

# City & Town

JUNE 2015 VOL. 71, NO. 06

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE



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## RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF LEADERSHIP



**Nathan  
Rutledge**

Nathan's work ethic and persistent tenacity personify his leadership skills. He and our Arkansas Public Finance Group have had their work recognized by being ranked the #1 Senior Managing Underwriter in Arkansas\*, and the group is off to a record start in the first quarter of 2015. Crews is proud to recognize Nathan's contributions to this effort by naming him Senior Managing Director. He will now begin managing Crews' Arkansas public finance operations, and we look forward to his continued success.

\*Source: Thomson Reuters



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Cover photo by Andrew Morgan

ON THE COVER—Downtown Little Rock will be the place to be June 24-26 when the Marriott Hotel and Statehouse Convention Center host the League’s 81st Convention. Check out the updated, tentative agenda inside for a sample of the important educational and networking opportunities available to all municipal officials. And if you haven’t yet registered, don’t hesitate! Registration info is inside as well. Read also about the recently adjourned Special Session of the Arkansas Legislature, meet Aubrey’s new mayor, and much more.—atm

## Features

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Dear Colleagues,

It is with a bit of sadness that I must write my final letter for *City & Town* as president of the Arkansas Municipal League. Over the last year, I have had the tremendous honor of working with all of you and all of our state's cities. I can truly say that it has been an experience I will always cherish. I am grateful to all of the elected officials who have served along with me and attended countless meetings. Thank you also to the superb League staff, which is always prepared and able to provide valuable and much-needed resources to our cities.



I hope you will all join me at the 81st Convention of the Arkansas Municipal League in Little Rock June 24-26. This conference will include important information about the 90th Arkansas General Assembly and how changes to state law will impact our cities. We will also be honoring many state legislators during the Opening Night Banquet, so I hope you will be present to thank your legislator for their work in helping Arkansas's cities. You can register for the 81st Convention by using the form in this issue of *City & Town* or by going to [www.arml.org](http://www.arml.org).

The Convention will feature continuing education certification sessions, including one session on Civic Pride: Ways to Promote and Enhance Your City. I hope you will consider attending this session and find new ways to promote civic pride in your city. Speaking of civic pride, this is always such an interesting time of year in our state with so many cities holding festivals. These events are important for economic development and tourism, but they are also a source of civic pride that brings communities together around a common objective. Little Rock hosts many festivals, including the recent River Fest, the Arkansas Cornbread Festival, the World Cheese Dip Championship, the Little Rock Film Festival, the Arkansas Literary Festival, and many ethnic food festivals. These are always enjoyable events that bring diverse community groups together for fun and exciting times. I encourage you to find new and creative ways to promote civic pride in your cities.

Thank you for allowing me to be your Arkansas Municipal League President. I appreciate this opportunity and am grateful to have worked with all of you. If I can ever be of service to any of you in the future, please contact me anytime.

All Best Wishes,

Mark Stodola  
Mayor, Little Rock  
President, Arkansas Municipal League

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# Special Session completed successfully

By Don Zimmerman, League Executive Director

The First Special Session of the 90th General Assembly was called into session by Gov. Asa Hutchinson on the day after Memorial Day. The session lasted from Tuesday, May 26-Thursday, May 28.

