

City & Town

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The Official Publication of the Arkansas Municipal League



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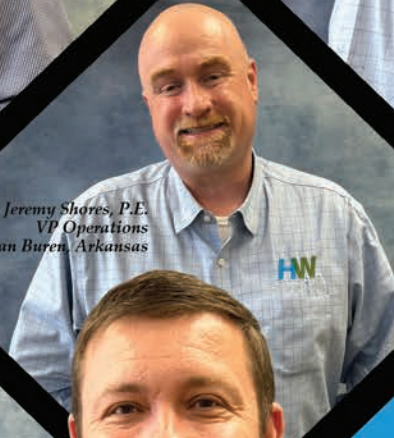
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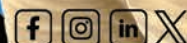
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After nearly 50 years in business, HW is proud to remain independently owned and operated, ensuring that every decision is made locally to benefit our customers. Every HW client has the phone number of an owner and knows that they will not only answer calls and texts but that they have the expertise and authority to provide fast and effective solutions. HW has never had to answer to out-of-state investors and our continued growth proves that our commitment to keep decisions local is what Arkansans demand. We invite you to experience the difference that stability makes.

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The Member Engagement Department integrates the Events and Communications teams to facilitate conventions, conferences and regional trainings; support League programs, including Municipal Health, Municipal Law, Municipal Workers' Comp, Municipal Vehicle & Property, the ACE Hub and other initiatives that connect and strengthen Arkansas' cities and towns.

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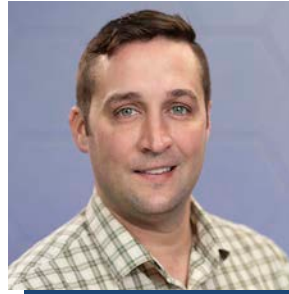
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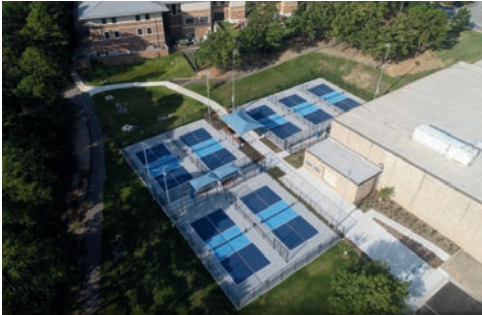


AML is giving away a select number of member registrations for Convention 91! Municipal officials may email events@arml.org to enter to win.

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President's Letter

OFFICE of the MAYOR



PARNELL VANN



Dear friends and colleagues,

I hope this letter finds you well. It's hard to believe that June is fast approaching—it seems like just yesterday I stepped into my role as president of the Arkansas Municipal League. Serving in this position has been a true honor, and I had hoped to be of even greater help to each of you. But as I always say, if my phone doesn't ring, I can't be of help!

I recently returned from Washington, D.C., where I attended the National League of Cities Congressional City Conference. We had the distinct honor of hearing from Vice President J.D. Vance, which was a truly memorable experience. The trip was filled with insightful discussions, invaluable connections and, of course, some amazing food. If you ever find yourself in D.C., I highly recommend adding Carmine's Italian Restaurant to your list of must-visit spots!

A special thank you to Senator Tom Cotton, Senator John Boozman and Representative Steve Womack for making time to meet with us. Congressman Womack has always gone out of his way to support Arkansas communities, and we truly appreciate his dedication.

It was also good seeing our other representatives at the airport. It is very important to have a strong connection between our cities and towns and those who represent us in Washington, D.C. Just as we take the time to visit them, we need them to come see us and experience firsthand the challenges we face and successes we celebrate.

Looking ahead, I am excited for the leadership of the League under Mayor Doug Kinslow of Greenwood, who is slated to become our 2025-2026 president at the 91st Convention in June. Angela and I have truly enjoyed traveling with Doug and Pam, and we both wish them all the best as they take on this role.

As always, if you have questions, need guidance or just aren't sure where to start, don't hesitate to reach out to the League staff. They are an incredible resource, here to serve and support each of you.

I look forward to seeing you all in June at Convention 91. And remember: If it's important to you and your town, it's important to me. My phone is always on, and I am just a call away.

Arkansas is a wonderful state, full of amazing people and incredible communities. I am so proud to call Magnolia and Arkansas my home. Thank you for all you do to make our state stronger.

Happy spring, and see you soon!

Best Regards,

Parnell Vann

Mayor, Magnolia

President, Arkansas Municipal League

Phone: 870-904-5882

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Time: The most precious of commodities

As always, I strongly encourage you to read the column first and then the footnotes. Feel free not to, but don't get mad at me when you have trouble following things!

It's no secret that I love movies. I've mentioned it in many of my columns. The Local Controller routinely asks me why I rewatch movies and why in the world I would jump in halfway through a movie. My responses:

1. It's a great movie!
2. It's a great scene and a great movie!

To say those responses are less than well received would be like saying syrup isn't sticky. A nonstarter, so to speak. One of my current go-to movies is *Top Gun: Maverick*. There's a quote I find particularly compelling for reasons I hope will make sense as you continue to read. While addressing other pilots about an upcoming mission Maverick says: "This makes time your greatest adversary." For context, *Maverick* premiered in 2022. Had you asked me I would have said last year or maybe 18 months ago, certainly not three years ago. Speaking of time, on April 3 of this year, I turned 65 years of age. 6.5 decades. Thirty six of those years have been spent in the employ of the League. Seven of those years I've had the privilege of serving as your executive director. While I don't think of time as my adversary, per se, the hard truth is I've got more of it behind me than I do in front of me.

In what seems the blink of an eye I graduated from Jonesboro High School, Arkansas State University and the Bowen Law School and began a long career in municipal law. I'm the proud father of four and the very fortunate husband to Alison. As they say, I out-punted my coverage. I'm blessed, no doubt about it. Time also reminds us of events long gone and others that may have recently occurred. These can be life-changing moments, both wonderful and tragic, or a simple recollection.

Here's a story from my life that is real and raw, and hopefully beneficial in some meaningful way. How many of you remember what happened exactly five years ago? My family remembers April 18, 2020, down to the very last detail. Every minute, every hour replays like *Groundhog Day*. Over and over, it never leaves, proving that time isn't always your friend. While the events I'm about to recount took place five years ago they are very real and ever present. They are indelibly etched in time.

On April 18, 2020, my family suffered a trauma that shouldn't have happened. A young man, age 23, died from an opioid overdose. Fentanyl, to be specific. That young man, Wells Curry Bratton, was my son. Technically of course, he was my stepson, like Bliss is my stepdaughter, but make no bones about it: I love Wells with the same passion and fury as my two biological sons, Franz and Colin. I continue to grieve his loss. Just writing about him in the past tense is painful. Wells is my son. That's how I think of it. The three remaining siblings think of him as their brother. Alison does the same as his mother. And Dwight, Wells' dad, does the same. In a nutshell I'm referring to family. Our family, unconventional though it is, lost a son and brother. We've been robbed of our time with him. His death was out of order. After all, parents die first, right? That's the way it should be. Fate had other plans.

After Wells died, I did what husbands and fathers have done since time immemorial. I protected my family. I made sure they didn't have to worry about the details of a funeral, that they got the physical and mental health care they needed and that I was available to them 24/7/365. When there were tears, I was there with a tissue and a shoulder for support. When a death certificate had to be had, I took care of it. I made sure everyone had a safe haven. A safe haven of place, situation and activity. While impossible, I tried to be omnipresent. I was zealous in removing negative matters in their lives and equally zealous in providing the positive.

As I tried to be the best husband and father to those of my clan, I did what men have also done since time imme-

morial. I ignored my own needs. All my needs including mental and physical health. Please know I'm not bragging. In retrospect it was stupid, but hindsight is always 20/20. Regardless of my own idiocy time passed from that wretched day and I squelched my needs because my family needed me. Incidentally, I had a big job that needed my attention, and a pandemic occurred somewhere in the mix. Bottom line: I never dealt with my pain.

Let me pause here briefly. I do not write the following to be graphic but rather to educate those unfamiliar with what happened and hopefully to provide context for a broader message. Of note, I also write as part of my healing. Wells had suffered for over two years with an active addiction to opioids. Like many of his generation the opioid epidemic infected him with a ferocity that ultimately became too hard to fight off. He overdosed so many times that we, as his collective family, can't come up with an actual number. He survived several of those overdoses by mere seconds. He spent days on a ventilator at a local hospital after one such event. He stole from us. He lied to us. He went to rehab twice. He was thrown out of the second rehab for failing to be honest about his use of over-the-counter mind-altering substances. He spent nearly a week in a homeless shelter in downtown Birmingham, Alabama. He came home from the shelter and within a short period of time began using again. There's no way to say this except to be blunt. Those two years nearly destroyed our family. More than 24 months of pure hell. Time we cannot get back and a time when Wells destroyed himself because Big Pharma cared more about money than human lives. That is the hard truth and it's one of the most difficult things I've ever written.

On the evening of April 17, he stole money from Alison's purse, left the house briefly and came back high. I confronted Alison and demanded he leave the house and not come back unless he was sober. A mother's love knows no boundaries and we argued as we never had before or since. Late that evening we finally agreed that we would drug test him the following morning. I texted him to be in the kitchen at 9 a.m. He responded that he would. He didn't. Alison left about 8:45 a.m. to buy a drug test. Oddly, we had many in stock over those two years but for some reason didn't on that day. When she got home, we walked downstairs and found his bedroom door open. Across the hall, the bathroom door was closed, locked and the fan was running. I kicked in the door. He was laying on his back in his boxers, his face covered in vomit and his blood in a small pool at the back of his head. He clearly overdosed, passed out, fell to the floor, vomited and stopped breathing. I cleared the vomit from his mouth and throat and began CPR. Alison called 911 and I continued to push on his chest while the dispatcher counted one, two, three, four over and over and over again. The first responders arrived but it was all too late. Wells died a mere 25 or 30 feet from us. A staircase and few feet of hallway is all that separated the living from the dead. What followed was hours of confusion punctuated by the animalistic screams of pain from a mother realizing her child was dead. Those visions and sounds remain with me in as vivid a format as the day they happened.

This is about the point in my column where I'm encouraged to "get to the point." Here's the point: Time is a precious commodity. The Hayes-Bratton family would give anything for one more day with Wells. One more day to try once again to get him clean. We would love hearing his voice, his laughter and to get one of his massive bear hugs. Just a little more time. Unfortunately, that's not going to happen and contrary to popular belief, time does not heal all wounds. We are still a wounded family, but we do have coping skills. The passage of time from the death of a child allows for coping skills provided those suffering take the time, pardon the play on words, to seek those skills. As I noted earlier, I did not take that time, and the results have not been pretty.

Approximately, 18 months ago I began to have flashbacks, seeing the entire episode from beginning to end in a repetitive loop. I sought counseling, albeit only three sessions, but the flashbacks stopped and I proceeded with life, both personal and professional. What I did not do was learn the most basic of life's lessons: if you don't take care of yourself, you cannot take care of anyone or anything else. Proceeding full steam ahead with no real change in my life, it was only a matter of time before something went wrong. Whether it was the impending five-year anniversary of his death, the constant realization that he's gone, the office workload or worrying about the League's investments as well as my own, something triggered, and I broke. It started on my birthday. I had a picture or two of the events pop into my mind periodically for the next several days. No rhyme or reason, they just came and went as did my ability to concentrate. I didn't sleep well for several nights. As it happened, Alison and I were out of town at the Southern Municipal Conference. Our flights on the way to the conference were badly weather delayed and, given the weather in Arkansas on April 4-5, we decided to drive home rather than fly. On Saturday we did so and when we crossed the bridge and rolled into Lake Village the bottom fell out. We got home safely but it was very stressful. I slept a bit that night but by Sunday night, the flashbacks returned with a vengeance. I didn't sleep much for two nights and by Wednesday I was essentially nonfunctional. That's hard to admit, but it's true.

Time marches on whether we are on board or not. I'm now in the process of making some changes. As a result, I already feel better. I'm not where I need to be quite yet so I'm staying on course with counseling, self-reflective reading, exercising, relying on my faith, asking for help when I need it (that's really difficult for me!) and generally taking a hard

look at the life of 65-year-old Mark Hayes. I will not only survive this but I'll be stronger. What's the old saying? What doesn't kill you will make you stronger. Harsh, but there's truth in the statement.

Now, you may be asking what any of this has to do with you and your city. Excellent inquiry! Your city or town relies on you for some of the very basic things in life. Will a qualified police officer or firefighter appear when they are needed? Is the garbage getting picked up or are your curbs overrun with rodents? Is driving to work or the grocery store a game of dodge the pothole? Can kids go to a park that's safe and well maintained? Is the budget sufficient to repair a water main or pump? Are there so many blighted properties in town that nobody wants to reinvest? These questions know no end. Please do as I say and not as I did: You must take care of yourselves to ensure you are taking care of your residents. Remember, time is a limited thing.

Here's some good news for you and your community. There are very real tools to deal with the mental health and opioid issues. The League has created a new program designed to provide essential support for first responders. The Trauma Assistance Program (TAP) is a confidential and free program to help first responders deal with traumatic events. It provides in-person and telehealth counseling that is specifically tailored for those on the front lines. First responders see and deal with terrible circumstances daily. TAP ensures there is help when it's most needed. Additionally, the League's work with the Association of Arkansas Counties to create the Arkansas Opioid Recovery Partnership (ARORP) has been nothing short of terrific. ARORP's message is powerful and clear: Be bold, stand together and commit to abating opioid misuse and addiction in Arkansas. ARORP is near and dear to me and my family. Specific community needs are being addressed daily in every county of the state thanks to ARORP. Please go to this website today: www.arorp.org.

LC says it's time to wrap this up. I'll leave you with this. Please don't go it alone when the hard times hit. Time is not your friend if you don't seek help. If you or others in your world are struggling with trauma or addiction issues, there's good news and help to be had. Just reach out to someone who can help. Feel free to reach out to me if that's easier. My cell is 501-607-3910. Wells' story is giving us a new chapter in his life. Please don't let it go to waste. I know I won't.

Until next time, peace.¹



Mark R. Hayes
Executive Director
Arkansas Municipal League

¹ An entire column and only one footnote! LC is cheering loudly enough to be heard from Lake Village to Bella Vista and from Texarkana to Piggot and all parts in between. Not only for the lack of footnotes but because her baby boy continues to make a difference in our state.



