but the potential impacts of increased accessibility and lower costs make this an attractive option for workforce development in the coming years. Technologies like VR workforce development training will be key for addressing the increasingly large gap between skilled workforce needs and skilled workforce supply. To learn more about TRANSFR, visit [www.transfrvr.com](http://www.transfrvr.com). 



*Dylan Edgell is the assistant director for the University of Central Arkansas Center for Community and Economic Development. Learn more about CCED at [www.uca.edu/cced](http://www.uca.edu/cced).*



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# Allied health professionals play vital role in health care

By Susan Long, Ed.D.

**A**llied health professionals are the unsung—and often unknown—heroes of health care. There are more than 5 million allied health professionals in the United States, making up more than 60 percent of all health care providers—more than physicians, nurses, dentists and pharmacists combined. On average, every physician needs to collaborate with eight allied health professionals to provide comprehensive patient- and family-centered care.

With numbers like that, everyone should know about the allied health professions, but most people don't.

## Who are allied health professionals?

Allied health professionals are members of the health care team who provide a range of diagnostic, technical, therapeutic and direct patient care and support services.

There are more than 80 professions under the allied health professional umbrella, including those in the UAMS College of Health Professions:

- Audiologist
- Speech pathologist
- Dental hygienist
- Dietitian
- Genetic counselor
- Diagnostic medical sonographer
- Radiography technologist
- Laboratory technician and scientist
- Nuclear medicine technologist
- Cytotechnologist
- Occupational therapist
- Ophthalmic medical technologist
- Physical therapist
- Physician assistant
- Respiratory therapist

As you can see, the allied health professions run the gamut of health care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought lots of attention to one type of allied health professional—the

respiratory therapist. The pandemic that left hundreds of thousands of Americans struggling to breathe shone a light on respiratory therapists, who stood between life and death as they intubated patients and monitored ventilators. Suddenly, the public knew how vitally important respiratory therapists are.

## Why are allied health professionals important?

To put it simply, cost and demand. Health care is nearly 18 percent of the U.S. economy, more than double that of any other nation. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the U.S. spent \$3.8 trillion in 2019 on health care expenditures, or \$11,582 a person. That number is expected to reach \$6.2 trillion—or nearly 20 percent of the gross domestic product—by 2028.

Allied health practitioners can provide access to care at a lower cost. For example, physician assistants (PAs) work under the supervision of a physician to deliver a broad range of medical and surgical services to rural and urban populations. The addition of a PA to the health care team allows the physician to treat more patients, which is vitally important in those areas where doctors are in short supply.

For years, we have been hearing about our country's need for more health care workers to care for aging baby boomers. According to the American Hospital Association, recent studies show that by 2032, the U.S. will face a shortage of as many as 132,000 physicians and will need to hire at least 200,000 nurses per year. A 2017 survey by the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science found that 7.2 percent of lab technician positions across the nation were unfilled.

There was a critical need for health care workers before COVID-19 hit. Since COVID, the need has only increased. Nearly 30 percent of health care workers are considering leaving their profession, according to a Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation survey taken earlier this year.



## Opportunities abound in allied health professions

While these numbers are concerning, as an educator I can also see amazing potential and opportunity. Yes, we have serious staffing needs in health care. However, I am able to tell our students the opportunities for those in allied health fields seem limitless, as the scope of practice and the need for health care practitioners continually expand.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment opportunities in health care occupations are projected to grow 18 percent from 2016 to 2026, adding about 2.3 million new jobs, which is much faster than the average for all occupations.

Our students are needed now more than ever. For students who are taking on debt to get an education, it is very reassuring to know the jobs are out there. Our students are ready, willing and able to take their place among the millions of allied health professionals. As someone who knows these students, I can attest we are going to be in great hands. 🙏



*Susan Long, Ed.D., is the dean of the College of Health Professions at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS). She is also a professor of dental hygiene at UAMS.*





PHOTO COURTESY CHEROKEE VILLAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Volunteers clear brush from a wooded area near homes in Cherokee Village. Vegetation removal projects are a critical part of the Firewise USA program.