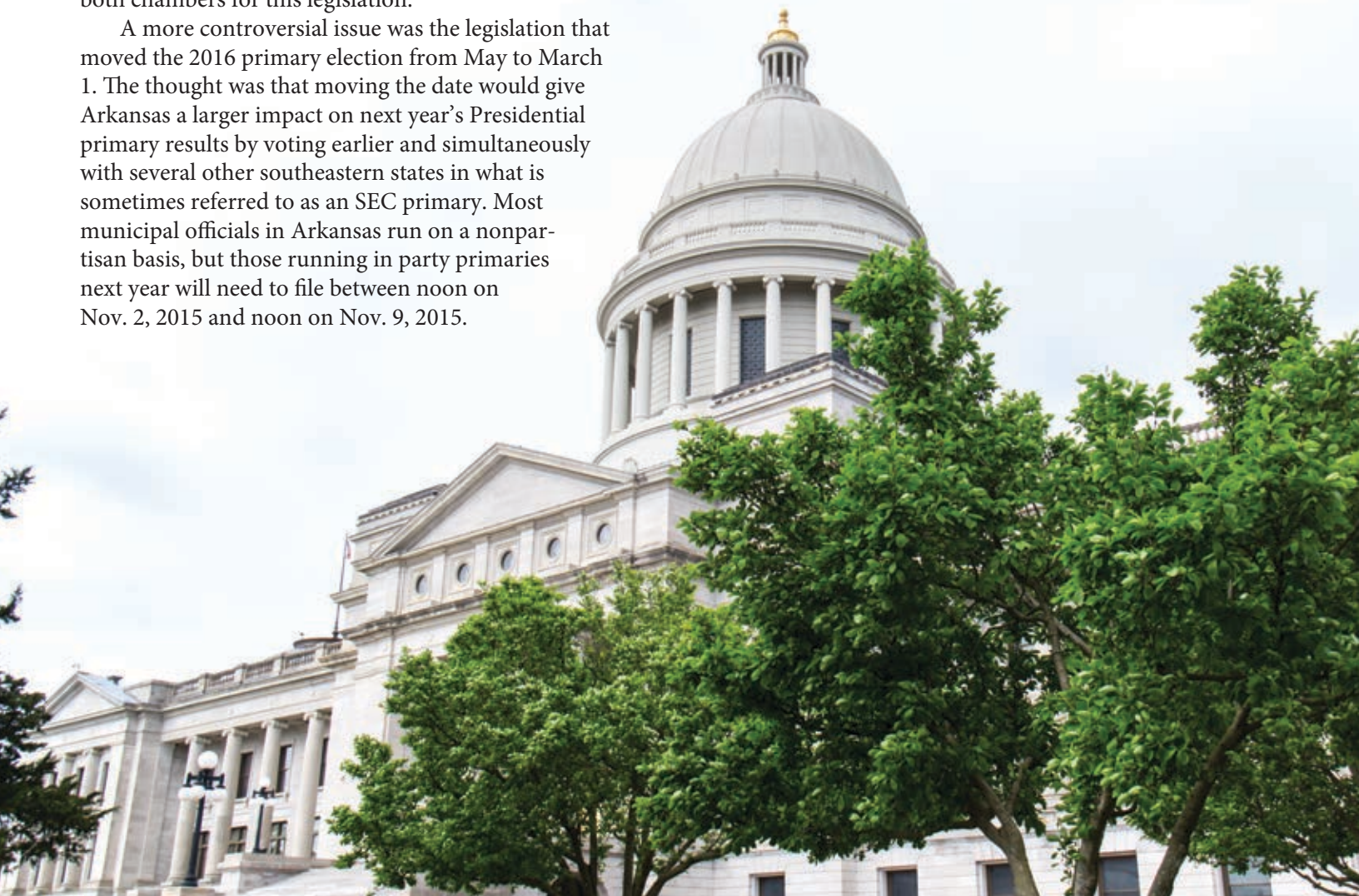
The main reason for the session was to allow the state to issue \$87 million in bonds under Amendment 82 to assist Lockheed Martin in securing a U.S. military contract to build the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle as the next generation of Army and Marine vehicles succeeding the Humvee. If Lockheed Martin succeeds in winning the contract, approximately 600 new full-time jobs will be created for the Camden-East Camden south Arkansas area. It is estimated that this game changer for south Arkansas will provide benefits over the next 25 years. Rep. Matthew Shepherd and Sen. Bobby Pierce were the lead sponsors and secured overwhelming support in both chambers for this legislation.

A more controversial issue was the legislation that moved the 2016 primary election from May to March 1. The thought was that moving the date would give Arkansas a larger impact on next year's Presidential primary results by voting earlier and simultaneously with several other southeastern states in what is sometimes referred to as an SEC primary. Most municipal officials in Arkansas run on a nonpartisan basis, but those running in party primaries next year will need to file between noon on Nov. 2, 2015 and noon on Nov. 9, 2015.

The third main issue for the session was for the consolidation of some state agencies. The Science and Technology Authority and the Department of Rural Services were both transferred to the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. The Arkansas Building Authority was transferred to the Department of Finance and Administration. The Division of Land Surveys of the Agricultural Department was transferred to the Arkansas Geographic Information System Office.

An additional issue was a DWI bill by Sen. David Johnson, which brought us into compliance with federal highway laws in order to maintain our state's eligibility for millions of dollars in federal highway assistance.

Congratulations to the Governor and members of the General Assembly on a successful and productive session. Our state will likely benefit for years to come from their good work.



# Aubrey mayor not content to sit back

By Andrew Morgan, League staff

**A**ubrey, a town of just 210 in Lee County, in the heart of the Arkansas Delta region, has seen its share of young adults and families leave looking for more opportunity elsewhere. That so-called “brain drain,” the loss of young people to more populous areas, has for decades now been a struggle for all rural cities and towns, especially in the Delta. New Aubrey Mayor Chad Glass and his family, which includes his wife, Kyleigh, and two children, have bucked that trend.

Glass, 34, grew up in nearby Marion in Crittenden County, and graduated from Arkansas State University with a degree in Marketing. He went to work for the nonprofit Boy Scouts of America, a job that took him and his young family to Memphis. That job, oddly enough, prepped him pretty well for one aspect of a mayor’s job, he says.