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2025 Regional Certification Training

TACKLING NEGLECTED PROPERTIES & INTRODUCTION TO THE ARKANSAS CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAM



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Neglected properties are among the toughest challenges cities and towns face. As municipal officials, you need a clear understanding of legal processes, strong collaboration, and strategic problem-solving. Addressing these challenging properties revitalizes neighborhoods, protects public safety, and preserves property values. Join the Arkansas Municipal League for practical training with the tools and strategies to take action. Learn how to navigate legal complexities, manage resources, and build partnerships to tackle these challenges head-on. This training focuses on solving complex issues through:

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9:30-11:45 **\$20** TACKLING NEGLECTED PROPERTIES TRAINING

TWO ACE HUB CERTIFICATION CREDITS
-OR- TWO ACAA CLE CREDIT HOURS

12-1 p.m. **\$20** LEGISLATIVE UPDATES
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designed to enhance your role as a municipal leader, the ACE Program offers both on-demand and in-person training to cater to your needs. Access on-demand training anytime via the ACE Hub, our online learning management system. Whether you're looking to continue your learning journey or start anew, the ACE Hub is your resource for extensive and flexible education opportunities.

Begin with an ACE Hub tutorial to familiarize yourself with the platform and learn how to navigate the program effortlessly. Join us and take the next step in your civic education with the ACE Program.

Working Calendar

February completed in Berryville

March completed in Crossett

May 2 | Magnolia Arts, 116 S. Washington, Magnolia

Sept 12 | Hope Center, Russellville

Oct 10 | Grand Prairie Center, Stuttgart

November 14 | ASU Jonesboro

As we work to fill in this calendar please stay tuned for more training dates & location logistics.

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[WWW.ARMUNILEAGUE.ORG/RESOURCES-EDUCATION/](https://www.armunileague.org/resources-education/)

\$20 + \$20 = \$40 TOTAL FOR THE DAY

EMAIL VALERIE SHIVELY, DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT, EVENTS@ARML.ORG FOR QUESTIONS OR TO HOST A REGIONAL TRAINING.



Regional training focuses on neglected properties

BY BEN CLINE, LEAGUE STAFF

Municipal leaders met in Berryville on February 28 and in Crossett March 21 as part of a series of regional training sessions taking place throughout 2025 to address key municipal challenges and provide support to local leaders.

League attorneys Caleb Alexander-McKinzie and Linda Burgess conducted a specialized training session on abating neglected properties, one of the most complex challenges faced by cities today. Participants were provided with practical tools and strategies to address this issue, including navigating legal complexities, managing resources and fostering partnerships for effective action. Attendees of this session earned two additional ACE Hub credits, and city attorneys who participated were also eligible to receive continuing legal education (CLE) credit.

"It was a privilege to connect with municipal leaders face-to-face during this training," said

Alexander-McKinzie. "In one form or another, every municipality in Arkansas contends with vacant and dilapidated structures that threaten the health and well-being of citizens who live in our cities and towns. This training is designed to give municipal officials and employees the tools to abate these nuisance structures, while also recognizing and protecting the rights of property owners. This advanced, high-level training was specifically designed for code enforcement officers and city attorneys, providing practical tools they can use right away."

The meetings also included comprehensive training sessions on The ACE Program, the League's online learning management system, which offers both on-demand and in-person training opportunities and is tailored to meet the needs of officials at various levels. Attendees earned one ACE Hub credit for completing this session.

The next training is scheduled for May 2 in Magnolia. City officials and employees involved in code enforcement, planning and zoning, and related local government functions are encouraged to attend. To register, please visit armuni.org/Events. For more information, email events@arml.org.

Municipal Notes

Fayetteville's Shelton achieves CMC status

Fayetteville Senior Deputy Clerk Treasurer Richard Shelton III has earned the Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) designation from the International Institute Of Municipal Clerks (IIMC), the organization has announced. To earn the CMC designation, a municipal clerk must attend extensive education programs often totaling more than 120 educational hours.

The CMC designation also requires pertinent experience in a municipality. Since 1970, the CMC program has prepared applicants to meet the challenges of the complex role of the municipal clerk by providing them with quality education in partnership with institutions of higher learning as well as local and national associations. For more information on the IIMC, visit www.iimc.com.

IIMC celebrates 56th Clerks Week



The International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) has designated May 4-10 as the 56th Municipal Clerks Week. Initiated in 1969 and endorsed by its members throughout the United States, Canada and 15 other countries, the week is a time of celebration and reflection on the importance of the clerk's office.

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed a proclamation that officially declared the first full week of May as Municipal Clerks Week. In 1994 and 1996, President Bill Clinton also signed proclamations confirming Municipal Clerks Week.

The 56th Municipal Clerks Week will feature a series of activities aimed at increasing the public's awareness of municipal clerks and the vital services they provide for local government and their communities. To learn how you can participate and spread awareness, please visit www.iimc.com/156/Municipal-Clerks-Week for videos, posters and other promotional ideas.

Act 833 deadline for fire departments June 30

The 2023 Act 833 application period for Arkansas fire departments opened January 1 and will close June 30.



Act 833 of 1992, "Funding for Fire Departments," is administered by the Arkansas Fire Protection Services Board and requires all

Arkansas fire departments to become certified in order to be eligible for funding. Certification requirements include possession of a NFPA 1901-compliant fire suppression apparatus, a minimum of six active members with 16 hours of certification training, and personal protective equipment for all active members.

Act 833 application forms are available through the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management website at dps.arkansas.gov. For log-in credentials or more information, contact State Fire Coordinator Louis Eckelhoff at 501-683-6781 or louis.eckelhoff@adem.arkansas.gov.

MONTHLY SALES TAX RECEIPTS: *City & Town* magazine is now printed quarterly, but you'll never have to miss a month of your latest local sales tax receipts. The latest reports for cities, towns and counties from the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration and each month's turnback estimates are available on the League's website. Go to armuni.org/Publications and click on "Local Option Sales and Use Tax in Arkansas" to access the information you need, when you need it.

Trendsetter City Awards 2025 accepting applications

Presented by Arkansas Business Publishing Group and Crews & Associates in partnership with the Arkansas Municipal League, the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, Associated Industries of Arkansas, Crafton Tull and Emery Sapp & Sons, the Trendsetter City program is designed to honor cities and towns that are leaders in innovative programs and initiatives for improvement and growth. Award recipients are recognized at the League's annual Winter Conference.

Trendsetter City Award winners will be recognized in the following categories:

- Diversity/Equity/Inclusion
- Education and Workforce Development
- Infrastructure and Water
- Public Works/Environmental and Green Management
- Technology and Security
- Tourism Development/Creative Culture



The competition is divided into three population categories to allow cities to compete with others of comparable size: cities less than 5,000 population, 5,000-20,000 population and more than 20,000.

Each city can submit one award application in each award category. Entries must describe programs or projects brought to conclusion or showing significant results between July 2021 and July 2025. An official entry application must be submitted for each project. Entry forms must be received in the

Arkansas Business office by 5 p.m. August 29 or be postmarked on or before that date. Entry forms should be submitted to: Bonnie Jacoby, Arkansas Business Publishing Group, 114 Scott Street, Little Rock, AR 72201; or emailed to bonnie@abpg.com. Winners will be notified in September 2025. For more information and an application, please visit www.arkansasbusiness.com/trendsetter.

Great American Cleanup underway in Arkansas

The Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission (KAB) invites Arkansans from across the state to come together for the Great American Cleanup. The annual spring cleanup event runs from March 1 through May 31 and offers volunteers the opportunity to organize events to beautify their communities. Community groups and organizers can register their events at www.KeepArkansasBeautiful.com/get-involved/cleanups.



Once a community signs on to host a Great American Cleanup in Arkansas event, KAB helps organize and publicize the effort and provides volunteers with trash bags, gloves, safety vests and T-shirts while supplies last. Promotional materials such as customizable media releases, banners and volunteer stickers, as well as how-to videos and safety tips, are also available on the website.

KAB reported that the 2024 Great American Cleanup was a great success in Arkansas, with 17,163 volunteers in all 75 counties donating more than 102,978 volunteer hours to pick up 626 tons of litter from 758 miles of roadways, 109 miles of shoreline areas and more than 1,632 acres of parks and public areas. Volunteers also collected 4,672 used tires 648 tons of bulky waste and litter.

The Great American Cleanup in Arkansas is one of two seasonal events that KAB promotes. The Great Arkansas Cleanup takes place each fall from September through October.

Attorney general opinions

A quarterly discussion of recent opinions that affect municipal government in Arkansas.

BY BLAKE GARY

OP. 2024-087

Question 3: To what type of property or facilities does A.C.A. § 1-4-133 apply?

A.C.A. § 1-4-133 requires a durable poster—or a framed copy—containing the national motto, an accurate representation of the U.S. flag underneath the motto and an accurate representation of the Arkansas state flag to be displayed in each “public building or facility in this state that is maintained or operated by taxpayer funds,” so long as the copy or poster is donated to the public building or is purchased with funds made available through voluntary contributions to the local building governing entity.

The Attorney General opines that A.C.A. § 1-4-133 applies to all public buildings and facilities in the state that are maintained or operated by taxpayer funds. Therefore, the national motto requirements under this statute would apply to a municipal building if it is: (1) open to the public or (2) funded by taxpayers, regardless of whether that funding is at the state, county or city level. If a building is public and publicly funded, a relevant official or administrator who oversees and manages that building would be responsible for adhering to A.C.A. § 1-4-133, even if the building is not entirely funded by the state, county or city.

OP. 2024-088

Question 2: Can the City of Green Forest or the Green Forest Fire Department adopt additional industry-recognized requirements for commercial construction projects more stringent than the minimum requirement of the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code, Volume 2?

The Attorney General opines that the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code (AFPC) establishes

minimum standards necessary to provide “a reasonable level of life safety and property protection from fire, explosion, or other dangerous conditions” in new and existing buildings, structures and premises. However, municipalities may adopt local fire prevention codes with provisions more stringent than those contained in the AFPC. Note that even Volume 1, § 104.3.2.(b) of the AFPC expressly authorizes that the State Fire Marshal’s Office shall not prevent any city from enacting more stringent regulations. The Attorney General further opines that a municipality can pass an ordinance adopting additional industry-recognized requirements for commercial construction projects within its jurisdiction that are more stringent than the minimum requirements of the AFPC.

Question 4: Can the City of Green Forest or the Green Forest Fire Department require the developer to pay a permit fee based, in part, on the anticipated cost to the building inspector of conducting inspections, including the cost of employing independent third-party experts to conduct the inspections on its behalf?

The Attorney General opines that the General Assembly has given municipal corporations general home rule over municipal affairs and the specific power to “regulate the erection, construction, reconstruction, alteration, and repair of buildings” per A.C.A. § 14-56-201. Further, per A.C.A. § 14-56-202, cities of the first class have the power to issue or refuse to issue building permits for buildings or structures within city limits. The Attorney General’s office has opined on a few occasions that requiring a building permit and charging a fee to offset the costs involved would appear to be “incidental” if not necessarily “indispensable” to express this type of regulatory power.

OP. 2024-093

Question: Can a city propose, pass, and enact an ordinance [like Fayetteville's Ordinance 6800 capping the fees landlords may charge prospective tenants for rental applications and background checks] that limits, restricts, or hinders what private business may charge for its services, goods, or contracts?

The Attorney General analyzes two statutes related to this specific ordinance. The first is A.C.A. § 14-54-1409, which prohibits local governments from enacting or enforcing rent control ordinances, but the Attorney General provides that Ordinance 6800 likely does not violate this statute because it caps the fees associated with an application to rent, rather than the amount of rent charged itself. The second

statute analyzed is A.C.A. § 14-43-608, which expressly prohibits municipalities from regulating “prices for goods, rentals, or services sold or performed within the municipality by individuals or firms.” The Attorney General believes Ordinance 6800 may violate this statute due to the state statute’s broad wording that includes “services.” The Attorney General reasons that this statute prevents a city from passing an ordinance to cap the fees a private entity charges to process a rental application or conduct a background check due to it being a “service” provided.

NOTE: Act 459 of 2025, which was signed into law April 1, amends the Arkansas Code to specifically prohibit municipalities from regulating the charges associated with background checks and application fees.

TO READ FULL ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS ONLINE, VISIT THE “OPINIONS” PAGE AT WWW.ARKANSASAG.GOV OR EMAIL OAG@ARKANSAS.GOV.

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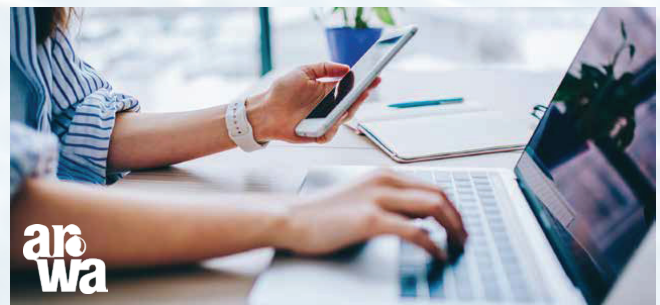
Please reach out to one of the contacts below to learn more.

Dennis Sternberg, CEO
Arkansas Rural Water Association
arwads@arkansas.net • 501.676.2255

Gary Larimore, President & CEO
Rural Water Financing Agency
g.larimore@krwa.org • 270.535.5921

Nick Roederer, Managing Director
Raymond James
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MUNICIPAL HEALTH

For years, Arkansas cities and towns have relied on the "Municipal Health Benefit Program" to provide affordable, high-quality health care to their employees. Now, with a fresh new look and a new name, Municipal Health, we're embracing growth and an even stronger commitment to the people we serve.

Key Benefits

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New partners, new benefits

In addition to the new look, here are a few of the new partnerships our members can utilize. Visit www.armunileague.org to learn more about Municipal Health.

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M: WELLNESS

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Prepping for Convention 91

BE IT RESOLVED...

The League is accepting resolutions for consideration at Convention 91. Resolutions may be drafted by an official of any member city or town and can relate to any matter of municipal concern. See your *Policies and Goals 2024-2025* for resolutions adopted at the 90th Convention.

Resolutions can be emailed to Sheila Boyd at sboyd@arml.org, or mailed to:

Convention 91 Resolutions
Arkansas Municipal League
P.O. Box 38
North Little Rock, AR 72115-0038

RESOLUTIONS DEADLINE: FRIDAY, MAY 9.

YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION

Were you elected and began serving your city or town in 2000? The League would like to know. The League will give special recognition to elected city and town officials who are in their 25th year of municipal service in 2025 at Convention 91, June 18-20.

To submit names, please contact Sheila Boyd at 501-537-3785 or sboyd@arml.org.

YEARS OF SERVICE DEADLINE: FRIDAY, MAY 9.



Four Levels of Certification

Participants can progress through 4 certification levels:

Level 1: CIVILPEDIA 25 Credits

Level 2: ACE CERTIFIED 75 Credits (additional 50 credits)

Level 3: ACE ADVANCED 150 Credits (additional 75 credits)

Level 4: ACE MASTER 250 Credits (additional 100 credits)

Each course completed earns one credit, providing a clear pathway for participants to achieve subsequent levels of certification.