## Get Firewise to reduce the threat of wildfires

By Leslie Foster

**F**ire prevention efforts took center stage in October during Fire Prevention Week, which is observed each year the week of October 9. Proclaimed by President Coolidge in 1925, Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health observance in the United States and commemorates the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. One of the most famous fires in history, the Great Chicago Fire burned more than 2,000 acres of land. The blaze spread quickly from a farm (according to legend it was started by a cow kicking over a lantern, though the official cause was never determined) to the inner city, burning nearly one-third of Chicago in about a day and a half. The Great Chicago Fire changed the entire structure of firefighting, which is why it still holds such importance in the world of fire prevention. New technology, building requirements and firefighting methods have made tremendous improvements in fire protection since 1871, but there are still plenty of things citizens can do year-round to help strengthen their homes, particularly from the threat of wildfire.

Firewise USA is a national wildfire risk reduction program through the National Fire Protection Association

that highlights simple steps homeowners can take to help protect their home in the event of a wildfire. In Arkansas, the Arkansas Forestry Division partners with local fire departments to participate in the program, which includes grant opportunities to help strengthen mitigation activities in the community. To participate, fire departments establish a Firewise USA site—typically the area within their fire district—of eight to 2,500 dwelling units or homes. The site is then outlined in a Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan, which lists emergency contacts, nearest locations to find fuel, food and lodging, and other information that would be useful in an emergency situation.

Once a CWPP is created, risk assessments must be conducted on at least 80 percent of the homes in the site that fall in the Wildland Urban Interface, which is defined by FEMA as “the zone between unoccupied land and human development.” These assessments are used to rate various aspects of the home and its surroundings for fire danger. Participating fire departments are required to take part in at least one vegetation removal project and one educational outreach project within their site. The time



PHOTO COURTESY GILLHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT

Sevier County Forester John Colbey, right, presents Gillham Fire Chief Marc Rosson with a Firewise renewal grant. The town's fire department was able to purchase this wood chipper with a mitigation grant.

invested in these projects must be equal to at least one volunteer hour per dwelling unit.

During 2020, 103 Firewise sites across Arkansas invested more than \$4 million worth of volunteer time helping strengthen their community's defenses against wildfire by participating in various vegetation removal and educational outreach efforts. As 2021 draws to a close, participating sites have already invested hundreds of hours toward this year's projects.

Here are some primary areas of concern for homeowners and steps they can take to prevent or mitigate wildfires.

## Create space between vegetation and homes

The area up to 300 feet from homes should contain lean, clean and green vegetation, including grass, trees and shrubbery. Homeowners' primary focus should be on the zone within 5 feet of the home. Keep grass mowed and provide water, making it resistant to fire embers. Trim trees so limbs do not touch the roof, windows or deck areas, and keep limbs trimmed at least 6 feet up from the ground so that a small surface fire is not transferred to treetops. Finally, keep dead vegetation like leaves, twigs and pine needles cleared from the roof, porches, vents and walls. These dead plant materials spread flames between vegetation and homes.

A large factor in the Great Chicago Fire was that the majority of the city, including the sidewalks, was constructed from wood. While building codes have changed drastically since then, the underlying risk still rings true. Those wooden sidewalks functioned just as vegetation and debris would in a wildfire today, acting as fuel and carrying the blaze from one location to another.

## Think of the yard as the primary defense against wildfire

Debris, trees, vehicles, fences, workshops, doghouses, RVs, barns or anything else between the surrounding wildland area and your home should be considered a hazard that could carry wildfire to your home. Any cleared area that could be used to stop a fire is helpful.

## Wildfire always runs quicker uphill

Wildfire will use slopes to build energy and burn through fuel faster. This doesn't mean people should fear living on hills; it means more effort should be focused on maintaining lean, clean and green space on downhill slopes, as these are the areas most prone to rapid wildfire behavior.

## Be mindful of burn bans and high fire weather

Local burn bans are declared by county judges when conditions are too dangerous to burn. Stay informed about burn bans via radio and television or visit [www.arkfireinfo.org](http://www.arkfireinfo.org) for an up-to-date statewide map of burn bans. Even if a burn ban is not in effect, when winds are high and humidity is low, burning is still very dangerous. The leading causes of wildfire in Arkansas are burning debris and arson. Debris fires include a broad list of accidents related to trash, brush pile and leaf burns, while arson fires are those lit intentionally. Homeowners often light fires when conditions are too windy, during burn bans or in areas that are not sufficiently separated from the surrounding wildland area. Don't leave burning debris unattended at any time, but especially when the weather is ripe for high wildfire danger. Firefighters encourage residents to call any time they plan to burn so that should the situation change, fire trucks can arrive quickly.