“I learned how to ask people for money and about ways to get money,” Glass says. “You can only rely on state and federal aid for so much.”

He and his family moved to Aubrey, Kyleigh’s hometown, after several years in Memphis when the opportunity arose to join his father-in-law’s farming business. After a string of Aubrey alderman had stepped in to fill the shoes of the longtime former mayor, Glass saw an opportunity to serve his new hometown.

“I’m not a politician,” he stresses. “That’s not me. I don’t have a political tie to any one party, and I don’t see this as being a lifetime career thing. I just think this is my way of giving back to my community.”

He counts as inspirations and mentors state Sen. Keith Ingram, his brother Kent, and their dad, all of whom have been state senators. He also names his hometown mayor, Marion’s Frank Fogleman. He also counts his wife as one of the smart and influential people in his life, and she understands the hard work of being a spouse of a volunteer and public servant.

“The families sacrifice a lot, and I think that sometimes gets overlooked.”

Small towns seem to get taken for granted or overlooked, but Aubrey is a diverse, eclectic place, Glass says, and he’s not content to watch it waste away. He’s even seen other young people move back to their hometown after trying out careers elsewhere, often to work in some aspect of the agriculture economy, the driving force of the Delta.

As mayor, Glass aims to preserve what Aubrey has and to enhance it. Under the previous mayor, the town



Aubrey Mayor Chad Glass, with his wife, Kyleigh, and two children, aims to preserve and enhance what makes the small, agricultural town special.

was among the first in the state to take advantage of the State Aid Street Fund, and that was a good start, he says. Aubrey doesn’t have a sales tax, so revenue comes from turnback, some grants, and the sewer system. In his first six months in office, Glass has already accomplished quite a bit. Through a mix of grants and volunteer work the town has brought its garbage truck back into compliance, improved its volunteer fire department, worked to reopen the town’s community center and make it handicapped accessible, and is now about to secure funding for a fun park. Glass along with 25 volunteers participated in the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission’s spring clean event, and they plan to do it again in the fall.

As he continues to help enhance his community, his ongoing priority as mayor is to get more people involved and engaged in their town, Glass says.

“I try to stay as transparent as possible,” Glass says. “I really want them to feel they are a part of something. This is our little town. And people have really appreciated the fact that I do that.”

# Arkansas mayors participate in ArCOP training for healthier, economically secure cities

By Amanda Potter Cole

**H**ealthy cities are economically secure cities. This is what mayors from cities and towns across the state have come to see first hand from working with the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention (ArCOP).

ArCOP is the state's only coalition focused on increasing access to healthy foods and physical activity in order to reduce and prevent obesity. Since the beginning of ArCOP's Growing Healthy Communities (GHC) program, one thing has been clear: Cities with the most significant changes toward better health are cities where the mayor is involved. Mayors who have seen the benefits of policy, program, and environmental changes first hand have become some of ArCOP's strongest champions.

That's where the two-part Mayors Mentoring Mayors (3M) program comes in. ArCOP's 3M program, funded in part by UAB Midsouth TCC and supported in partnership with the Arkansas Municipal League, included an online toolkit and a "lunch & learn" series.

The online toolkit was designed to help mayors

implement healthy initiatives in their communities. The toolkit lives online and is accessible to all interested at [www.arkansasobesity.org/ghc/3m](http://www.arkansasobesity.org/ghc/3m). It begins with data that can be used to help make the case of how healthy initiatives lead to healthier economies. It then provides tools for analysis, planning, and funding resources; tools for city projects; increasing access to healthy foods and physical activity; growing healthy kids; and creating healthier workplaces.

The free lunch & learn events were hosted from March to May, with one in each region of the state. The host mayors shared their successes, lessons learned, and





best practices relating to no-cost, low-cost, and investment-level solutions in an effort to increase community health. By sharing information on projects that have been completed and are happening across Arkansas right now, attendees gained insight on how to utilize the resources available to do more to make their communities healthier, and thus more economically secure.

Lunch & learn events were held in Northeast Arkansas, hosted by Batesville Mayor Rick Elumbaugh; Northwest Arkansas, hosted by Yellville Mayor Shawn Lane and Springdale Mayor Doug Sprouse; Southeast Arkansas, hosted by Lake Village Mayor JoAnne Bush; Southwest Arkansas, hosted by Camden Mayor Marie Trissolini and Hot Springs Mayor Ruth Carney; and Central Arkansas, hosted by Bryant Mayor Jill Dabbs, Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola, and North Little Rock Mayor Joe Smith. In addition to the host mayors, 31 mayors from across the state attended the events, along with more than 50 other municipal and community leaders.