Register for ACE

To Register for the ACE Program, learners can scan this QR code. Questions? Contact Tricia Zello at tzello@arml.org.



ACE Program

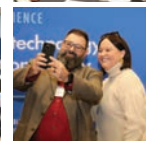
The Arkansas Civic Education (ACE) Program is the cornerstone of AML's training and certification initiative. Beginning with the foundational Civilpedia module and extending through a variety of flexible on-demand and live learning opportunities, the program offers comprehensive training in topics that matter most to local leadership.

Participants can customize their learning journey, earn certifications, and build expertise to better serve their communities while fostering growth, innovation, and excellence in municipal governance.

ACE Certification

Civilpedia serves as the "general education" of the ACE Program, providing a solid foundation in municipal governance.

Afterward, participants can deepen their knowledge through on-demand and live training opportunities, exploring diverse topics and earning credits toward advanced certification levels. Each on-demand class is available for \$20 and live training is included in the registration fee for conferences and conventions.



"With the ACE SafeTrack Certification, we're bringing safety training directly to those who need it most. This program not only equips our frontline workers with critical safety knowledge but also strengthens our communities by creating safer workplaces."

**KERRIE LAUCK,
EDUCATION DIRECTOR**

Safety Training Anywhere, Anytime.

Workplace Hazards

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Learn safe and efficient practices for handling heavy machinery in municipal work.

Harassment Training

Gain practical insights into fostering a respectful and harassment-free workplace.

Policy

Stay informed on workplace policies and compliance essentials for smoother operations.

ACE SafeTrack

The ACE SafeTrack Certification is part of the broader Arkansas Civic Education (ACE) Program, a cornerstone of AML's training and certification initiatives. Launched just after the one-year anniversary of the ACE Program, ACE SafeTrack ensures that essential safety training is always accessible, empowering municipal employees to learn anytime, anywhere.

- ✓ Training is available exclusively through the ACE Hub at any time.
- ✓ The Safetrack program currently offers 75 courses, with plans to expand the catalog further.

Four Levels of Certification

Participants can progress through four certification levels:

LEVEL 1: 25 CREDITS

LEVEL 2: 75 CREDITS (ADDITIONAL 50 CREDITS)

LEVEL 3: 150 CREDITS (ADDITIONAL 75 CREDITS)

LEVEL 4: 250 CREDITS (ADDITIONAL 100 CREDITS)

Each course completed earns one credit, providing a clear pathway for participants to achieve safety excellence.

Sponsored by AML

The ACE SafeTrack Certification program, proudly sponsored by the Arkansas Municipal League, is offered completely free of charge.

Course Variety

The ACE SafeTrack Certification program offers a comprehensive range of safety training courses tailored to meet the needs of municipal employees. From mastering the safe operation of heavy machinery to recognizing and addressing workplace hazards, these courses provide essential skills to foster a secure and efficient work environment.



Register for SafeTrack

To Register for the SafeTrack Certification, learners can scan this QR code.

Questions? Contact Tricia Zello at tzello@arml.org.



ACCRTA scholarships available

The executive board of the Arkansas City Clerks, Recorders and Treasurers Association (ACCRTA) awards scholarships for tuition to attend the Municipal Clerks' Training Institute, the Academy for Advanced Education and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks' annual conference, all of which enable Arkansas clerks to further their educational training.

A scholarship honoring the memory of Bill S. Bonner will be awarded to a first-year attendee in the certification program at the Municipal Clerks' Institute in September 2025. This scholarship covers the registration fee. Additional scholarships include: four \$400 scholarships to attend the Municipal Clerks' Institute in North Little Rock and one \$400 scholarship for the Academy for Advanced Education in Fayetteville.

These scholarships are in addition to the 11 regional scholarships awarded by the IIMC.

Completed scholarship application should be returned to the ACCRTA Scholarship Committee chair:

Complete the nomination below and send to:

Penny Lamb
Recorder/Treasurer
City of Murfreesboro
8054 N. Washington Ave.
Murfreesboro, AR 71958

Questions: murfreesboroclerk@yahoo.com
or 870.285.3732

2025 APPLICATION FOR SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE

I, _____ am a member of the Arkansas City Clerks, Recorders and Treasurers Association and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, and do hereby apply for assistance from ACCRTA. (Applicant must be a City Clerk, Deputy City Clerk, Recorder, Treasurer or related title at the time of application.)

Name _____ Title _____

Street Address or P.O. Box _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____ Date assumed present position _____

Other related experience: Title _____ Municipality _____ Years _____

Education: H.S. _____ Graduate College (years) _____ Degree _____

Check one: This application is for a ____ First ____ Second ____ Third year Institute

What are the approximate costs of the institute you plan to attend? _____

Travel/Transportation _____ Registration Fee/Tuition _____

Lodging and Meal _____ Total Amount _____

How much does your municipality budget your department yearly for education? _____

What is your reason(s) for applying for this scholarship _____

I understand that if a scholarship is awarded to me, it must be used between Jan. 1, 2025, and Dec. 31, 2025, and that I must attend all sessions.

I do hereby attest that the information submitted with this application is true and correct to my best knowledge.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

CHECK THE SCHOLARSHIP FOR WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Municipal Clerks' Institute, North Little Rock, AR	September 14-18, 2025	Deadline: May 31, 2025
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academy for Advanced Education	TBA	TBA

Disclaimer: ACCRTA will not be responsible for applications that do not reach the chairman by the deadline. Please feel free to call after a few days to be sure your application was received.

ACCRTA seeks nominations for Clerk of the Year

The Municipal Clerk of the Year Award recognizes a member of the Arkansas City Clerks, Records and Treasurers Association (ACCRTA) who has made significant contributions to the profession and to the improvement of municipal government in Arkansas and the clerk's own community.

Qualities are length of service, good relationship with other clerks, interest in education, attendance at regional/national conferences, community volunteerism, and advancing and supporting the municipal clerks association.

Any municipal official or ACCRTA member may nominate a candidate for Municipal Clerk of the Year for 2025. The finalist will be honored at the 91st Annual Convention of the Arkansas Municipal League, June 18-20, in Little Rock.

Requirements for nominees:

- Has been an active ACCRTA member for at least five years.
- Holds a city clerk/recorder/treasurer or deputy position.
- Is a Certified Municipal Clerk or Certified Arkansas Municipal Clerk.
- Provides service to other municipal clerks in the state as the opportunity exists.
- Exhibits leadership.

Municipal Clerk of the Year 2025

Please Submit the Following Information

Nominee's full name and title: _____

Address, city, zip: _____ Business phone: _____

Name of the city the municipal clerk represents: _____

Years served as Clerk, Recorder, Treasurer or Deputy Clerk and year appointed or elected: _____

Arkansas City Clerks, Records, Treasurers Association (ACCRTA) member years served _____ and date of membership: _____

ACCRTA offices held: _____

ACCRTA meetings attended: _____

ACCRTA, IIMC or Arkansas Municipal League committee service, committees served on and number of years served: _____

International Institute Municipal Clerk (IIMC) participates at annual and regional meetings (please list all meetings attended): _____

IIMC workshops (District meetings) attended: _____

Municipal Clerks Institute attendance (number of years and classes attended): _____

Certification received: IIMC Certified Municipal Clerk, IIMC Master Municipal Clerk or Certified Arkansas Municipal Clerk and date of certifications: _____ Arkansas Municipal League conferences attended: _____

Education program participation (instructor, panel member, moderator): _____

Community involvement: _____

Leadership activities: _____

Other activities: _____

Name of individual submitting nomination: _____

Address: _____ Phone number: _____

Signature

Date

Deadline to apply: May 2

To submit the nomination form or for more information, please contact:

Stacey Bennett
166 Highway 1 B
Cherry Valley, AR 72324
Stacey.bennett@cherryvalleyar.org
870.588.3323

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A woman is riding a white Capital Bikeshare bicycle on a city street. In the background, the United States Capitol building is visible under a clear blue sky. To the right, there are traffic lights and signs, including a 'No U-turn' sign and a 'TURNING BICYCLE USE X-WALKS' sign. The street has white lane markings and a blue-painted bike lane.

Features

CITY & TOWN | SPRING 2025



PHOTOS: ANDREW MORGAN

Cities seek strong federal partnerships at NLC Congressional City Conference

BY ANDREW MORGAN, LEAGUE STAFF

Local government officials from cities, towns and villages across the United States convened March 10-12 in Washington, D.C., for the 60th National League of Cities Congressional City Conference. More than 3,000 local leaders were in attendance to hear from Vice President J.D. Vance and members of the Trump administration, congressional leaders, NLC's leadership and their fellow municipal officials, who discussed issues essential to cities, including the housing crisis and the effects of the myriad executive orders and funding cuts across the federal government in this administration's first few months in power. The annual conference also gave local officials the opportunity to meet with their congressional delegations to discuss the issues facing their constituents at home.

When it comes to cities reporting their receipts and obligations of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, "You guys have homework to do," said Arkansas Municipal League Senior Grants Counsel Caran Curry, who participated in a federal funding panel discussion during the Congressional City Conference. If the funding received is more than the obligations reported, the Trump administration has expressed its intent to claw back that balance, she said. Treasury has issued a "naughty list," Curry said, sent to the executive directors of all state municipal leagues, of cities and towns that may be out of compliance. "Treasury told me today, upstairs at this very conference, that if you haven't done a report, then they're going to come after you on this one. So if you get a call or notice from your municipal league about this, please pay attention."





“We know that good government starts at the local level,” said U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance, who addressed the conference on the afternoon of Monday, March 10. He focused his remarks on the nation’s housing crisis. “I think it’s the issue where [the administration’s] interests in some ways are most aligned with the people in this room.” To bring housing prices down and increase the supply, he cited a need to slash “needless regulations,” and he suggested local governments revisit their zoning laws to expedite new construction. He placed part of the blame for the crisis on rising inflation over the previous four years. Vance then claimed that the housing crisis is in large part driven by increased demand by illegal immigrants. “If you allow 20 million people to compete with American citizens for the cost of homes, you’re going to have a large and frankly completely preventable fight in the demand for housing. And that is what we of course have seen, because while we’ve made it a little bit harder to build homes in the country over the past four years, we’ve also unfortunately made it way too easy for people to compete against American citizens for the precious homes that are in our country to begin with.” He said Canada and Europe are

also experiencing housing shortages because of a “massive increase in immigration.” These sentiments rankled many in the audience, and several shouted out. Vance smiled at the outburst. “I see one of our nice representatives out here wants to actually I guess continue to flood the country with illegal immigrants making your communities and cities unaffordable,” he fired back and received a mix of claps, jeers and boos.

“Eighty-five percent of NLC members come from communities of 50,000 or less in population. These communities contribute so much to our economy, to our culture, to our future at the end of the day. That can’t be overlooked.”
—Athens, Ohio, Mayor and NLC President Steve Patterson.



Athens, Ohio, which is nestled in the Appalachian region of the state, has “long been not only underestimated, but oftentimes forgotten about,” said Mayor Steve Patterson, this year’s NLC president. Because of that, they’ve become resilient, he said. “I know why you find yourselves in similar positions, I do, which is why my presidential platform this year is ‘Ready and Resilient: Building Cities, Towns and Villages for the Future.’ That means uplifting small and underserved communities, and 85 percent of NLC members come from communities of 50,000 or less in population. These communities contribute so much to our economy, to our culture, to our future at the end of the day. That can’t be overlooked.” The NLC’s Local Infrastructure Hub has been instrumental in connecting cities and

towns with resources and direct funding. “It’s worked,” Patterson said. “It’s worked to the tune of \$534 million that is coming to communities.” The NLC is also there to help communities manage that funding, stay in compliance with federal regulations and navigate the impact of quickly evolving federal actions of the first several months of the Trump administration. To access the Local Infrastructure Hub, visit www.localinfrastructure.org.

It's important that city officials come to Washington, D.C., to advocate for their constituents back home, said NLC CEO and Executive Director Clarence Anthony, who is a former mayor of South Bay, Florida. The NLC has worked to build a strong partnership with the federal government, fought against unfunded mandates and helped secure direct funding to local governments, he said. "Through the pandemic, we stood up as municipal leaders. When no one else was open, you were open every day during the pandemic. And guess what? We're not going to stop doing that, now or never, because that's what the NLC does." That doesn't change with the new administration, Anthony said, and he outlined NLC's advocacy priorities, including addressing the housing crisis, protecting the bipartisan infrastructure law that spurred historic levels of investment at the local level, streamlining complex regulations and programs, and fighting for community resilience and disaster preparation and response efforts. The local leaders at the conference also have their own issues to address, he said. Go to Capitol Hill and "lift up your voice," Anthony encouraged. "I want you to go up there and continue to fight for those issues along with the priorities of the National League of Cities."



From left, Cleveland, Ohio, Council President Blaine Griffin moderated a panel discussion on tax-free municipal bonds with Hattiesburg, Mississippi, Mayor Toby Barker, Government Finance Officers Association Federal Liaison Emily Brock, and Oklahoma City CFO Brent Bryant. For more NLC photos, visit the League's Flickr page.

"How many of you all use tax-free municipal bonds?" Savannah, Georgia, Mayor and NLC Second Vice President Van Johnson asked the audience during the conference's closing general session on March 11. Nearly every city official in attendance raised their hand. "All of us, right? But as Congress debates its priorities for the next tax bill, the future of our beloved and heavily used tax-exempt municipal bonds remains unclear." Tax-exempt municipal bonds are on "the chopping block" this year, moderator and Cleveland, Ohio, Council President Blaine Griffin said. And "Unlike for other tax changes being discussed this year, cities don't have die-hard municipal bond defenders in Congress," he said. "We need a handful of Republicans, just a handful of Republicans, to come forward and say they will not vote for a tax bill that includes the elimination of the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds." Hattiesburg is a city of about 50,000 in southern Mississippi, and having access to tax-exempt bonds has been essential for projects like the public safety complex, municipal court building, new police and fire stations, the city's mayor Toby Barker said. "Like many of you, we have a very squeezed general fund budget every year," he said. "If we didn't have tax-exempt municipal bonds, a lot of the projects that we need wouldn't happen."



“Cooperative federalism” is one of the pillars of the Environmental Protection Agency under the new administration, said newly appointed administrator Lee Zeldin, who addressed the conference on March 10. “We believe that you know your cities better than we do here in Washington,” he said. “That partnership between the federal government through states and local municipalities is key in order for us to make the right decision. We can’t keep pursuing one-size-fits-all solutions to everything.” Mitigating PFAS—per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, sometimes referred to as “forever plastics”—in public water systems is a priority for the EPA, Zeldin said, and the agency aims to work with local governments on solutions that also prevent consumers from having to pay “to clean up PFAS contamination in their own communities. Being able to hear from you, to be responsive and to act quickly is a top priority.”