## Install highly visible mailbox lettering

It's easy enough for firefighters to find a home when smoke is billowing from all sides. It becomes very difficult, however, to locate emergencies and possible victims in the middle of the night or during rain. Firefighters encourage everyone to post the address in 4-inch reflective letters to allow for the quickest possible response time.

For more information on Arkansas' Firewise USA program, please visit [www.agriculture.arkansas.gov/forestry/arkansas-firewise](http://www.agriculture.arkansas.gov/forestry/arkansas-firewise).



*Leslie Foster is the Firewise public information specialist for the Arkansas Forestry Division. Contact her at 501-813-2554 or email [leslie.foster@agriculture.arkansas.gov](mailto:leslie.foster@agriculture.arkansas.gov).*

# Supply chain woes impact the A/E/C industry

By Jennifer Thompson

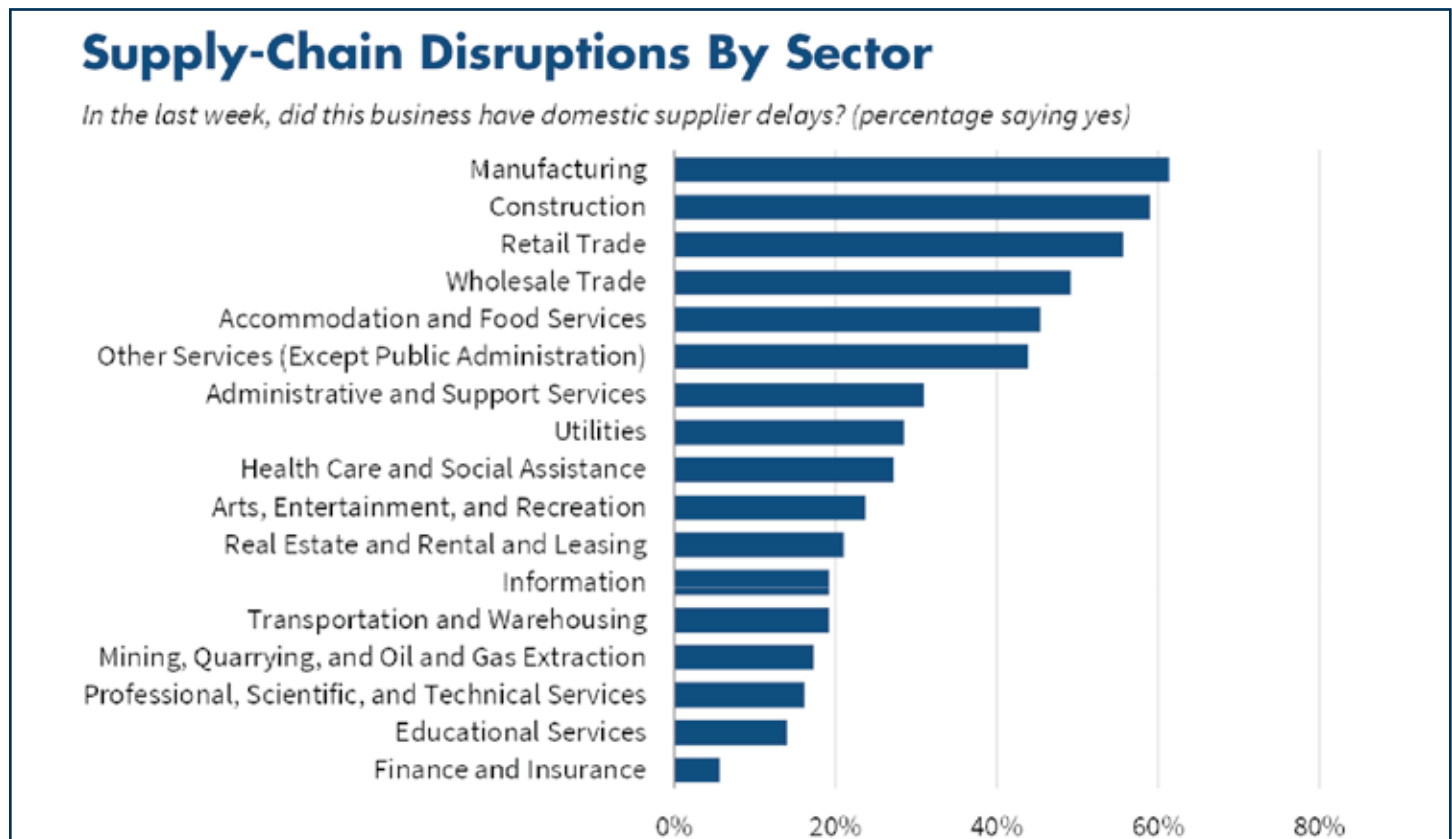
There is no shortage of reasons for the broken supply chain. Entire industries that shrank during the beginning of the pandemic are now trying to get back to pre-COVID operating levels. Many businesses report that they have been unable to hire quickly enough to keep pace with demand. Others do not have enough inventory to avoid running out of stock. The situation has been especially difficult for businesses with complex supply chains.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.S. in 2020, contractors and builders across the country have faced a range of obstacles, including layoffs, project shutdowns and increased construction costs. The architect/engineer/construction (A/E/C) industry has been no exception to this, with current COVID impacts to the A/E/C industry's supply chain that include a labor shortage (including truck drivers), rising construction costs, price increases (including concrete, timber and steel) and a materials shortage, all of which are affecting both the pricing of projects and construction times.