Southeast



Southwest



Central

# DOT thanks League for river upgrade support

In a letter to League Executive Director Don Zimmerman, U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration Administrator Paul Jaenichen thanked the League for joining several other organizations in support of upgrading the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS) from a “connector” to a “corridor.” The upgrade request was approved in mid 2014, and the MKARNS is now officially the M-40 Marine Highway Corridor.

“As you are aware, the MKARNS is an important component of the national and regional freight systems,” Jaenichen wrote. “The U.S. Department



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Administration**

of Transportation is supportive of the efforts of the Arkansas Waterways Commission and Oklahoma Department of Transportation to foster and expand services on the M-40. We encourage your continued support of the M-40 and any proposed Marine Highway Projects on the route.”

The League in 2014 joined the Arkansas Waterways Commission, ports and metropolitan planning organizations along the Arkansas River system, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, and congressional delegations in both states in supporting the upgrade. 🏢

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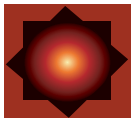
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# Parrot Island opens with a splash in Fort Smith

Memorial Day weekend may have been a bit cooler than usual, but the weather didn't keep enthusiastic residents of Fort Smith and the surrounding area from enjoying the opening day of the new Parrot Island Waterpark on Saturday, May 23. The new \$11 million park located at Ben Geren Park is a unique joint venture between the City of Fort Smith and Sebastian County. Parrot Island features a wave pool, four water slides, a lazy river, an activity pool, and a themed children's aquatic play area.

The waterpark is a great addition to the many amenities already featured at Ben Geren Park, including miniature golf, go-karts, playground, picnic areas and pavilions, sports fields, and more. The waterpark replaces the park's swimming pool, which was closed in 2004.

"The region has eagerly awaited the opening of Parrot Island Waterpark," Fort Smith City Administrator Ray Gosack told the *Fayetteville Flyer*. "Three years ago, voters overwhelmingly approved the use of a local sales tax to help finance the project. Now they'll get to float, splash, and slide in the region's best waterpark." 🍹





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# Top 10 computer-related issues cities face

Below are the top 10 most common computer-related issues identified by the Arkansas Division of Legislative Audit across Arkansas municipalities:

## 1. Data Integrity

### Finding:

Data integrity controls were inadequate, specifically related to the ability of employees to change receipt or disbursement information after issuance or to edit or delete records without proper approval. Sound information system best practices dictate that a secure authorization structure be in place to limit access to critical transactions and that field edit checks be in place to prevent incorrect or unauthorized data from being processed.

### Recommendation:

We recommend that application users work with the application vendor to modify the software to include the data input edits that would eliminate vulnerabilities.

## 2. Remote Access Policy

### Finding:

A Documented remote access security policy was not in place, which could result in unauthorized or inappropriate parties gaining access to the network or the network being compromised.

### Recommendation:

We recommend that management draft and implement a policy identifying the risks associated with remote access and establishing guidelines for remote connections to local network resources.

## 3. Review Access Security

### Finding:

Management had no process in place to periodically review appropriate access security. Lack of adequate supervisory oversight of user security permissions increases the risk of unauthorized access and misuse of information resources.

### Recommendation:

We recommend that management design and implement a process to review and update application user security periodically. Employees should only be given the degree of system access that is necessary for performing their job duties.

## 4. Passwords

### Finding:

Password controls did not follow minimum industry best practices. The minimum number of characters required for passwords was below industry standards. Passwords were not required to be changed on a periodic, recurring basis of 90 days or less. Passwords were not required to contain a mixture of alpha and numeric characters. A password history file was not maintained to prevent re-use of previous passwords. User accounts were not locked after three unsuccessful login attempts. Failure to establish proper password controls increases the likelihood that an unauthorized person could gain access to the system.

### Recommendation:

We recommend implementing strengthened password parameters to decrease the likelihood of unauthorized access to the application.

## 5. Wireless Access Policy

### Finding:

A Wireless network security and use policy was not in place, which could result in misuse or unnecessary exposure of information resources.

### Recommendation:

We recommend that management draft and implement a policy identifying the risks associated with wireless technology use and establishing guidance for wireless network connections.



## 6. Disaster Recovery Planning

### Finding:

A formally documented and approved Disaster Recovery or Business Continuity Plan did not exist, or existing plans were not adequate or had not been tested. This situation could cause the entity to be without computer processing for an extended period of time in the event of a disaster or major interruption and could place undue financial and personnel burdens on entity resources.