From left, Savannah, Georgia, Mayor and NLC Second Vice President Van Johnson moderated a discussion on disaster response and resilience with Maryland Governor Wes Moore and West Hollywood, California, Mayor Chelsea Byers.



From extreme weather events like hurricanes, tornadoes and floods—as well as firestorms like the ones that swept across southern California earlier this year—to disasters caused by human error like the 2024 collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, local governments are at the forefront of disaster preparation and recovery, and they need a strong federal partner. It’s essential to set politics aside when disasters occur, said Moore, who thanked his state’s congressional delegation for their support when a cargo ship struck the Key Bridge, resulting in the deaths of six construction workers. He cited some important advice he received from a fellow state governor. “You may want to put a political lens on certain things, and you can do that. Don’t do it with emergency management. Do not do it with disaster relief, because you will realize that very early in your tenure, you’re going to have an emergency to deal with, and you’d better make sure you have people in there who know what to do, and people in there who know how to respond and help you to respond well. I think about that with the Key Bridge.”

Arkansas Senators John Boozman, right, and Tom Cotton, left, visited with Arkansas' municipal delegation in the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center on March 12, the final day of the NLC Congressional City Conference, where they shared their thoughts on a few key issues. As Congress works on a blueprint for major tax legislation that extends existing tax cuts and potentially adds more, it is a "massive concern" for cities and towns that the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds could be targeted in order to fund those cuts, League Executive Director Mark Hayes said, and he urged the senators to support keeping it in place. "I don't think that's at real risk," Cotton said. "[Sen. Boozman] and I are going to keep our eye on it." Boozman expressed appreciation for both the



local government officials and for the League. "I want to thank you all. You've got big jobs and a lot of responsibility and limited resources. I also understand how important your organization is." With so much regular turnover in local offices, education is essential for continuity, he said. He also acknowledged how important it is that cities and towns collaborate to advocate for the issues that affect them. "The fact that you all band together and do such a great job of presenting a united front with some of the things that are important to you and in a very bi-partisan way I think is really important."

"If I could rewrite the Constitution, in the qualifications to become a member of the House or the Senate you would have to have spent at least a term as a mayor, because mayors know how to get stuff done."—Rep. Steve Womack

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a continuing resolution (CR) March 11 to fund the federal government through September, Rep. Steve Womack reported to Arkansas city officials during the visit. That's good news and bad news, he said. While passage of the CR avoids a government shutdown, it "could be characterized as a manifestation of an ineffective Congress," he said, "and I think I can defend that claim with anybody, because one of our most fundamental duties up here is to fund the dadgum government. And if you are doing a CR it means that you have failed to pass annual appropriations. And once you do it once, it becomes easier to do it over and over again." Operating a government like this would not be acceptable at the local level, said Womack, who is a former mayor of Rogers. "Best job I ever had was being a mayor.



Best job. As a matter of fact, if I could rewrite the Constitution, in the qualifications to become a member of the House or the Senate you would have to have spent at least a term as a mayor, because mayors know how to get stuff done."

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The March 14 tornado damaged or fully destroyed about 52 residences and more than 20 businesses in the city with a population of just under 2,000. "Those are big numbers for Cave City," said Mayor Jonas Anderson. See more scenes from Cave City on the League's Flickr page.



Recovery mode: Cave City cleans up after historic tornado

BY ANDREW MORGAN, LEAGUE STAFF

Arkansas has been hit with several rounds of destructive and deadly storms this spring, with almost no corner of the state left unscathed. Tornadoes and widespread flooding have left cities and towns reeling, with long roads to recovery ahead. In March *City & Town* visited one of the many communities that took a direct hit. On the night of Friday, March 14, an EF-3 tornado with 165-mile-per-hour winds cut a northeasterly path from north Arkansas into southeastern Missouri. According to KARK's Arkansas Storm Team, it was the third longest tracked tornado on record since 1950. It spent 94 miles on the ground in Arkansas before dissipating in Missouri. The storm killed three people in rural Independence County.

While no residents were killed in the Sharp County city of Cave City, the tornado bisected the community on its way northeast, destroying homes and businesses in its path.

When the sirens blared just before the tornado struck at 10:38 p.m., Cave City Mayor Jonas Anderson, his wife and children quickly helped their elderly neighbor from his house and into his storm shelter. Their homes only received minor damage, but by 11:15 p.m. the mayor was able to get a first look amid the darkness of the homes and business that weren't. It was like a disaster scene from a movie, he said. "There were so many power lines, pieces of transformers and power poles. And natural gas was obviously blowing out of the ground. The smell was so overpowering." The city's water lines along the path of

destruction were also affected. "Our water guys had to get up here quick because people's houses had been ripped away, so the water was just shooting out of the ground."

Homes and businesses bore the brunt of the storm. Though several residents sustained injuries, no one was killed in the city, Anderson said. "It did not hit our nursing home. It did not hit our school. There's a trailer park right over here—if it had taken a direct hit, there's no telling what would have happened. I'm reckoning with it now. Like, as bad as it was, we could have lost the whole place."

One of the two Cave City Fire Department buildings was severely damaged. A local business' portable building was thrown through the back of the department's shop, and it may be a total loss, Anderson said. "Luckily that was not the building that most of our fire trucks were in, so we didn't lose a single Fire Department truck, and you know how expensive those are. We did lose two police vehicles, and the officers were inside the vehicles when they were hit." One officer was injured but is recovering, he said.

The city was without power for about three days. Darrell Kirby, former mayor of Bay who now works for the Rural Water Association, delivered a generator that got the water treatment plant running within hours of the storm, Anderson said. "We would've probably gotten in a dicey situation there without the treatment plant running." Three wells provide the city's water, and only one had an old diesel generator. Over the past few years, the city has prioritized installing new generators at each well. "They'll



Before his annual state of the city address on March 27, Batesville Mayor Rick Elumbaugh invited Anderson to join city employees for a fish fry and to say a few words. The assistance in the storm's aftermath has been "absolutely overwhelming," he said. "I don't know what Rick's going to say about the state of the city of Batesville, but from my perspective the state of the city is unbelievable."

run independently for days. When this hit, not one of our wells missed a beat."

As Cave City began to deal with the aftermath, it immediately became clear they were not alone. Fourteen different law enforcement and public safety agencies were soon on the scene. Mountain Home Mayor Hillrey Adams brought crews down to help cleanup efforts. Numerous other crews from neighboring cities and towns did the same, including Batesville. "Rick Elumbaugh dispatched pretty much I'd say the entire city of Batesville to Cave City until further notice," Anderson said. "I think one day I actually had to tell their crews go back to Batesville, take care of your city, make sure you're not getting behind and then obviously you're welcome to come back." Mayors from further away, including Doug Kinslow from Greenwood and Jennifer Hobbs from Wynne, who experienced a devastating 2023 tornado in her city, showed up to offer help and moral support as well, Anderson said. "It's just been like that the whole time—mayors and people from all over the state have been calling and coming by, bringing equipment in, just on their own."

While the city received generous outside help in the storm's aftermath, Anderson stressed the critical and selfless response of Cave City's employees and the volunteers from within the community. "I've always known that we have good people here that basically just show up and do the work—they know what needs to be done and they just do it. But this has shown that we've got that in spades."

Anderson also praised the quick response from Governor Sanders and her administration. "I've got to give a lot of credit to the state. Within like two hours or less they had 40 state troopers on the ground here. The National Guard followed pretty quickly after that." The Arkansas Department of Emergency Management has also been "unbelievable," he said. Mayor Anderson also had personal, direct access to the governor. "One night at 11 p.m. I was at my house trying to scarf down a bite, and I get a text on my phone and it's the governor. She's up at 11 p.m. texting me about an update on AT&T and asking me how things are going. That's pretty accessible, if you ask me, for a governor."

WORKING AGENDA AT TIME OF PRINT

ARKANSAS
MUNICIPAL
LEAGUE

CONVENTION NINETY ONE

STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER
JUNE 18–20, 2025



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This schedule does not include group meetings like State Aid Street Committee or ACCRTA. Times, descriptions and session content are a work in progress and may change before the event. Stay tuned for more information by checking register.arml.org.

Main agenda pages 37-39, working breakouts listed on pages 43 & 45.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18

12:30-5 p.m. Check-in & Exhibition Hall Open

1-2:30 p.m. Joint City, County, and Local Affairs Committee, Governor's Hall IV

Make plans to take advantage of this opportunity to engage with members of the Arkansas General Assembly.

2:30-3:30 p.m. Resolutions Committee, Fulton Room

Each municipality has a designated representative who votes on legislative matters to be included in the League's Policies & Goals for the coming year.

3:45-5 p.m. Welcome & Presentation of Colors; **General Session 1:** Keynote by Becky McCray, The Idea Friendly Method: Open Up to New Ideas, Governor's Hall IV

Convention 91 will begin with the Presentation of Colors and the singing of the National Anthem, followed by a keynote on turning ideas into action with less overhead, less friction, and more meaningful participation from more people. McCray will help say goodbye to endless meetings, negativity, and conflict, and say hello to actionable steps to bring ideas to life with the research-baked Idea Friendly method, positioning small towns to thrive.

6-8 p.m. Opening Night Dinner, Wally Allen Ballroom

Enjoy live music, meaningful networking, and an interactive action station-style dinner featuring live cooking by multiple chefs. Each station will accommodate a variety of dietary needs. Guests can customize their meals with fresh ingredients and toppings, all while enjoying an atmosphere of connection and celebration.

*Times, descriptions and session content are a work in progress and may change before the event.
Main agenda pages 37-39, working breakouts listed on pages 43 & 45.*

WORKING AGENDA AT TIME OF PRINT

ARKANSAS
MUNICIPAL
LEAGUE

CONVENTION NINETY ONE

STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER
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THURSDAY, JUNE 19

7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Check-in & Exhibition Hall Open

7:30-8:45 a.m. Breakfast, Exhibition Hall

8:15-8:45 a.m. Voluntary Prayer Session led by Reverend Gary Perry, Fulton Room
Municipal officials and personnel are invited to gather and pray for national, state and local leaders.

8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Arkansas City Attorneys Association CLE, Drew Room

9 a.m.-10:45 a.m. General Session 2: Resilient in Response, Governor's Hall IV

From infrastructure to public safety, cities were built to deliver the services communities rely on, but the past legislative session tested the foundation of municipal government. AML General Counsel and Legislative Director John Wilkerson won't just unpack the bills that passed (and the ones that didn't); together we'll examine the deeper shifts that are making it harder for cities to serve their communities and opportunities for growth on the horizon.

11 a.m.-3:50 p.m. 13 Certification Credit Options Available. For more details look on on pages 45 & 49. Find speakers, times and more details online at register.arml.org.

1. **The Idea Friendly Method: Open Up to New Ideas**
2. **Advancing Economic Mobility with National League of Cities**
3. **Municipal Bonds 101**
4. **Idea to Reality: How to Sell Improvements to Your Citizens**
5. **Building Community Buzz: Secrets to Successful Fairs and Festivals**
6. **Introduction to ACE SafeTrack Certification**
7. **Neglected Properties Training**
8. **"FOIA for 2,000, Alex"**

*Times, descriptions and session content are a work in progress and may change before the event.
Main agenda pages 37-39, working breakouts listed on pages 43 & 45.*

WORKING AGENDA AT TIME OF PRINT

9. Elevating Wellness: Municipal Health's Wellness Platform & GLP-1 Coverage
10. Navigating Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction
11. Tackling Changes to Housing and Development Law
12. Engaging the Media for Your City
13. Guarding the Gateway: Mobile Device Security in a Cyber World

12-1:30 p.m. Summer Cookout Lunch, Exhibition Hall

4-5 p.m. General Session 3: Rooted in Legacy: A Juneteenth Conversation on Leadership & Resilience, Governor's Hall IV

Across Arkansas, from backyard cookouts to city wide festivals, Juneteenth is more than a National Holiday, it represents a legacy of resilience, freedom, and progress especially in Black communities. AML Executive Director Mark Hayes, Fort Smith Mayor George McGill, and Pine Bluff Mayor Vivian Flowers will lead a discussion about the history and significance of Juneteenth celebrations, and how education and open dialogue continues to shape the work of municipal leaders and community builders today.

FRIDAY, JUNE 20

7:30- 8:45 a.m. Breakfast in Exhibition Hall

9-10:30 a.m. General Session 4: Annual Business Meetings & State of the League: Rooted in Structure, Governors Hall IV

10:45-11:45 a.m. General Session 5: Drugs, Dogs, & Drainage, Governors Hall IV

Join Elaine Mayor Hicks-Gilbert, Keo Mayor Stephanie White, and Eudora Mayor Tomeka Butler for a discussion about the three dreaded Ds: Drugs, Dogs & Drainage. This will be a candid, heartwarming and inspiring conversation with a few mayors who do it all and the lessons they have come across along the way.

12- 1:15 p.m. New Officers' Luncheon & Awards Ceremony, Marriott Ballrooms

Before heading home, we'll welcome the incoming president and 2025–2026 slate of officers with a fried chicken buffet lunch and recognize Certified Municipal Officials and present awards from the Arkansas City Clerks, Records, and Treasurers Association, along with the John Woodruff City Above Self Award, the Adrian White Municipal Leadership Awards, the Marvin Vinson Commitment to Excellence Awards, and the Jack Rhodes Sr. Distinguished Service Award.

1:30 p.m. Attendees on the road home.

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SPONSOR & EXHIBITOR INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE

*Times, descriptions and session content are a work in progress and may change before the event.
Main agenda pages 37-39, working breakouts listed on pages 43 & 45.*



PHOTO: COURTESY THOMAS BRYANT

Cities like Batesville become great by what we expect and by what we inspect.

A trip down south

BY JIM VON TUNGELN

Winter showed signs of moderating, so I decided to make a trip down to visit the self-proclaimed “Best mayor in Arkansas.” Mayor Furlow Thompson took my phone call and invited me to head toward the city of Potluck. He sounded in good spirits.

When I arrived at his office, though, the first thing I saw was his assistant Rosie Aberdeen giving me the warning sign indicating that the mayor was in a bad mood. Nevertheless, she motioned me go into his office.

“What do you want?” he asked from behind a framed photo on his desk of a young Furlow in full combat gear. He gave me what his staff refers to as “the look.”

“Just to visit,” I said. “What’s the problem?”

“My council,” he said. “What a bunch of ...”

“Mayor!” Miss Rosie yelled from the next room. After many long years, she knew his speech patterns in advance.

“Fenderheads,” he said by way of compromise—a Navy term and not a complimentary one. “Shut that door.”

I complied. “What did your council do?” I asked.

“Passed a stupid regulation that the planning commission sent up that I don’t have the people or money

to enforce.”

“Oh,” I said. “Did you ask them to restudy it?”

“No, I used the Andrew Jackson approach.”

“The Andrew Jackson approach?”