Abrupt price increases have been another impact of the shortages. According to a press release from the White House earlier this year, "Between May 2020 and May 2021, prices of commodities tracked within the Producer Price Index rose by 19 percent, the largest year-over-year increase since 1974."

The Association of Builders and Contractors says that the construction industry is still losing jobs. This could mean even higher prices, and an increased cost of delivering construction services could come during the fall months and beyond.

"Contractors are struggling to find enough skilled craft workers even as they continue to be impacted by pandemic-induced project delays and supply chain disruptions, according to a workforce survey from the Associated General Contractors of America and Autodesk," industry magazine *Engineering News-Record* reported in September. "The survey results show how the pandemic has created constraints on the demand for work even as it limits the number of workers that contractors can hire."



According to the survey, nearly nine out of 10 contractors reported difficulty finding workers. “Meanwhile, 88 percent of the 2,136 participating decision-makers from a range of several contractor types said they are experiencing project delays and nearly all, 93 percent, said their businesses have been affected by rising materials prices.”

If you haven’t encountered these types of supply chain issues yet, it is highly likely you will. In northwest Arkansas we have recently seen increasing issues with the supply of concrete as well as other truck-related operations on some construction projects, owing to a significant shortage of truck drivers locally. The situation here has been further exacerbated by construction-related activities associated with the building of Walmart’s new home office in Bentonville.

Our firm has been fortunate to maintain normal business operations throughout COVID, however this has not been the case within the contractor community in Arkansas. This is uncharted territory for all of us, even considering the challenges we faced in 2008 with the economic recession. None of us know when or how quickly these challenges will be overcome. For those developers and municipalities who are in the process of constructing projects, anticipate project delays, requests for time extensions and increased costs. 🏠



*Jennifer Thompson is a marketing coordinator for MCE and works out of the Fayetteville office. Contact Jennifer by phone at 479-443-2377 or email her at [jthompson@mce.us.com](mailto:jthompson@mce.us.com).*

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# 2020/2021 State Turnback Funds

<b>Actual Totals Per Capita</b>						
	<b>STREET</b>		<b>SEVERANCE TAX</b>		<b>GENERAL</b>	
<b>MONTH</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
January	\$6.789	\$6.659	\$0.083	\$0.071	\$2.145	\$1.951
February	\$6.340	\$6.607	\$0.118	\$0.163	\$1.087	\$0.893
March	\$5.758	\$5.693	\$0.101	\$0.110	\$1.087	\$0.892
April	\$6.088	\$6.135	\$0.064	\$0.162	\$0.924	\$0.889
May	\$5.943	\$7.568	\$0.034	\$0.258	\$0.924	\$0.890
June	\$5.605	\$6.753	\$0.030	\$0.206	\$0.924	\$1.665
July	\$6.094	\$7.303	\$0.022	\$0.163	\$2.795	\$4.306
August	\$6.478	\$6.988	\$0	\$0.150	\$1.542	\$0.854
September	\$6.399	\$6.822	\$0.014	\$0.205	\$0.728	\$1.020
October	\$6.378	\$6.597	\$0.021	\$0.295	\$0.893	\$0.964
November	\$6.340		\$0.060		\$0.893	
December	\$5.984		\$0.105		\$0.893	
<b>Total Year</b>	<b>\$74.197</b>	<b>\$67.123</b>	<b>\$0.652</b>	<b>\$1.785</b>	<b>\$14.838</b>	<b>\$14.322</b>