### Recommendation:

We recommend that management develop and implement a Disaster Recovery Plan or Business Continuity Plan that includes recovery efforts necessary to address the unavailability of computer applications in use during an unexpected outage. This plan should be written, approved by management, and tested regularly. The plan should address how the entity would recover from short or long-term outages, as well as how operations would continue during recovery efforts. Additional resources are available at [www.dis.arkansas.gov/security/Pages/ContinuityofOperationsProgram.aspx](http://www.dis.arkansas.gov/security/Pages/ContinuityofOperationsProgram.aspx)

## 7. Audit Log Report Review

### Finding:

Management had no process to periodically review and approve data changes and deletions. Inadequate supervisory oversight of information changes could decrease detection of erroneous or fraudulent transactions.

### Recommendation:

We recommend that management develop a formal process for review and approval of data changes.

## 8. Audit Log Not Enabled

### Finding:

Audit logging was not enabled, or a report was not available for supervisory review. An audit log or trail is a chronological sequence of audit records, each of which contains evidence directly pertaining to, and resulting from, the execution of transactions by users. Without adequate reporting functionality of application and security events within the system, management loses the ability to track erroneous or unauthorized transactions and the users who made them.

### Recommendation:

We recommend that management work with the software vendor to obtain an audit log report for periodic review of changes and deletions.

## 9. Offsite Backups

### Finding:

Backups were not stored at a suitable off-site facility, which could result in loss of data and the inability to continue operations in the event of a disaster.

### Recommendation:

We recommend that backup media be stored at a secure, off-site location that is geographically apart from the primary facility and not a personal residence.

## 10. Physical Access Security

### Finding:

Physical access to computing resources was not adequately restricted to authorized personnel. Inadequate physical security over information assets increases the risk of unauthorized access to these sensitive devices.

### Recommendation:

We recommend that physical access to information systems resources be restricted to authorized personnel.



# Chiefs of Police Association discusses accreditation program

The League was honored to host the Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police May 27 at its North Little Rock headquarters, where officers from across Arkansas met to discuss the Arkansas Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (ALEAP). The program is a voluntary process where police agencies prove their compliance with Arkansas law enforcement's current standards and best practices. The AACP developed ALEAP to assist Arkansas police agencies in meeting their professional obligations to the citizens of Arkansas. For more information about ALEAP, contact the AACP at 501-372-4600 or visit [www.arkchiefs.org](http://www.arkchiefs.org). 🏠



## County equalization boards to meet in August

County equalization boards will meet Aug. 1 through Oct. 1 to equalize the assessed value for all acreage lands, city and town lots, other real property and personal property. “Equalization” means to adjust the valuation of property in order to bring about a uniform tax rate (ACA § 26-27-315; *Black’s Law Dictionary*). The boards will meet as often as necessary during this time to complete their work (ACA § 26-27-309). If a county’s ratio of assessed-to-market value is out of compliance, the equalization board may meet after Oct. 1, but no later than the third Monday in November (ACA § 26-27-311).

County equalization boards have two responsibilities: (1) to review and equalize overall county assessments as assessed by the assessor, and (2) to hear assessment appeals by property owners. The board begins the review of assessments on Aug. 1, when the county assessor delivers the completed assessment records to the county clerk, who serves as the secretary for the board. Assessment appeals from landowners begin no later than the second Monday in August (ACA § 26-27-317).

Cities and incorporated towns have a part to play in deciding who sits as a member of the county equalization board. Cities and incorporated towns

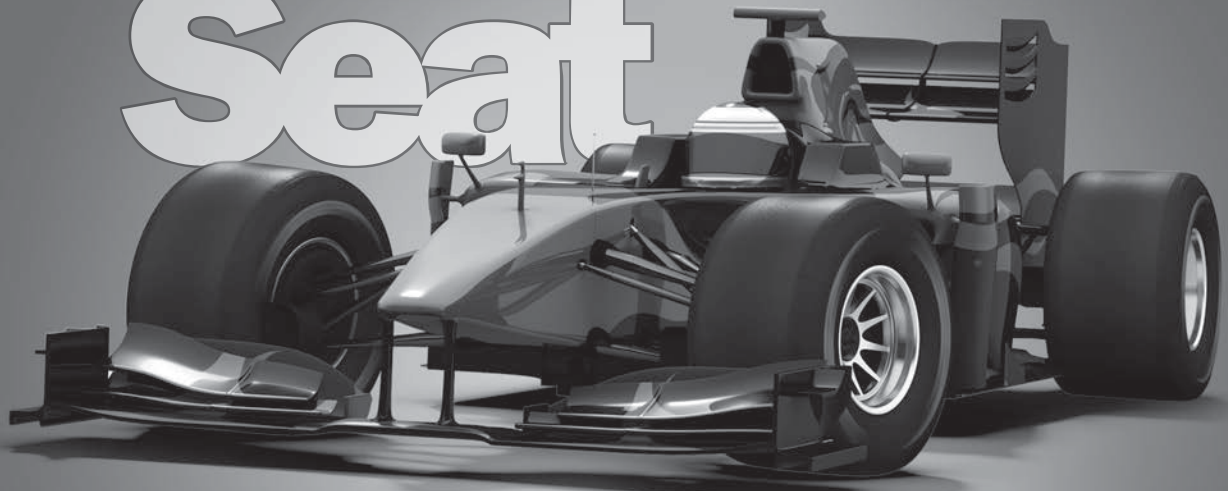
select one member of a five-member board (counties with a population less than 79,000) and two members of a nine-member board (counties with a population greater than 79,000) (ACA § 26-27-303 and 304).