“Like when he didn’t like a court decision and said of Chief Justice John Marshall, ‘He has made his decision; now let him enforce it.’ Developers love to use that one on us.”

I didn’t dare respond. He continued. “Know what I call passing regulations that the people don’t need and the city can’t enforce? Ones that just make people mad?”

“No sir, what?”

“Suicide by regulation. And I’ve told you not to call me sir.”

“Right. So I assume you have trouble with code enforcement?”

He leaned back. “Not since I fired our regulatory bully I called ‘Swaggerin’ Sam.’ What an embarrassment. Biggest mistake I ever made was letting him carry a pistol.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah. Something about holster leather hitting his leg turned him from a quiet sort of feller into Attila the Code Man. I have a nice enforcer now we

call 'Sally the Sweetheart.' She settles more than 75 percent of complaints with one face-to-face, but she ain't afraid to take further steps when conditions justify it. She does it in this calm way, too, always explaining why the regulation is there to protect us. She says if she can't explain why we have it, it ain't a good reg to begin with."

"And it works?"

"Almost always. If not, she's liable to say she's gonna tell their momma." He laughed. and I felt relieved although sometimes I don't know when he is kidding. He says it's not important that I know. I let him continue.

"Like most cities," he said, "we must conduct our code enforcement on a complaint-based fashion. Lack of resources and all that. Problem is that sometimes she receives a complaint and heads out to the offending address. When she gets there and talks to the property owner, they can see five other properties with the same problem, or a worse one. She has to handle the complaint and drive past several sites in worse conditions on her way back to City Hall. That doesn't make your citizens love city government."

"Does it work?"

"Somewhat. But when we can, I practice what I call 'systematic code enforcement' and that works a whole lot better."

"How so?"

"When we have some capital improvements planned in an area, we let the residents know in advance. We tell them it is part of a targeted neighborhood improvement program, and it will include concentrated code enforcement. I tell them they have been specially chosen for a TNIP. That helps sell it. They can even brag about it down at the bingo parlor."

"Isn't that deceitful?"

"Nah, lyin' and blaming problems on your predecessor is deceitful. Of course my predecessor has been dead for 20 years, so it won't work for me anyway."

"How about your zoning regs?"

"We didn't have any trouble until this current thing came up. Our policy has always been simple. If a zoning regulation gets three requests for a variance, we pull it out and make it fight for its life. Not many survive."

"If you don't mind my asking, what is this current thing?"

"You won't believe me, but I'll try. You know them accessory dwelling units that we allow now?"

"Yes. I thought that was a good idea."

"It was, but now they want to say we can reduce

the parking requirements if a person rents them to disabled veterans."

I didn't respond.

"How," he said, "are you going to enforce that?"

"I'm not sure," I said.

"Ain't zoning supposed to be about land use and not about who is using the land?"

"That's what they taught me."

"I'd like to see one of them planning commissioners on the witness stand telling the judge why a person has to leave their unit vacant because there ain't no disabled veterans needing a place to live at the moment. I guess you can see I don't care for overregulation."

I nodded.

He continued. "Of course we might have an ordinance or two that we only enforce when we must."

"Oh?"

"Yeah. Like the firearms restriction. We ain't gonna arrest someone for shootin' a snake that has their kitten cornered in their backyard and relocation ain't an option."

I said I understood.

He continued, "But it's nice to have the law when Otis Holmier gets tanked up and wants to go out in his backyard and show his boy how an assault rifle works."

"Is he a veteran?"

"Nah. He just has this thing about guns and a penchant for bourbon. As we used to say back in the day, that'll foul your rigging. What else you want to know?"

"I'm good for this trip."

"How's Mark Hayes?"

"Mark is fine. Working with him is one of life's blessings."

"Yeah, me and him get along fine as long as I don't borrow money from him. You know, on a quiet night, ever once in a while I can imagine I can hear him talking all the way from Little Rock. You tell him I said hi."

"I will. And good luck with your council. I hope they don't hold what you said against you."

"No worry. They'll be busy enforcing that new law they just passed. Besides, what they gonna do, cut my hair off and send me to war?"

With that I headed home, thinking about wars and TNIPs.



AML is giving away a select number of member registrations for Convention 91! Municipal officials may email events@aml.org to enter to win.

The do's and don'ts of non-DOT drug testing

BY CALEB ALEXANDER-MCKINZIE AND
TRACEY CLINE-PEW, LEAGUE STAFF

Drug testing non-DOT employees is an important aspect of maintaining a safe and productive workplace. However, it is not a simple process and must be done in a legal and ethical manner. First and foremost, blanket drug testing of all employees is generally prohibited and, for the most part, regular employees cannot be randomly drug tested. The two most common types of drug testing are testing due to reasonable suspicion and drug testing for employees in safety-sensitive positions.

Since municipalities are governments, the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution necessarily applies. See *Green v. City of N. Little Rock*, 2012 Ark. App. 21, 9, 388, S.W.3d 85, 90 (2012). This means that for non-DOT employees, the city is generally required to have reasonable suspicion that an employee is impaired and may be using a controlled substance unlawfully before conducting a drug test. The requirement of reasonable suspicion cannot be standardless but must be based on “specific articulable facts that meet an objective requirement of ‘reasonable cause.’” See *Dimeo v. Griffin*, 721 F. Supp. 958, 973 (N.D. Ill. 1989), judgment aff’d, 924 F.2d 664, 6 I.E.R. Cas. (BNA) 297 (7th Cir. 1991). The court indicated that this standard was met by a testing program that prohibited testing unless there was corroborated evidence of drug use or a direct observation of drug use or possession, or physical symptoms of drug use. Employees, especially supervisors and managers, should be trained on how to recognize specific behavioral, physical and performance indicators that could suggest an

employee is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. These observations should be well documented.

Arkansas law provides an exception that allows municipal employers to conduct random drug tests on employees in safety-sensitive positions. The Arkansas Constitution defines a “safety-sensitive position” as one that qualifies for drug/alcohol testing under U.S. Department of Transportation regulations or “any position designated in writing by an employer as a safety-sensitive position in which a person performing the position while under the influence of [drugs or alcohol] may constitute a threat to health or safety.” Ark. Const. Amend. 98, § 2(25). These are positions—and the job description should describe them as such—where a momentary lapse of judgment or attention could lead to an injury or death of the employee or others. Examples of safety sensitive positions include but are not limited to employees who carry a firearm, perform life-threatening procedures, work with or around hazardous or flammable materials, operate heavy equipment, or employees who operate a motor vehicle as a primary function of their job.

To help guide you along the way, here is a list of do's and don'ts related to non-DOT drug testing.

DO:

- Establish a well-defined drug testing policy and make certain that it is communicated to all employees. Cities and towns may want to pass this policy by ordinance. A sample policy can be found in the League

publication *Drug Free Workplace Non-Commercial Driver's License Employees* available at armuni.org/Publications.

- Follow state and local laws regarding non-DOT drug testing and ensure that your policy follows these laws. One very important aspect of drug testing in a municipality is knowing which employees are subject to testing and which employees are not.
- Understand the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The Fourth Amendment protects the “right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects” by prohibiting unreasonable searches and seizures. Drug testing an employee without reasonable suspicion, or testing an employee who is not in a safety-sensitive position could be interpreted as an unlawful search.
- Use a certified collector and laboratory to ensure that all required protocols are followed during the testing process to guarantee accurate test results.
- Provide training for employees regarding the hazards of drug use in the workplace. Promoting a drug-free work environment creates a healthy, safe workplace for everyone.
- Provide training for employees to recognize and document reasonable suspicion, and how to handle situations involving drug testing.
- Maintain confidentiality to protect the privacy of employees. Keep drug test results confidential and share them only with authorized personnel.

DON'T:

- Discriminate. Ensure that drug testing is performed impartially pursuant to your policies and procedures.
- Ignore a positive test result. Follow your policy and take the prescribed action if an employee has a positive test result.
- Forget to document everything! Detailed record keeping is essential during the drug testing process. The documentation should include the reason for the test, test results and action(s) taken.
- Forget to stay well informed on changes in state and local law and update your policy when necessary to maintain compliance.
- Hesitate to contact your city attorney or the League if you have questions or concerns. We are here to help.

CONVENTION NINETY ONE

STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER
JUNE 18–20, 2025

Speakers and descriptions are a work in progress and may change before the event. Register online and stay tuned for the latest information at register.arml.org.

WORKING BREAKOUT SESSIONS LIST THURSDAY, JUNE 19

1. **The Idea Friendly Method: Open Up to New Ideas:** Continue Wednesday's conversation with keynote speaker **Becky McCray** in this interactive breakout focused on putting ideas into practice with real-world tools for building momentum and community buy-in.
2. **Advancing Economic Mobility:** Join NLC staff for a hands on workshop to learn three key economic mobility resources your city. Opportunity Insights' Opportunity Atlas, Results for America's Economic Mobility Catalog and Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Framework designed to identify and implement evidence-based strategies to improve upward economic mobility.
3. **Municipal Bonds 101: Cindy Frizzell** will guide you through the essential steps and legal requirements for creating a successful bond improvement for your city with practical insights into navigating bond creation and building a solid foundation for community improvements.
4. **Idea to Reality: How to Sell Improvements to Your Citizens: Kerrie Lauck** and local mayors and development partners will discuss transforming ambitious municipal projects into community-supported realities with insights for gaining public buy-in and ensuring your projects succeed at the ballot box.
5. **Building Community Buzz: Secrets to Successful Fairs and Festivals:** Join **Ben Cline** for a panel discussion from Arkansas' most effective event planners with strategies for rallying your community behind your event and fostering grassroots involvement.
6. **Introduction to ACE SafeTrack Certification:** Discover the newest addition to the Arkansas Civic Education (ACE) Program: ACE SafeTrack offers comprehensive safety training from enhancing workplace safety to fostering preparedness. League staffers **Kerrie Lauck** and **Allen Green** will provide practical tools and resources to empower your team.

*Main agenda on pages 37-39.
Working breakouts on pages 43 & 45.*

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PHOTO: COURTESY HOT SPRINGS SISTER CITY PROGRAM

Each year Hot Springs' Cherry Blossom Festival celebrates the city's Sister Cities relationship with Hanamaki, Japan.

The Hanamaki-Hot Springs connection bridges cultures, fosters innovation

BY UNZILA CHEEMA

In the heart of Arkansas, a remarkable story of global connection and innovation is unfolding. The Sister Cities program, a beacon of international cooperation, has found fertile ground in the Natural State, with Hot Springs leading the charge in fostering meaningful cross-cultural relationships and driving economic growth.

Founded in 1956, Sister Cities International (SCI) is a nonpartisan nonprofit powered by citizen diplomats and volunteers. With over 2,000 partnerships spanning 145 countries, this program has proven that local connections can have far-reaching impacts.

Hot Springs' Sister Cities partnership with Hanamaki, Japan, was established in 1993. This connection has blossomed into a multifaceted collaboration, yielding impressive cultural exchanges, educational opportunities and economic development outcomes.

The Hot Springs Sister City Program recently clinched the SCI 2024 Annual Award for Innovation in Business, Trade, and Professional Exchange. This accolade recognizes the program's outstanding achievements in fostering international cooperation and economic growth while

acknowledging the dedication of everyone involved since its inception as a Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce project.

A crowning achievement of this partnership was the 2023 opening of Origami Sake, a brewery in Hot Springs owned by Ben Bell and Matt Bell. The brewery's founders, who share a last name but aren't related, were granted a trip to Japan to explore the sake industry and learn best practices. This trip introduced a new industry to Arkansas and deepened cultural ties between the two cities.

Another outcome of the Hot Springs-Hanamaki relationship is the annual Cherry Blossom Festival, which has grown significantly over the years and is expected to continue to draw large crowds to Hot Springs. In 2024, the event attracted 40,000 participants.

This year's Cherry Blossom Festival was held April 12 and offered an exciting lineup of cultural experiences and entertainment: Taiko drumming performances, anime and manga lectures, sumo wrestling exhibitions featuring wrestlers from Hanamaki, and tastings from American sake brewers.



Each year the festival also serves as a fundraiser for scholarship programs. The Hot Springs Sister City Program has additional positive impacts on education by developing the next generation of engaged, globally focused citizen diplomats. Student exchanges between Hot Springs and Hanamaki provide young leaders with invaluable opportunities to broaden their horizons and learn about a culture different than their own.

At its core, the Sister Cities Program is about people. It's about forging friendships, understanding different perspectives, and finding common ground across cultural divides. As Mary Zunick, Arkansas state representative for SCI, said, "Now more than ever, we need to know the importance of learning from each other—the more we can learn from and about other cultures, the better."

In an increasingly interconnected world, Arkansas' embrace of Sister Cities programs stands as a testament to the power of international cooperation. From the thermal waters of Hot Springs to the cherry blossoms of Hanamaki, these connections are not just bridging distances, they're shaping a more understanding, innovative and prosperous future for all.

You can learn more about the Hot Springs Sister City Program at www.hotspringssistercity.org.

CONVENTION NINETY ONE

WORKING BREAKOUT SESSIONS LIST THURSDAY, JUNE 19 CONTINUED

7. **Neglected Properties Training:** League staff **Caleb Alexander-Mckenzie** created this training as a part of the 2025 Regional Training delivered in **Berryville, Crossett** and **Magnolia** this spring and coming to **Russellville, Stuttgart** and **Jonesboro** this fall. If you're unable to make any of these in-person trainings, this session will teach you to navigate legal complexities, manage resources and build partnerships to address these challenging vacant and dilapidated properties.
8. **"FOIA for 2,000, Alex":** Get ready to shine under the Arkansas Sunshine Law in this exciting follow-up to last year's hit session "FOIA for 1,000, Alex," with engaging challenges, deeper dives into FOIA intricacies, and plenty of opportunities to show off your FOIA know-how, led by **John Wilkerson**.
9. **Elevating Wellness: Municipal Health's Wellness Platform & GLP-1 Coverage:** Explore Municipal Health's Wellness platform and its tools for promoting healthier lifestyles with **Katie Bodenhamer**, including coverage for GLP-1 treatments. This session will provide practical guidance on utilizing the platform to enhance health initiatives and create lasting positive impacts for your municipality.
10. **Navigating Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction:** Join **John Wilkerson** for a discussion about recent changes to Arkansas' extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) law following the 2025 legislative session. This session will provide an overview of the updated legal framework, its implications, and practical strategies for navigating these changes effectively.
11. **Tackling Changes to Housing and Development Law:** This panel discussion will cover legislative changes surrounding short-term rentals, housing development challenges and alternative dwelling units, providing insights into how these updates impact municipalities and community planning.
12. **Engaging the Media for Your City:** Peek behind the curtain of the newsmaking process with this panel discussion hosted by the League's **Ben Cline** and seasoned members of the local media. Learn how a news story evolves from idea to print or broadcast.
13. **Guarding the Gateway: Cell Phone Security in a Cyber World:** Join **Jeff Melton** and cybersecurity experts identifying and mitigating the most pressing mobile security threats facing Arkansas cities and towns. Gain insights from real-world case studies, current mobile threat intelligence and best practices to equip your municipality with the tools to tackle today's mobile security challenges confidently.