<b>Actual Totals Per Month</b>						
	<b>STREET</b>		<b>SEVERANCE TAX</b>		<b>GENERAL</b>	
<b>MONTH</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
January	\$12,833,880.33	\$12,587,621.61	\$156,199.64	\$134,647.89	* \$4,054,970.57	* \$3,688,464.32
February	\$11,984,924.80	\$12,488,753.05	\$223,221.26	\$308,183.56	\$2,055,049.55	\$1,688,281.84
March	\$10,883,990.67	\$10,760,836.82	\$191,150.53	\$207,709.60	\$2,055,396.67	\$1,685,424.74
April	\$11,509,342.85	\$11,627,333.33	\$120,647.65	\$307,147.46	\$1,747,446.98	\$1,684,913.88
May	\$11,233,895.61	\$14,343,742.05	\$63,817.15	\$489,324.42	\$1,747,094.76	\$1,687,137.50
June	\$10,595,347.60	\$12,799,319.93	\$57,224.47	\$390,405.22	\$1,747,446.98	\$3,154,867.86
July	\$11,520,392.64	\$13,841,564.30	\$41,735.92	\$309,031.02	** \$5,284,317.00	*** \$8,160,945.43
August	\$12,263,537.56	\$13,245,023.56	\$0	\$285,053.21	\$2,919,346.12	\$1,617,878.89
September	\$12,097,147.76	\$12,929,805.85	\$26,456.51	\$389,181.65	\$1,376,535.41	\$1,932,348.55
October	\$12,057,206.89	\$13,228,061.49	\$39,675.17	\$592,445.41	\$1,688,464.32	\$1,933,129.73
November	\$11,984,780.59		\$113,060.67		\$1,688,281.98	
December	\$11,312,336.38		\$199,121.43		\$1,688,464.32	
<b>Total Year</b>	<b>\$140,276,783.68</b>	<b>\$127,852,061.99</b>	<b>\$1,232,310.40</b>	<b>\$3,413,129.44</b>	<b>\$28,052,814.66</b>	<b>\$27,233,392.74</b>

\* Includes \$2 million appropriation from the Property Tax Relief Fund

\*\* Includes \$3,513,475.64 supplemental for July 2020

\*\*\*Includes \$3,513,480.88 supplemental for July 2021

# Local Option Sales and Use Tax in Arkansas



### 2021 Elections

**MOUNTAIN HOME, March 9**  
 Passed. 0.5% temporary  
 Passed. 0.25% ongoing

**COTTER, May 11**  
 Passed. 1% extension

**HARRISON, May 11**  
 Passed. 0.25% temporary  
 Passed. 0.25% ongoing

**LOWELL, May 11**  
 Passed. 1% extension

**BEEBE, Sept. 14**  
 Passed. 0.25% ongoing  
 Failed. 0.75% temporary

**GARFIELD, Sept. 14**  
 Passed. 0.5% extension

**LITTLE ROCK, Sept. 14**  
 Failed. 0.625% ongoing

**PEA RIDGE, Sept. 14**  
 Passed. 1% ongoing

Source: Rachel Garrett, Office of State Treasurer

See also: [www.dfa.arkansas.gov](http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov)

Sales and Use Tax Year-to-Date 2021 with 2020 Comparison (shaded gray)