To select county equalization board members, city and incorporated town representatives within the county shall hold a meeting during the month of May of each year in which the terms of any of the members of the county equalization board shall expire (ACA § 26-27-304(b)(2)(A)). The mayor of the city or town or his or her designee shall serve as the representative of his or her city or town (*Id.*). The mayor of the county seat shall be the chair of the meeting, and if there are dual county seats, the mayor of the larger of the two seats shall be the chair of the meeting (*Id.*). Those at the meeting shall select the member of the board via majority vote, and each city or town shall be entitled to one vote (*Id.*). No action shall be taken unless a quorum is present. A majority of all of the representatives of all cities and incorporated towns in the county shall constitute a quorum (*Id.*).

Information for this article comes from “Arkansas Property Tax Equalization and Appeal System,” a publication of the Assessment Coordination Department. For more information, contact the Department at 501-324-9240, or visit [www.arkansas.gov/acd](http://www.arkansas.gov/acd). 🏠



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Pierce Fire Engine, department ready \$48,900



# Fairs & Festivals

June 12-14, **CHEROKEE VILLAGE**, 60th Anniversary Celebration, [www.discovercherokeevillage.com](http://www.discovercherokeevillage.com)

June 18-20, **SMACKOVER**, 44th Oil Town Festival, 870-725-3521, [smackoverar.com](http://smackoverar.com)

June 19, **LESLIE**, 61st Leslie Homecoming, 870-448-7505

June 26-27, **MALVERN**, 35th Malvern Brickfest, 501-458-1115, [www.malvernbrickfest.com](http://www.malvernbrickfest.com)

June 27, **EMERSON**, 26th Purple Hull Pea Festival & World Championship Rotary Tiller Race, 870-547-3500, [www.purplehull.com](http://www.purplehull.com); **HATFIELD**, 14th Jubilee in June Festival, 870-389-6611; **MULBERRY**, Celebrate Mulberry, 479-997-1321, [cityofmulberry.org](http://cityofmulberry.org)

July 3, **FAIRFIELD BAY**, Independence Day Celebration Parade, 352-789-0300; **OZARK**, 5th Cardboard Boat Race & Fireworks Celebration, 479-667-2949, [www.ozarkchamberofcommerce.com](http://www.ozarkchamberofcommerce.com)

July 4, **BEEBE**, 4th of July Extravaganza, 501-882-8135, [www.beebeark.org](http://www.beebeark.org); **CAMDEN**, 15th Star Spangled Spectacular, 870-836-4440; **COLT**, Fireworks on the 4th, 870-633-9170; **GREENWOOD**, 4th Freedom Fest, 479-996-1224; **HARRISON**, 4th Fire in the Sky Festival, 870-741-1789, [www.harrisonarkansas.org](http://www.harrisonarkansas.org); **HEBER SPRINGS**, Fireworks Extravaganza, 501-362-2444, [www.heber-springs.com](http://www.heber-springs.com); **HORSESHOE BEND**, Independence Day Parade & Celebration, 870-670-5433, [www.horseshoebendarcc.com](http://www.horseshoebendarcc.com); **LITTLE ROCK**, 32nd Pops! on the River, 501-918-4539, [showtime.arkansonline.com/pops](http://showtime.arkansonline.com/pops); **MENA**, 4th of July Celebration, 479-394-8355, [visitmena.com](http://visitmena.com); **MOUNTAIN VIEW**, Independence Day Celebration; **PINE BLUFF**, 4th of July Celebration, 870-536-7600; **RUSSELLVILLE**, Community Fireworks Display, 479-968-1272, [russellvillearkansas.org](http://russellvillearkansas.org); **SHERWOOD**, 16th 4th of July Family Celebration, 501-833-0476, [cityofsherwood.net](http://cityofsherwood.net)



## REMINDER: Act 1229 of 2013 now in effect

Act 1229 of 2013, passed during the 89th General Assembly of the Arkansas Legislature, protects the identities of children by prohibiting the release of names and addresses of minor passengers that appear in motor vehicle accident reports. Act 1229 updates Arkansas Code Annotated § 27-53-202(b) regarding accident and supplemental reports. The law went into effect on January 1 of 2015.