*Main agenda on pages 37-39.
Working breakouts on pages 43 & 45.*

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A gentler approach to stress management

BY MATTHEW BOONE, LCSW

Stress is a natural and unavoidable part of our lives. In some cases, it serves a beneficial purpose, triggering our bodily systems to perform at their best during challenging or dangerous situations. However, when stress becomes too frequent or too overwhelming, it can place a heavy burden on our mental and physical health.

We all feel pressure to find the perfect balance between our work and family lives, between our day-to-day obligations and the activities that truly bring us joy. And when we fall short or face challenges in life, we're all too quick to label ourselves as failures. That's why I'd like to talk about ways to manage our stress—and be a little kinder to ourselves along the way.

Effects on health

Stress is unpleasant on its own, but it can have much more significant effects in the long term, leading to psychological problems such as anxiety and depression. People who struggle to cope with their stress may be vulnerable to self-defeating habits such as substance or alcohol misuse.

While the mental and emotional effects of stress are easily felt, the physical toll might be less noticeable at first. Stress responses kick the nervous system into overdrive, straining the body in ways that add up over time. Chronic stress can increase your risk of developing serious medical conditions such as hypertension, diabetes and strokes.

Managing stress

We all have different methods for managing stress, but what's most important is that we don't rely too heavily on ways that have unintended consequences, especially those that involve avoidance. If checking out for a moment by scrolling your phone gives you a moment to refresh, then go for it. But if that's the only strategy you have in your toolbox, eventually you'll find that it can cause more problems than it solves.

Fortunately, most of the activities that bring you joy, meaning or a sense of connection can also help mitigate the long-term effects of stress. Consider regularly giving

yourself time to decompress in ways that enhance your life as well as reduce your stress, whether that involves evening walks in nature, hobbies or quality time with friends and family.

Go easy on yourself

Many of the typical recommendations for managing stress—what I've listed above, as well as the old familiars like getting plenty of sleep, enjoying a healthful diet and exercising regularly—are easy to bring to mind. However, making these a consistent part of your life sounds simpler than it is.



As we navigate our busy schedules, it's easy to fall back into prioritizing productivity over well-being. At times, this can become its own form of stress, causing us to beat ourselves up over our lack of self-care. Have you ever heard your inner voice saying something like: "If you would just meditate regularly and get back to the gym, you wouldn't feel this way"? You're not alone.

I want to propose that we take a gentler approach to stress, one in which we treat ourselves with grace instead of condemnation. There's nothing out of the ordinary in falling back on old habits—that's just human. But scolding yourself into compliance isn't sustainable, and the side effects are not worth it.

Over the past few years, I've learned to talk to myself in ways that have made an enormous difference in my life. Whereas my mind used to default to some version of "You're doing it wrong!" whenever I made a mistake, it's now accompanied by another, kinder voice that says: "This is hard. Everyone feels this way sometimes. You can be kind to yourself in this moment."

These words may sound hokey—they certainly did when I first said them. But they haven't made me lazy or given me permission to give up. Instead, they have given me a nurturing companion as I work to manage my stress more effectively. If you want to give it a try, just think of what the most benevolent and loving person in your life might say to you in a moment of hardship and go from there.

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PHOTOS: COURTESY MCE

With the completion of the JP Wright Loop overpass in Jacksonville, a decades-long effort to improve safety and increase efficiency at railroad crossings across central Arkansas is now complete.

Jacksonville RR Xing completion marks end of 3 decades of upgrades

BY TAYLOR CLARK, PE

Nearly three decades ago, Metroplan developed Metro 2020, a broad transportation plan aimed at creating a more livable and efficient transportation environment across the region. Increasing safety at railroad crossings is one of the priorities of the plan, and the Metroplan board identified 12 at-grade crossings in need of conversion to grade-separated crossings by constructing overpasses. At-grade railroad crossings present several challenges, including safety risks and traffic delays. From emergency response disruptions due to blocked crossings to the potential for train-vehicle collisions, these locations require careful attention. With completion of the work on the JP Wright Loop in Jacksonville in December 2024, all the overpass projects are now finished.

JP Wright Loop was chosen due to the risk posed by the intersection between a major thoroughfare and one of the busiest railways in the region. A grade-separated railroad crossing enhances safety for both the public and trains by reducing conflict points and preventing

delays for emergency vehicles, school buses and daily commuters. The project also included provisions for future expansion, with a multi-lane typical section and sidewalks to improve pedestrian access. Additionally, incorporating multi-modal transportation elements such as sidewalks and expanded lanes allows for greater mobility and connectivity, ensuring that pedestrians, cyclists and motorists can all navigate the intersection safely and efficiently.

Multi-modal transportation planning plays a crucial role in enhancing safety and accessibility in urban infrastructure projects. By integrating pedestrian walkways, bike lanes, and separating the rail and vehicular travel ways, the project not only greatly improves safety for motorists and trains but also provides dedicated, protected spaces for non-motorized traffic. This reduces the likelihood of collisions and ensures that all road users can travel smoothly without interference. Furthermore, multi-modal infrastructure encourages alternative trans-



portation options that alleviate congestion and decrease the risk of accidents caused by heavy-demand intersections.

Design work for the JP Wright Loop was completed in 2022 and construction began in January 2023. The Union Pacific tracks running through Jacksonville form one of the busiest rail corridors in the state and required the contractor to pause construction multiple times to allow for the priority of the railway traffic. Coordination between the contractor and the railroad was essential to keep the project on track.

During construction, several challenges arose, including unsuitable subbase material that required undercutting and stone backfill to ensure stability for the leveling pad, overpass walls and adjacent roadways. Safety remained a top priority, given the hazards associated with at-grade railroad crossings. A special emergency plan was maintained throughout the project, and an updated schedule was provided every 30 days to track work in the railroad

right-of-way. All personnel involved in observation and construction were required to obtain a specialized permit that included safety training.

Despite these challenges, the project was completed ahead of schedule in December of 2024, with a total construction cost of \$15.3 million. Upon completion, the existing at-grade crossing approaches were removed, and railway access was restricted to railroad personnel only. By integrating multi-modal features into the project, such as pedestrian pathways and expanded vehicular capacity, the new intersection significantly enhances both safety and usability for the community.

This project has been widely praised by the public for eliminating a hazardous intersection and improving safety for all transportation modes. The successful and timely completion of this project reflects the dedication and coordination of all involved parties, reinforcing a commitment to a safer, more efficient transit system for all users.

2024/2025 State Turnback Funds

Actual Totals Per Capita						
	STREET		SEVERANCE TAX		GENERAL	
MONTH	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
January	\$6.71	\$7.15	\$0.12	\$0.10	\$2.02	\$2.02
February	\$7.18	\$6.98	\$0.15	\$0.08	\$1.024	\$1.019
March	\$6.064	\$5.793	\$0.121	\$0.165	\$1.024	\$1.018
April	\$6.567	\$6.815	\$0.117	\$0.183	\$1.024	\$1.017
May	\$7.139		\$0.087		\$1.019	
June	\$7.037		\$0.028		\$1.023	
July	\$7.047		\$0.022		\$2.797	
August	\$7.017		\$0.00		\$0.826	
September	\$7.107		\$1.024		\$1.019	
October	\$5.745		\$1.023		\$1.019	
November	\$6.626		\$1.020		\$1.02	
December	\$6.43		\$1.020		\$1.02	
Total Year	\$80.67	\$26.74	\$15.185	\$0.52	\$14.83	\$5.07

Actual Totals Per Month						
	STREET		SEVERANCE TAX		GENERAL	
MONTH	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
January	\$13,454,740.53	\$14,344,529.55	\$240,989.05	\$195,553.15	*\$4,053,953.86	*\$4,043,691.60
February	\$14,401,299.45	\$14,012,520.67	\$291,821.41	\$157,738.04	\$2,053,698.28	\$2,045,108.83
March	\$12,165,510.80	\$11,622,645.85	\$243,039.99	\$330,048.09	\$2,053,791.22	\$2,043,178.51
April	\$13,174,735.35	\$13,676,758.28	\$235,152.80	\$367,688.47	\$2,053,791.22	\$2,041,110.91
May	\$14,323,397.61		\$173,692.76		\$2,045,124.02	
June	\$14,117,409.82		\$56,190.94		\$2,051,666.16	
July	\$14,138,631.04		\$43,727.20		** \$5,612,132.59	
August	\$14,079,298.02		\$0.00		\$1,657,294.23	
September	\$14,258,812.79		\$130,337.65		\$2,044,036.89	
October	\$11,526,560.92		\$194,177.09		\$2,043,691.60	
November	\$13,294,518.33		\$93,515.72		\$2,043,524.94	
December	\$12,903,890.83		\$102,506.36		\$2,043,691.60	
Total Year	\$161,838,805.49	\$53,656,454.35	\$1,805,150.97	\$1,051,027.75	\$29,756,396.61	\$10,173,089.85


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

**Includes \$3,514,392.30 supplemental for July 2024

Love seeing these turnback numbers? We want to know! Email citytown@arml.org and let us know if you want to keep seeing them in the magazine, or if you prefer to access them each month at armuni.org/Publications.

Local Option Sales and Use Tax in Arkansas



KEY:  Counties not collecting sales tax

Source: Rachel Garrett, Office of State Treasurer

See also: www.dfa.arkansas.gov

Sales and Use Tax Year-to-Date 2025 with 2024 Comparison (shaded gray)								
Month	Municipal Tax		County Tax		Total Tax		Interest	
January	\$87,231,351	\$86,862,371	\$73,841,246	\$74,528,796	\$161,072,597	\$161,391,167	\$552,364	\$617,233
February	\$99,189,231	\$95,415,332	\$82,980,100	\$80,279,972	\$182,169,331	\$175,695,304	\$492,132	\$636,728
March	\$82,603,040	\$78,770,386	\$69,633,233	\$67,473,517	\$152,236,273	\$146,243,903	\$484,497	\$670,892
April	\$78,191,680	\$79,987,030	\$67,323,560	\$69,344,938	\$145,515,240	\$149,331,968	\$535,740	\$693,345
May		\$90,224,300		\$76,716,593		\$166,940,893		\$636,336
June		\$84,560,060		\$72,394,282		\$156,954,342		\$603,810
July		\$86,879,194		\$73,819,576		\$160,698,770		\$720,986
August		\$89,183,357		\$76,027,968		\$165,211,326		\$671,600
September		\$87,897,466		\$75,130,969		\$163,028,435		\$664,721
October		\$88,062,355		\$75,108,082		\$163,170,437		\$707,196
November		\$87,283,881		\$74,005,294		\$161,289,175		\$602,341
December		\$88,658,933		\$75,900,169		\$164,559,102		\$589,602
Total	\$347,215,301	\$1,043,784,664	\$293,778,140	\$890,730,157	\$640,993,441	\$1,934,514,820	\$2,064,733	\$7,814,791
Averages	\$86,803,825	\$86,982,055	\$73,444,535	\$74,227,513	\$160,248,360	\$161,209,568	\$516,183	\$651,233

April 2025 Municipal Levy Receipts and April 2025 Municipal/County Levy Receipts with 2024 Comparison (shaded gray)