Month	Municipal Tax	County Tax	Total Tax	Interest				
January	\$68,199,990	\$62,951,910	\$59,726,912	\$54,023,046	\$127,926,902	\$116,974,957	\$14,602	\$137,620
February	\$79,611,239	\$73,128,305	\$68,300,663	\$61,276,755	\$147,911,902	\$134,405,060	\$20,412	\$151,340
March	\$66,877,931	\$57,761,974	\$57,918,592	\$49,863,364	\$124,796,523	\$107,625,338	\$13,492	\$140,860
April	\$60,600,707	\$58,720,966	\$53,282,134	\$50,676,002	\$113,882,841	\$109,396,969	\$16,537	\$173,069
May	\$83,488,059	\$64,061,809	\$73,792,913	\$55,167,274	\$157,280,972	\$118,762,027	\$10,492	\$51,758
June	\$78,858,097	\$61,816,632	\$67,860,902	\$54,700,218	\$146,718,999	\$120,220,830	\$9,681	\$37,445
July	\$76,784,978	\$66,569,122	\$65,778,959	\$58,404,198	\$142,563,936	\$127,921,569	\$12,566	\$27,240
August	\$78,501,622	\$69,810,263	\$67,970,242	\$61,352,447	\$146,471,864	\$132,096,586	\$9,395	\$22,963
September	\$77,398,158	\$69,731,104	\$65,883,715	\$62,286,322	\$143,281,872	\$132,017,426	\$13,951	\$14,982
October	\$77,705,438	\$67,795,513	\$66,726,221	\$60,898,642	\$144,431,660	\$128,694,156	\$11,344	\$13,552
November		\$70,085,468		\$62,498,473		\$132,583,941		\$12,579
December		\$67,813,178		\$60,080,515		\$127,893,693		\$14,370
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$748,026,219</b>	<b>\$790,246,247</b>	<b>\$647,241,253</b>	<b>\$691,227,256</b>	<b>\$1,395,267,471</b>	<b>\$1,488,592,551</b>	<b>\$132,473</b>	<b>\$797,777</b>
Averages	\$74,802,622	\$65,853,854	\$64,724,125	\$57,602,271	\$139,526,747	\$124,049,379	\$13,247	\$66,481







# MUNICIPAL MART

To place a classified ad in City & Town, please email the League at [citytown@arml.org](mailto:citytown@arml.org) or call 501-374-3484. Classified ads are FREE to League members and will run for two consecutive months from the date of receipt unless otherwise notified. FOR NON-MEMBERS, classifieds are available for the rate of \$0.70 per word and will run for one month unless otherwise notified. Once we receive the ad, we will send an invoice. The ad will run once payment is received.

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**—The city of Eureka Springs is seeking an assistant director of finance to work with the city finance director to help lead and manage all aspects of the city's financial operations. Responsibilities will include but not be limited to: Develops and maintains timely and accurate financial statements and reports in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). Financial planning and forecasting. Management of all accounting, finance and treasury functions for the city. Oversight of the city's ambulance billing process and manages relationship with third-party billing agency. Manages debt administration for the city including issuance of new debt and compliance with existing programs and procedures. Monitors and evaluates municipal operations, financial transactions and procedures for compliance with statutory requirements, policies and the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Directs and manages the preparation and administration of municipal budget and comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). Develops and interprets cash and investment policies and procedures. Manages certain aspects of payroll processes related to funding of benefits, payroll, tax filings and auditing of bi-weekly payroll process. Directs and manages the annual audit process. Develops, coordinates and maintains five-year capital improvement plan. Manages property and vehicle insurance claims. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree in accounting, finance or business and a minimum of seven years of experience in accounting role. Minimum three years in government accounting and management. Applicants who are interested in applying should send their resume, cover letter and contact information to [HumanResources@eurekaspringsar.gov](mailto:HumanResources@eurekaspringsar.gov)

**ASSOCIATE STAFF ATTORNEY**—The city of Rogers is seeking applications for a staff attorney. Salary range begins at \$55,754 DOE. General description of position: The associate staff attorney is responsible for the prosecution of misdemeanor and traffic cases in Rogers District Court and also represents the state of Arkansas/city of Rogers on district court cases that are appealed to the Benton County Circuit Court. Essential duties and responsibilities: Prosecutor for the municipal court. Performs legal research, prepares briefs and memoranda, and represents the city in District Court. Represents the city of Rogers/state of Arkansas when cases are appealed from Rogers District Court to Benton County Circuit Court. Develops procedures for the prosecution of cases in Rogers District Court. Responsible for legal briefs that may be required in criminal prosecutions. Promotes a positive public image through excellent customer service. Performs other duties as assigned by the senior staff attorney. Performs any other related duties as required or assigned. Education and experience: Professional degree (J.D., Ph.D., M.D., etc.) plus 3 years related experience and/or training, and 19 to 23 months related management experience, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Required certificates, licenses, registrations: Must be licensed to practice law in the state of Arkansas and licensed to practice in the Western District of Arkansas and Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. For full job description and to apply, please visit the city of Rogers website: [www.rogersar.gov/jobs.aspx](http://www.rogersar.gov/jobs.aspx).