The updated portion in Section 1 of the law reads:

*(B) The name and address of a minor occupant who is under eighteen (18) years of age shall be included in the report, but the name and address of the minor occupant shall:*

*(i) Not be open to public inspection under the subchapter of the Freedom of Information Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq., unless the requestor is:*

*(a) The parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian of the minor occupant; or*

*(b) A representative of an insurance company that insures a person involved in the accident.; and*

*(ii) Be redacted on copies, including without limitation written, photostatic, or electronic copies, produced under this subchapter of the Freedom of Information Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq., unless the requestor is identified in subdivision (b)(2)(B)(i) of this section. ☰*



# Municipal Property Program



Your Municipal Property Program offers broad coverage for your municipal properties. The limits of coverage are \$500 million per occurrence per member for damages from fire, windstorm and other incidents in excess of \$5,000.

Tax interruption coverage in the amount of \$500,000 is included with additional amounts available to members.

Coverage is \$50 million for losses exceeding \$100,000 on earthquakes and flooding.

The Municipal Property Program's current rates are listed below.

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FIRE CLASS III	—	.0013	x covered value	= Premium
FIRE CLASS IV	—	.0014	x covered value	= Premium
FIRE CLASS V	—	.0015	x covered value	= Premium
FIRE CLASS VI	—	.0016	x covered value	= Premium
FIRE CLASS VII	—	.0017	x covered value	= Premium
FIRE CLASS VIII	—	.0018	x covered value	= Premium
FIRE CLASS IX	—	.0019	x covered value	= Premium
FIRE CLASS X	—	.002	x covered value	= Premium
Unincorporated	—	.003	x covered value	= Premium

For more information, call Linda Montgomery at League headquarters, 501-978-6123 or 501-374-3484, Ext. 233. You can access the Program online at [www.arml.org/mpp](http://www.arml.org/mpp).

# DRS honors Lake Village's Angel

The Arkansas Department of Rural Services (DRS) has named Lake Village Alderman and Fire Chief Sam E. Angel, II its Arkansas Rural Advocate of the Year. DRS and Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson presented Angel with the award at a May 21 luncheon during the organization's 2015 Arkansas Rural Development Conference. DRS cited Angel's 25-year history of public service in Lake Village and the state of Arkansas. He was first elected to the Lake Village City Council in 1991. He was elected to the Arkansas House of Representatives in 1994 and served for six years before returning to Lake Village and being elected again to the City Council, where he continues to serve today.

Angel is also the city's fire chief, captain of the County Sheriff's Reserve, chairman of the Chicot County Memorial Medical Center, is a member of the Lake Village Economic Development Commission, and the Bank of Lake Village Board of Directors. He is also a former chairman of the Arkansas Rural Development Commission. 🏛️



From left, DRS Director Alex Johnston, Sam E. Angel II, Gov. Asa Hutchinson, and Arkansas Economic Development Commission Deputy Director Amy Fecher.

# IIMC honors Jones, swears in Whitbey

The International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) has named Kim Jones, Institute director for the State of Arkansas, the IIMC Institute Director of the Year.

IIMC President Brenda Young presented Jones with the award at the organization's annual business meeting May 20 in Hartford, Conn. Arkansas City Clerks, Records and Treasurers Association President Linda Simpson, city clerk of Lake City, nominated Jones for the award.

"Kim inspires us to do our best and to accept nothing less, and when we leave Municipal Clerks Institute, we know we can," Simpson said. "She has been a mentor to us all." 🏛️



Kim Jones, right, receives the IIMC Institute Director of the Year award.

Also, North Little Rock City Clerk and Collector Diane Whitbey was sworn in as the new Region IV Director on May 20 at the meeting. Whitbey will hold the office for a three-year term expiring in 2018.



Diane Whitbey is the new IIMC Region IV Director.

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# IBLA Grand Prize winners perform across Arkansas

By Sherman Banks

A close friend of mine wrote about rhythm, harmony, and balance—music as the great equalizer. He said, “Everyone loves music because it is the universal, nonverbal expression of the flow of life. Whether if it is a symphony or a country ballad, music frames and expresses the human experience and can include sadness, joy, idealism, passion, and all the rest of it. Music mirrors life. Rhythm, harmony, and balance are the Trinity that tells us how to live an enlightened life.”

When the IBLA winners come to Arkansas, they bring the past, present, and future of music. Music is the equalizer that quiets the spirit and enriches the soul.

IBLA Grand Prize, in its near 25 year history, has given winners the opportunity to perform in such prestigious venues as Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall, Tchaikovsky Bolshoi Hall in Moscow, and each year in Carnegie Recital Hall, New York City. The competition commences each July with participants from all over the world in the magnificent baroque quarters of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) site of Ragusa Ibla, Sicily. The island of Sicily is the site where IBLA Grand Prize participants compete in piano, vocals, composition, and other instruments with an emphasis on classical music, but other musical genres are encouraged. To learn more about the competition please visit [www.ibla.org](http://www.ibla.org).