CITY SALES AND USE.	AMOUNT	LAST YEAR	Fountain Hill	2,402.09	Monette	37,306.02	24,938.18	White Hall	94,203.00	103,779.72
Alexander	245,244.86	192,369.96	Franklin	2,819.93	Monticello	237,148.32	260,608.56	Wickes	7,828.79	16,772.35
Alma	310,911.82	290,461.46	Garfield	23,843.57	Moorefield	4,362.17	5,675.69	Wiener	4,244.97	4,356.92
Almyra	3,178.92	3,297.55	Garland	1,755.19	Moro	2,974.40	4,271.66	Wiederkehr Village	2,276.97	2,929.03
Alpena	7,663.81	6,981.94	Gassville	38,037.64	Morrilton	190,572.07	195,110.80	Wilmot	3,850.00	5,129.75
Alzheimer	4,199.70	4,288.45	Gentry	174,727.23	Morrison Bluff	4,000.63	5,621.06	Wilson	5,679.12	6,763.02
Altus	7,834.31	7,935.87	Gilbert	397.54	Mount Ida	23,386.58	24,263.56	Wilton		970.85
Amity	18,000.26	17,037.28	Gillett	15,497.04	Mountain Home	1,098,281.36	1,147,430.28	Winslow	11,534.29	9,464.50
Anthonyville	1,379.09	1,405.04	Gillham	9,305.64	Mountain View	217,022.67	227,333.35	Wynne	189,259.53	194,158.59
Arkadelphia	442,337.71	489,799.26	Gilmore	638.04	Mountainburg	29,136.37	20,342.55	Yellville	54,643.35	60,674.19
Arkansas City	5,442.00	26,791.45	Glenwood	89,588.98	Mulberry	37,779.34	38,692.71			
Ash Flat	131,663.42	136,324.98	Goshen	38,120.78	Murfreesboro	36,847.12	35,153.67	COUNTY SALES AND USE	AMOUNT	LAST YEAR
Ashdown	172,781.28	164,333.70	Gosnell	20,533.78	Nashville	134,675.24	139,430.37	Arkansas County	360,145.57	361,966.45
Atkins	77,836.00	91,450.43	Gould	18,108.31	Newport	238,079.91	249,603.27	Ashley County	251,473.03	291,130.11
Augusta	23,878.77	22,036.60	Grady	8,358.37	Norfolk	8,358.44	7,699.29	Crossett	60,718.19	70,293.39
Austin	55,571.46	49,259.24	Grannis	6,219.33	Norman	4,446.19	5,827.67	Fountain Hill	1,359.93	1,574.39
Avoca	11,261.18	13,190.13	Gravette	124,640.45	North Little Rock	3,328,300.28	3,782,176.99	Hamburg	31,933.08	36,968.90
Bald Knob	61,774.94	63,503.54	Green Forest	171,558.32	Oak Grove	1,629.25	1,095.77	Montrose	3,059.83	3,542.37
Banks	769.60	644.81	Greenbrier	391,394.67	Oak Grove Heights	8,765.61	12,133.36	Parkdale	2,165.81	2,507.35
Batesville	794,063.25	121,789.70	Greenland	57,973.53	Ola	17,830.72	16,465.90	Portland	4,092.37	4,737.73
Bauxite	28,465.51	858,895.97	Greenwood	324,195.94	Oppelo	4,780.16	3,851.79	Wilmot	5,238.23	6,064.31
Bay	28,134.41	36,124.18	Greers Ferry	27,467.10	Oseola	331,890.16	204,731.15	Baxter County	641,556.74	664,611.56
Bearden	10,063.37	13,696.11	Guion	2,943.20	Oxford	4,730.27	3,671.89	Big Flat	1,654.91	1,714.39
Beebe	236,751.82	12,500.44	Gum Springs	1,432.46	Ozark	205,701.44	224,924.44	Briarcliff	4,438.18	4,597.67
Beehive	160.73	240,765.25	Gurdon	31,386.76	Palestine	35,638.22	34,620.21	Cotter	16,661.98	17,260.74
Bella Vista	673,791.76	155.45	Guy	15,039.48	Pangburn	8,960.32	10,346.26	Gassville	40,827.49	42,294.66
Bellevue	2,990.58	629,714.87	Hackett	9,959.61	Paragould	813,869.94	440,723.20	Lakeview	14,574.53	15,098.28
Benton	2,022,913.66	3,282.56	Hamburg	104,809.94	Paris	90,034.61	90,820.34	Mountain Home	241,184.98	249,852.14
Bentonville	3,838,482.00	2,146,621.88	Hampton	9,413.26	Parkdale	548.69	681.45	Norfolk	8,744.72	9,058.97
Berryville	302,507.57	3,725,161.20	Hardy	25,857.65	Parkin	6,052.03	5,234.72	Salesville	8,895.17	9,214.80
Big Flat	965.52	321,484.56	Harrisburg	85,042.78	Pattmos	415.44	165.63	Benton County	994,214.59	1,040,979.68
Black Rock	4,858.92	1,070.21	Harrison	803,698.70	Patterson	916.34	1,574.19	Avoca	10,809.82	11,317.27
Blains	4,469.99	7,088.73	Hartford	7,521.86	Pea Ridge	300,721.08	288,245.98	Bella Vista	668,210.94	699,579.25
Blue Mountain	457.17	4,480.15	Haskell	63,285.61	Perla	8,317.37	3,060.20	Bentonville	1,202,264.72	1,258,703.51
Blytheville	527,078.49	398.61	Hatfield	5,590.95	Perryville	24,726.11	24,747.13	Cave Springs	121,971.14	127,696.92
Bonanza	3,003.02	507,585.78	Havana	4,324.41	Piggott	86,148.05	86,663.49	Centerton	394,924.56	413,463.79
Bono	37,679.49	5,312.43	Hazen	86,051.45	Pine Bluff	875,458.33	1,620,014.32	Decatur	39,354.84	41,202.30
Booneville	164,231.96	31,992.62	Heber Springs	192,427.41	Pineville	2,041.11	2,378.67	Elm Springs	10,321.49	10,806.02
Bradford	19,073.07	170,288.26	Hector	7,509.13	Pineblow	5,468.13	7,068.80	Garfield	13,162.67	13,780.58
Bradley	5,318.57	23,990.54	Helena-West Helena	249,495.44	Pleasant Plains	23,373.76	13,620.98	Gateway	9,677.78	10,132.09
Branch	2,170.45	7,104.62	Hermitage	14,726.55	Plumerville	13,139.11	13,946.88	Gentry	84,125.68	88,074.85
Briarcliff	2,211.42	2,754.73	Higginson	2,900.23	Pocahontas	348,405.64	404,912.44	Gravette	78,731.87	82,427.84
Brinkley	173,775.19	2,231.43	Highfill	167,467.74	Pollard	480.69	95.82	Highfill	35,226.24	36,879.89
Brookland	145,338.01	201,743.19	Highland	38,521.36	Portia	4,827.87	4,763.92	Little Flock	67,811.07	70,994.37
Bryant	1,526,119.60	142,293.13	Holly Grove	10,201.68	Portland	8,348.58	8,907.50	Lowell	218,393.82	228,646.03
Bull Shoals	35,069.85	1,531,557.90	Hope	211,439.35	Pottsville	49,345.59	48,037.63	Pea Ridge	145,588.48	152,422.94
Cabot	1,164,089.16	36,311.53	Horatio	8,502.69	Prairie Grove	266,365.84	236,363.87	Rogers	1,551,730.34	1,624,574.34
Caddo Valley	57,123.86	1,142,313.67	Horseshoe Bend	36,978.47	Prescott	110,727.54	95,373.48	Siloam Springs	383,715.20	401,728.22
Calico Rock	66,730.02	57,160.89	Hot Springs	2,139,251.00	Pyatt	1,625.73	1,553.44	Springdale	268,514.08	281,026.17
Camden	383,373.90	58,456.32	Hoxie	23,424.59	Quitman	32,888.54	31,039.74	Springtown	1,842.33	1,928.82
Caraway	6,769.73	411,923.36	Hughes	7,942.63	Ravenden	4,563.11	4,892.63	Sulphur Springs	10,676.63	11,177.85
Carlisle	57,287.09	7,346.78	Humke	2,627.28	Reactor	39,819.53	38,892.20	Boone County	532,401.83	528,595.10
Carthage	2,819.17	65,426.86	Humphrey	2,630.43	Redfield	43,820.58	43,324.30	Alpena	4,997.26	4,961.53
Cash	2,915.48	3,561.12	Huntington	7,360.94	Rison	19,218.30	20,293.70	Bellefonte	7,082.32	7,031.68
Cave City	33,946.27	34,787.98	Huntsville	90,825.94	Rockport	36,293.35	35,143.35	Bergman	7,340.80	7,288.31
Cave Springs	163,117.79	165,806.00	Imboden	12,626.87	Roe	1,350.89	756.11	Diamond City	13,044.57	12,951.30
Cedarville	12,798.80	10,527.68	Jacksonville	815,048.33	Rogers	4,052,573.56	4,234,006.30	Everton	1,792.12	1,779.31
Centerton	507,469.53	468,748.53	Jasper	39,762.79	Rose Bud	26,429.11	29,175.48	Harrison	225,204.02	223,593.78
Charleston	51,794.75	46,242.72	Jennette	476.27	Rosston	3,599.92	3,311.94	Lead Hill	4,721.55	4,687.79
Cherokee Village	32,843.91	33,041.38	John	165,520.87	Rudy	13,585.35	13,041.31	Omaha	2,205.69	2,189.92
Cherry Valley	9,756.12	6,838.70	Joiner	4,911.48	Russellville	1,302,320.11	1,301,780.36	South Lead Hill	1,481.95	1,471.35
Chidester	4,794.27	5,002.23	Jonesboro	1,970,146.09	Salem	27,953.92	28,170.88	Valley Springs	3,153.44	3,130.89
Clarendon	67,949.71	69,218.33	Judsonia	19,293.12	Salesville	4,292.42	5,319.66	Zinc	1,585.32	1,573.99
Clarksville	479,274.32	465,710.76	Junction City	7,814.12	Scranton	5,173.17	5,567.21	Bradley County	154,339.81	149,338.27
Clinton	115,589.65	115,983.70	Keiser	5,239.30	Searcy	1,397,387.12	883,003.70	Banks	893.68	864.72
Coal Hill	5,162.71	5,436.72	Keo	1,831.59	Shannon Hills	20,546.72	16,952.07	Hermitage	5,399.91	5,218.14
Concord	3,211.60	3,149.77	Kibler	5,855.62	Sheridan	305,791.07	294,514.36	Warren	56,014.31	54,199.12
Conway	2,871,864.03	2,927,977.42	Kingsland	3,069.86	Sherill	725.36	909.72	Calhoun County	124,660.12	112,453.62
Corning	83,696.14	81,931.90	Lake City	43,481.57	Shirley	1,189,742.91	1,229,458.51	Hampton	33,158.94	32,050.14
Cotter	16,161.35	20,606.55	Lake Village	83,823.48	Shirley	4,375.54	4,797.37	Harrell	5,896.16	5,699.00
Cotton Plant	1,943.89	1,338.50	Lakeview	7,113.95	Siloam Springs	937,341.67	1,011,471.78	Thornton	9,518.10	9,199.82
Cove	20,390.87	13,413.69	Lamar	29,245.99	Sparkman	6,048.08	5,441.77	Tinsman	1,403.86	1,356.98
Crawfordsville	12,139.92	32,024.34	Leadville	19,660.41	Springdale	3,991,846.48	3,763,679.33	Carroll County	216,151.70	202,930.98
Crossett	237,337.62	233,507.61	Leachville	19,660.41	Springtown	1,728.02	719.84	Beaver	562.46	528.06
Cushman	4,038.99	3,362.50	Lepanto	24,288.47	St. Charles	2,681.60	3,457.41	Blue Eye	386.17	362.55
Damascus	13,663.84	13,816.76	Leslie	11,099.73	St. Paul	4,786.62	4,039.57	Holiday Island	20,139.34	18,907.53
Danville	63,406.01	71,959.83	Lewisville	11,684.65	Stamps	15,691.37	16,526.17	Chicot County	149,394.70	154,108.24
Dardanelle	188,338.20	195,149.96	Lincoln	105,569.31	Star City	63,934.32	71,726.69	Dermott	20,677.08	21,329.48
Decatur	45,594.96	51,191.49	Little Flock	22,883.77	Stephens	5,638.81	6,723.50	Eudora	17,679.36	18,237.18
Delight	7,060.90	5,836.86	Little Rock	5,961,428.17	Strong	10,824.03	12,974.14	Lake Village	21,127.25	21,793.84
De Queen	84,724.95	148,283.99	Lockesburg	8,143.41	Stuttgart	694,986.05	671,620.86	Clark County	555,744.72	579,851.24
Dermott	30,172.57	27,068.75	London	8,419.44	Subiaco	8,065.14	9,366.98	Clay County	115,851.55	109,320.13
Des Arc	75,608.41	75,307.35	Lonoke	292,497.88	Sulphur Springs	10,286.62	8,517.32	Corning	32,768.25	31,184.62
DeValls Bluff	10,572.76	10,201.15	Lowell	641,441.68	Summit	9,488.21	6,229.97	Datto	990.06	942.21
DeWitt	175,605.24	202,150.20	Luxora	5,097.62	Sunset	9,124.45	7,429.16	Greenway	2,650.30	2,522.22
Diamond City	3,220.46	3,296.68	Madison	1,557.23	Swifton	6,724.06	6,192.22	Knobel	2,239.05	2,130.84
Diaz	4,211.97	4,722.97	Magazine	19,718.60	Taylor	13,568.31	12,347.70	McDougal	2,041.03	1,942.40
Dierks	21,755.99	18,442.57	Magnolia	603,260.09	Texarkana	522,916.15	543,758.06	Nimmons	1,050.98	1,000.19
Dover	55,377.73	53,081.32	Malvern	414,546.38	Texarkana Special	226,716.00	247,161.17	Peach Orchard	1,599.32	1,522.02
Dumas	198,927.56	206,576.49	Mammoth Spring	10,944.40	Thornton	1,569.53	1,829.34	Piggott	36,779.24	35,001.77
Dyer	3,924.18	3,437.71	Manila	57,121.70	Tontitown	481,461.89	481,164.36	Pollard	1,959.80	2,797.63
Earle	33,179.22	34,942.28	Mansfield	39,598.29	Trumann	225,979.56	217,587.39	Rector	18,907.49	17,993.73
East Camden	9,163.44	10,503.93	Marianna	83,342.76	Tuckerman	15,556.29	16,060.45	St. Francis	3,320.49	3,160.02
El Dorado	549,788.80	711,991.39	Marion	375,932.30	Turrell					