**COURT ADMINISTRATOR**—The city of Hot Springs is looking for a court administrator in District Court. This position pays \$28.82 per hour plus full benefits. Must possess HS diploma or equivalent, bachelor's degree in public administration or other related field, at least three years in public contact and supervisory work or any equivalent combination of education and experience. This position is open until filled. Apply online at [www.cityhs.net/jobs](http://www.cityhs.net/jobs) or send your resume to Alisha Gruszka at [Agruszka@cityhs.net](mailto:Agruszka@cityhs.net).

**FIRE CHIEF**—The city of Warren seeks qualified applicants for a full-time fire chief. Duties include: provides chief supervisory authority for the full-time and volunteer firefighters, establishes policies and procedures and implements directives from the mayor and city council. Works a minimum of 40

hours per week. Complete background check will be required. Minimum qualifications: Must be at least 21. Prefer graduation from an accredited college or a closely related field. Prefer 12 years of experience in a supervisory field firefighting or seven years as a full-time firefighter. Knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques of modern firefighting and fire prevention. A physical examination and drug test will be required upon hire. For application information and other details, contact Mayor Denisa Pennington at 870-226-6743 or come by the mayor's office at 104 North Myrtle Street, Warren, AR 71671.

**POLICE CHIEF**—Junction City is accepting applications for a new police chief. Must be a certified police officer with leadership experience. Should have minimum of five years of law enforcement experience. Please submit resumes to City of Junction City, P.O. Box 787, Junction City, AR 71749, email [cityofjunctioncity@yahoo.com](mailto:cityofjunctioncity@yahoo.com) or fax 870-924-4023.

**POLICE OFFICER**—The city of Hermitage is accepting applications for the position of full-time police officer. Applicants must be 21 years old and have a minimum of HS diploma or GED. Arkansas certification preferred. Must be able to pass a background check and other pre-employment screening and possess a valid Arkansas DL. Salary, paid insurance and paid LOPFI retirement. Applications may be picked up at Hermitage City Hall between 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri., 186 U.S. Hwy. 63 South Bypass, Hermitage.

**STAFF ATTORNEY**—The city of Rogers is seeking applications for a staff attorney. Salary range begins at \$73,319 DOE. General description of position: The staff attorney represents the city of Rogers in all legal matters before state and federal courts, will assist the senior staff attorney in advising the mayor and city council on legal issues. Reviews, drafts and edits any legal documents or pleadings as assigned. Assists in providing leadership and strategic guidance to high-level departments within the city. Essential duties and responsibilities: Assists in representing the city of Rogers in the circuit court of Benton County in such matters as condemnations and land issues. When required, prosecutes misdemeanor criminal cases in Rogers District Court and Benton County Circuit Court, prepares plea offers, judgments and other legal documents. Attends various meetings of city boards, commission and city council. Assists in the defense of the city in lawsuits brought against it in federal and state courts as assigned. Assists in ensuring that the city is compliant with all federal and state laws regarding employment, discrimination and civil rights. Responsible for the writing of legal briefs in criminal prosecutions as assigned. Assists in the drafting and review of all city contracts. Drafts city ordinances and resolutions. Monitors any state law change or proposed change to determine city compliance. Other duties as assigned by the senior staff attorney. Performs any other related duties as required or assigned. Education and experience: Professional degree (J.D., Ph.D., M.D., etc) plus 6 years related experience and/or training, and 3 years related management experience, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Required certificates, licenses, registrations: J.D with three years of relevant experience. Licensed in the state of Arkansas and licensed in the Western District of Arkansas and the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. For full job description and to apply, please visit the city of Rogers website: [www.rogersar.gov/jobs.aspx](http://www.rogersar.gov/jobs.aspx).

**NOTICE OF BIDS**—The city of Bradley will be taking sealed bids on a 1996 Loadmaster Trash Truck. The truck will start and run. Selling as is. If you would like to view this truck, please call Bradley City Hall at 870-894-3464 Mon- Fri 8 a.m. - 4 pm. Please mail your bid to: City of Bradley, Trash Truck—sealed bid, P.O. Box 729, Bradley, AR 71826. The city of Bradley has the right to refuse any and all bids submitted. Please have your bids turned in by 6 p.m. December 8. Bids will be opened at the city council meeting the next night. Please include your name and a good phone number where we can reach you.

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Seated from left: Michele Casavechia, Jack Truemper

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