Menifee.....	4,225.70	4,332.54	Howard County.....	442,433.52	464,896.46	Fouke.....	10,845.89	11,765.99	Saline County.....	707,891.20	733,472.07
Morrilton.....	107,832.47	110,558.87	Dierks.....	18,600.56	19,544.94	Garland.....	10,845.89	11,765.99	Scott County.....	173,070.72	139,260.07
Oppelo.....	11,366.21	11,653.59	Mineral Springs.....	22,032.33	23,150.94	Texarkana.....	244,032.42	264,734.77	Mansfield.....	11,538.05	9,284.01
Plumerville.....	11,319.94	11,606.15	Nashville.....	84,332.04	88,613.69	Mississippi County.....	1,320,665.27	1,623,692.99	Waldron.....	46,152.19	37,136.01
Craighead County.....	382,257.86	394,635.22	Tollette.....	3,756.67	3,947.39	Bassett.....	2,389.59	2,937.89	Searcy County.....	99,185.54	96,489.57
Bay.....	38,317.70	39,558.41	Independence County.....	646,905.14	664,764.30	Birdsong.....	616.67	758.16	Gilbert.....	263.47	256.31
Black Oak.....	4,759.07	4,913.17	Batesville.....	189,968.65	195,213.13	Blytheville.....	258,345.99	317,623.70	Leslie.....	3,800.02	3,696.73
Bono.....	49,204.34	50,797.55	Cave City.....	3,089.47	3,174.76	Burdette.....	2,697.93	3,316.97	Marshall.....	13,467.25	13,101.21
Brookland.....	83,008.06	85,695.83	Cushman.....	7,350.23	7,553.15	Dell.....	3,738.56	4,596.37	Pindall.....	962.67	936.50
Caraway.....	23,141.77	23,891.09	Magness.....	3,734.53	3,837.63	Dyess.....	6,532.84	8,031.81	St. Joe.....	1,307.21	1,271.67
Cash.....	5,719.06	5,904.24	Moorefield.....	2,138.87	2,197.91	Etawah.....	4,894.81	6,017.93	Sebastian County.....	376,380.03	394,950.83
Egypt.....	2,308.05	2,382.78	Newark.....	20,030.65	20,583.64	Gosnell.....	56,078.39	68,945.62	Barling.....	99,017.96	103,903.55
Jonesboro.....	1,604,931.51	1,656,898.57	Oil Trough.....	3,836.38	3,942.29	Joiner.....	9,596.92	11,798.94	Bonanza.....	12,154.65	12,754.37
Lake City.....	47,509.04	49,047.37	Pleasant Plains.....	5,975.24	6,140.20	Keiser.....	14,472.46	17,793.18	Central City.....	9,545.65	10,016.63
Monette.....	30,760.37	31,756.39	Southside.....	72,636.57	74,641.86	Leachville.....	39,293.41	48,309.32	Fort Smith.....	1,845,809.01	1,936,882.17
Crawford County.....	580,111.91	555,906.64	Sulphur Rock.....	10,337.86	10,623.26	Luxora.....	18,153.21	22,318.48	Greenwood.....	197,042.01	206,764.16
Alma.....	83,277.01	79,802.26	Izard County.....	65,250.88	63,475.56	Manila.....	70,955.54	87,236.35	Hackett.....	16,233.81	17,034.79
Cedarville.....	20,358.19	19,508.74	Jackson County.....	327,729.67	341,926.29	Marie.....	2,081.26	2,558.81	Hartford.....	10,332.49	10,842.30
Chester.....	2,058.69	1,972.79	Amagon.....	902.13	941.20	Osceola.....	134,433.96	165,279.94	Huntington.....	10,146.13	10,646.75
Dyer.....	11,036.88	10,576.37	Beeleville.....	1,098.24	1,145.81	Victoria.....	385.42	473.85	Lavaca.....	50,730.66	53,233.73
Kibler.....	14,367.96	13,768.46	Campbell Station.....	3,033.23	3,164.63	Wilson.....	14,761.53	18,148.58	Mansfield.....	14,163.17	14,861.99
Mountainburg.....	7,548.54	7,233.58	Diaz.....	16,002.92	16,696.13	Monroe County.....	NA	NA	Midland.....	4,700.35	4,932.27
Mulberry.....	22,059.47	21,139.04	Grubbs.....	3,935.36	4,105.83	Montgomery County.....	221,957.76	234,753.10	Sevier County.....	563,541.57	567,449.62
Rudy.....	1,858.54	1,780.99	Jacksonport.....	1,961.14	2,046.09	Black Springs.....	894.73	946.31	Ben Lomond.....	1,897.41	1,910.56
Van Buren.....	331,935.73	318,085.64	Newport.....	104,659.60	109,193.25	Glennwood.....	577.85	611.16	De Queen.....	82,740.48	83,314.26
Crittenden County.....	1,025,472.21	1,035,004.09	Swifton.....	9,583.45	9,998.58	Mount Ida.....	9,282.80	9,817.93	Gillham.....	2,127.81	2,142.56
Anthonyville.....	1,297.59	1,309.65	Tuckerman.....	22,317.79	23,284.56	Norman.....	2,823.98	2,986.78	Horatio.....	12,468.67	12,555.14
Clarkedale.....	3,229.55	3,259.57	Tupelo.....	915.20	954.84	Oden.....	1,677.62	1,774.32	Lockesburg.....	8,050.42	8,106.25
Crawfordsville.....	4,440.63	4,481.90	Weldon.....	745.22	777.53	Nevada County.....	124,189.92	101,879.94	Sharp County.....	313,209.91	315,226.85
Earle.....	17,599.10	17,762.69	Jefferson County.....	447,701.77	511,135.50	Bluff City.....	1,182.76	970.29	Ash Flat.....	15,186.47	15,284.27
Edmondson.....	2,335.65	2,357.36	Altheimer.....	9,007.62	10,283.88	Bodcaw.....	1,212.83	994.95	Cave City.....	25,805.14	25,971.32
Gilmore.....	1,522.50	1,536.65	Humphrey.....	2,769.58	3,162.00	Cale.....	731.71	600.26	Cherokee Village.....	58,536.15	58,913.09
Horseshoe Lake.....	2,537.50	2,561.09	Pine Bluff.....	533,895.33	609,541.61	Emmet.....	3,979.29	3,264.43	Evening Shade.....	6,228.83	6,268.94
Jennette.....	1,020.77	1,030.26	Redfield.....	19,477.67	22,237.42	Prescott.....	31,082.56	25,498.77	Hardy.....	10,500.02	10,567.64
Jericho.....	941.95	950.71	Sherill.....	685.92	783.11	Rosston.....	2,726.36	2,236.59	Highland.....	14,563.59	14,657.37
Marion.....	132,180.71	133,409.35	Wabbaseka.....	2,329.56	2,659.62	Willisville.....	1,483.47	1,216.97	Horseshoe Bend.....	192.80	194.04
Sunset.....	1,591.70	1,606.50	White Hall.....	72,229.16	82,463.13	Newton County.....	53,119.88	50,709.14	Sidney.....	2,847.46	2,865.80
Turrell.....	4,472.34	4,513.91	Johnson County.....	166,002.88	161,114.97	Jasper.....	4,594.65	4,386.13	Williford.....	1,171.62	1,179.16
West Memphis.....	235,679.96	237,870.64	Clarksville.....	123,075.40	119,451.48	Western Grove.....	2,973.51	2,838.56	St. Francis County.....	431,994.78	464,777.83
Cross County.....	649,302.80	605,072.26	Coal Hill.....	10,758.11	10,441.34	Ouachita County.....	592,161.85	477,786.87	Caldwell.....	10,785.52	11,604.00
Cherry Valley.....	9,198.51	8,571.91	Hartman.....	6,769.74	6,570.40	Bearden.....	10,621.49	11,608.82	Colt.....	7,007.00	7,538.74
Hickory Ridge.....	3,647.41	3,398.95	Knoxville.....	8,658.97	8,404.01	Camden.....	145,251.64	158,753.66	Forrest City.....	311,249.56	334,869.54
Parkin.....	12,701.94	11,836.69	Lamar.....	22,552.66	21,888.62	Chidester.....	3,462.93	3,784.84	Hughes.....	25,253.90	27,170.36
Wynne.....	133,002.45	123,942.31	Lafayette County.....	119,775.48	115,600.94	East Camden.....	10,922.62	11,937.94	Madison.....	18,151.24	19,528.70
Dallas County.....	171,589.72	192,594.96	Bradley.....	4,236.60	4,088.94	Louann.....	2,094.19	2,288.85	Palestine.....	12,100.82	13,019.14
Deshua County.....	121,035.36	135,070.18	Buckner.....	1,726.02	1,665.87	Stephens.....	10,539.36	11,519.07	Wheatley.....	6,672.20	7,178.54
Arkansas City.....	5,532.04	6,173.51	Lewisville.....	9,571.58	9,237.98	Perry County.....	176,460.24	183,048.29	Widener.....	5,069.92	5,454.66
Dumas.....	58,866.16	65,692.06	Stamps.....	13,159.61	12,700.96	Adona.....	1,047.63	1,086.74	Stone County.....	201,658.29	211,832.96
McGehee.....	56,629.80	63,196.39	Lawrence County.....	407,899.20	420,063.42	Bigelow.....	2,474.93	2,567.33	Fifty Six.....	2,055.15	2,158.84
Mitchellville.....	4,310.87	4,410.74	Alicia.....	1,305.26	1,344.19	Cisela.....	843.73	875.23	Mountain View.....	37,421.93	39,310.05
Reed.....	1,912.67	2,134.46	Black Rock.....	5,385.35	5,545.95	Fourche.....	393.74	408.44	Union County.....	583,446.12	665,460.63
Tillar.....	470.81	525.41	Hoxie.....	23,713.80	24,420.98	Houston.....	1,005.44	1,042.98	Calion.....	16,114.53	18,379.73
Watson.....	2,721.87	3,037.49	Imboden.....	5,841.74	6,015.95	Perry.....	1,842.14	1,910.91	El Dorado.....	714,406.04	814,829.44
Drew County.....	517,486.77	548,822.05	Lynn.....	2,354.95	2,425.18	Perryville.....	9,653.64	10,014.06	Felsenthal.....	3,061.29	3,491.62
Monticello.....	145,993.06	154,833.35	Minturn.....	794.11	817.79	Phillips County.....	170,335.64	194,038.65	Huttig.....	20,869.04	23,802.59
Tillam.....	2,421.11	2,567.72	Portia.....	3,870.15	3,985.56	Elaine.....	8,521.67	9,707.50	Junction City.....	19,702.35	22,471.90
Wilmar.....	6,830.99	7,244.63	Powhatan.....	949.28	977.59	Helena-West Helena.....	161,079.16	183,494.09	Norphet.....	25,371.46	28,937.90
Winchester.....	2,369.24	2,512.69	Ravenend.....	3,888.41	4,004.36	Lake View.....	5,630.56	6,414.09	Smackover.....	65,775.97	75,022.03
Faulkner County.....	1,102,758.60	1,105,711.29	Sedgwick.....	1,487.82	1,532.19	Lexa.....	3,584.33	4,083.11	Strong.....	17,223.90	19,645.05
Enola.....	2,895.98	2,903.74	Smithville.....	794.11	817.79	Marvell.....	14,852.36	16,191.13	Van Buren County.....	266,110.64	264,658.93
Holland.....	5,336.62	5,350.91	Strawberry.....	2,446.23	2,519.18	Pike County.....	220,603.44	239,303.00	Clinton.....	35,618.65	35,424.34
Mount Vernon.....	1,311.39	1,314.90	Walnut Ridge.....	49,143.59	50,609.15	Antoine.....	1,524.47	1,653.70	Damascus.....	3,478.11	3,459.13
Twin Groves.....	2,886.87	2,894.60	Lee County.....	38,911.99	45,538.85	Daisy.....	1,187.20	1,287.83	Fairfield Bay.....	27,640.30	27,489.51
Wooster.....	9,489.35	9,514.75	Aubrey.....	954.46	1,117.01	Delight.....	3,885.38	4,214.73	Shirley.....	3,520.70	3,501.49
Franklin County.....	388,270.62	343,657.39	Haynes.....	1,078.19	1,261.81	Glennwood.....	27,062.77	29,356.77	Washington County.....	2,152,739.23	2,105,796.00
Altus.....	11,243.31	9,951.42	LaGrange.....	459.56	537.82	Murfreesboro.....	20,168.92	21,878.55	Elkins.....	76,431.31	74,391.21
Branch.....	5,004.54	4,429.51	Marianna.....	31,594.45	36,975.11	Poinsett County.....	310,540.71	314,317.00	Elm Springs.....	40,231.47	39,156.56
Charleston.....	43,755.90	38,728.24	Moro.....	1,564.26	1,830.66	Fisher.....	2,239.14	2,266.37	Farmington.....	160,925.29	156,626.25
Denning.....	4,884.31	4,323.09	Rondo.....	1,440.53	1,685.85	Harrisburg.....	27,516.54	27,851.15	Fayetteville.....	2,001,197.50	1,940,253.17
Ozark.....	59,885.38	53,004.41	Lincoln County.....	180,379.11	190,686.41	Lepanto.....	21,545.50	21,807.50	Goshen.....	44,602.61	43,410.92
Wiederkehr Village.....	845.34	748.21	Gould.....	5,258.84	5,559.35	Marked Tree.....	28,437.08	28,782.88	Greenland.....	25,951.00	25,051.11
Fulton County.....	278,026.48	277,992.48	Grady.....	2,419.23	2,557.47	Trumann.....	92,041.09	93,160.34	Johnson.....	76,579.85	74,533.78
Ash Flat.....	784.17	784.07	Star city.....	17,236.00	18,220.90	Weyner.....	8,048.47	8,146.34	Lincoln.....	48,676.69	47,376.14
Cherokee Village.....	5,780.64	5,779.93	Little River County.....	344,899.74	355,273.50	Polk County.....	338,552.48	370,469.58	Prairie Grove.....	149,488.78	145,494.76
Hardy.....	242.88	242.85	Ashdown.....	51,023.52	52,558.19	Cove.....	9,214.86	10,083.60	Springdale.....	1,596,166.72	1,550,628.84
Horseshoe Bend.....	76.33	76.33	Foreman.....	11,699.13	12,051.01	Grannis.....	14,327.82	15,678.58	Tontitown.....	91,263.48	88,825.10
Mammoth Spring.....	6,446.84	6,446.05	Ogden.....	1,568.66	1,615.85	Hatfield.....	9,965.92	10,905.46	West Fork.....	49,461.80	48,140.27
Salem.....	10,867.32	10,865.99	Wilton.....	3,436.69	3,540.06	Mena.....	161,447.94	176,668.47	Winslow.....	7,744.98	7,538.05
Viola.....	2,484.36	2,484.06	Winthrop.....	1,389.06	1,430.82	Vandervoort.....	3,321.98	3,635.16	White County.....	1,494,545.12	1,365,707.20
Garland County.....	2,330,010.77	2,517,783.73	Logan County.....	413,022.23	422,230.82	Wickes.....	18,400.84	20,135.58	Bald Knob.....	40,418.88	36,934.56
Diamondhead.....	30,121.72	NA	Blue Mountain.....	1,088.07	1,112.33	Pope County.....	460,198.15	480,380.45	Beebe.....	135,215.75	123,559.42
Fountain Lake.....	15,204.91	16,220.56	Booneville.....	47,096.21	48,146.25	Atkins.....	51,079.53	53,319.66	Bradford.....	10,865.98	9,929.27
Hot Springs.....	809,434.61	863,502.91	Caulksville.....	1,904.13	1,946.58	Dover.....	23,887.14	24,934.73	Garner.....	3,381.60	3,090.08
Lonsdale.....	3,297.07	3,517.30	Magazine.....	9,149.70	9,353.69	Hector.....	7,343.02	7,665.05	Georgetown.....	1,298.15	1,186.24
Mountain Pine.....	18,726.03</										

Fairs & Festivals

April 25-27: SILOAM SPRINGS, Dogwood Festival, silوامchamber.com/dogwood-festival

April 26: CHEROKEE VILLAGE, Arkansas Pie Festival, arkansaspiefestival.com **JONESBORO**, 8th Oasis Arts & Eats Fest, oasisfest.org/artsandeats

April 30-May 3: HAMBURG, World Famous Armadillo Festival, hamburgchamber.com

May 2-3: LITTLE ROCK, 501 Fest, littlerock.com/events/501fest-2025

May 2-4: CONWAY, Toad Suck Daze, toadsuck.org

May 3: COTTER, Cotter Trout Festival, cottergassvillechamber.com; **PARIS**, Spring Time in Paris Festival, ParisArkansas.com

May 8-10: DARDANELLE, Free State of Yell Fest, 479-699-5246

May 10: BLYTHEVILLE, Mayfest, 870-763-2525; **CORNING**, 5th Hop Alley Rally, 870-857-6746

May 10-11: VAN BUREN, 47th Old Timer's Day Steampunk Festival, oldtownvanburen.com/old-timers-day-steampunk-festival

May 15-17: PARAGOULD, 25th Loose Caboose Festival, loosecaboose.org

May 16-17: HARRISON, Crawdad Days, crawdaddays.net; **MAGNOLIA**, Magnolia Blossom Festival & World Championship Steak Cook-off, blossomfestival.org

May 18: FAYETTEVILLE, Fayetteville Strawberry Festival, downtownfay.org/strawberry-festival

May 29: WYNNE, Wynne FarmFest, crosscountychamber.org

June 6-7, HOT SPRINGS, World Championship Running of the Tubs, hotsprings.org/events/world-championship-running-of-the-tubs **LOWELL**, 47th Mudtown Days, lowellarkansas.gov; **MENA**, Lum & Abner Festival, visitmena.com/events/the-lum-abner-festival

June 12-15: EUREKA SPRINGS, Pride Festival, visiteurekasprings.com

June 13-14: TYRONZA, Stars and Stripes Festival, cityoftyronza@gmail.com

June 28: SULPHUR SPRINGS, Sulphur Days, 479-298-3218

July 24-26: CAVE CITY, Cave City Watermelon Festival, cavecitywatermelonfestival.com



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