The IBLA Foundation has worked with cities across Arkansas and loyal benefactors to offer an annual tour of public concerts and community outreach programs that allow IBLA winners to perform and interact with thousands of Arkansas students and families by sharing their professional experience and artistic talents.

The IBLA winners arrived in Arkansas on May 3 for the 2015 IBLA Grand Prize Arkansas Tour, which included performances and classes in Little Rock, Lake

Village, Springdale, Tontitown, Jacksonville, and North Little Rock. The delegation departed Arkansas on May 11.

This year we had classical pianists from Japan, Holland, South Korea, and Poland; a 19-year-old jazz piano virtuoso from Italy; the unique performer of the *Lame Sonore* (musical saw) from Holland; guitarists from Italy; a soprano from Italy; a mezzo-soprano from France; a violinist from Italy; and a 15-year-old virtuoso cellist from Italy.

To again quote my friend, “Music is a metaphor for life, and if you think of a musical piece that you love and ask yourself why you do, you’ll likely find that the music you find most satisfying is that which is expressed with the measure of rhythm, harmony, and balance that suits your personal consciousness.”

For 15 years the IBLA performers have touched the hearts of our students and communities around the state of Arkansas. If you would like to have the 2015 world-class IBLA Grand Prize winners to come to your community in the spring of 2016, please contact me.



Contact Sherman Banks at 501-374-8493, email [sbanks@aristotle.net](mailto:sbanks@aristotle.net), or write to P.O. Box 165920, Little Rock, AR 72216.



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# NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2015

The Newsletter, provided by a'TEST consultants, is included in City & Town as a service of the Arkansas Municipal League Legal Defense Program.

## Employee observations and warning signs

How does one know an employee is troubled? It is difficult to pinpoint problems and they are often overlooked. Here are some important work observations that may help you recognize a trouble employee.

Using the past 12 months as a point of reference, review the following: difficulty in making decisions; does not heed advice from counseling; obvious change in work performance; does not follow policies; involved in accidents or safety problems; unexplained disappearances at work; over-extended meal breaks; pattern of absences (sick day before or after holidays, etc.); often late to work; unauthorized absences; and a number of excused absences.

Once these patterns of behavior are assessed and any other observations are noted, it is important to determine if the employee is troubled. Could it be family matters, drug abuse, financial, etc.? Regardless of the issues, an employer should set up an intervention. This troubled employee is not functioning in an appropriate manner and could cost you money.

## Which test should I request?

Recently we had an employer bring an employee in for a "reasonable cause" test. The person was evidently under the influence of alcohol; however, the employer requested a drug test. This was the wrong test to request. To make matter worse, when the employer was told an alcohol test was needed, not a drug test, he replied their substance abuse policy said any reasonable cause test was a drug test. Since the testing program is owned by the employer, and we advised him what test was needed, we administered a drug test because he insisted on a drug test. What happened after that is important for you to know.

The drug test was negative because it is not designed to detect alcohol. Now the employer had a very visibly drunk employee, who willingly took a test requested by his employer, and he passed it! That leaves an employer in a bad situation because the test result was of no value to the company in a very serious situation.

Please think carefully about the tests you are requesting. If you suspect an alcohol situation, request an alcohol test. If you suspect a drug problem, request a drug test. It is important to have a statement in your policy that allows testing for both substances. In the case of alcohol you should have a statement that says at what level you consider the employee intoxicated.

Generally at a Breathalyzer reading of .02-.039, an employee is removed from any safety sensitive work and transported home. The employer will often give the employee a second alcohol test when they report to work the next day. At .04, many employers terminate the employee or refer them to a counselor. Regardless of the action taken, this employee is not fit to work and needs to get an assessment. The DOT states a .04 is positive and a driver is required to get education and assessment by a qualified Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) or Substance Abuse Professional (SAP). With a positive alcohol test at .04, a driver's result is entered into a state database and he/she cannot drive again until treatment is obtained and verified. The state of Arkansas considers a positive alcohol test a .05 and this is confusing to all. Employers that have DOT and non-DOT programs generally keep the .04 as their positive level so that all employees are treated the same.

At any time, if you have concerns on reasonable suspicion testing, please call our staff for assistance. We are here to guide you in maintaining a legally sound program.

a'TEST CONSULTANTS, Inc., provides drug and alcohol testing as a service of the Arkansas Municipal League Legal Defense Program. The program helps cities and towns comply with the U. S. Department of Transportation's required drug testing for all holders of commercial drivers' licenses.

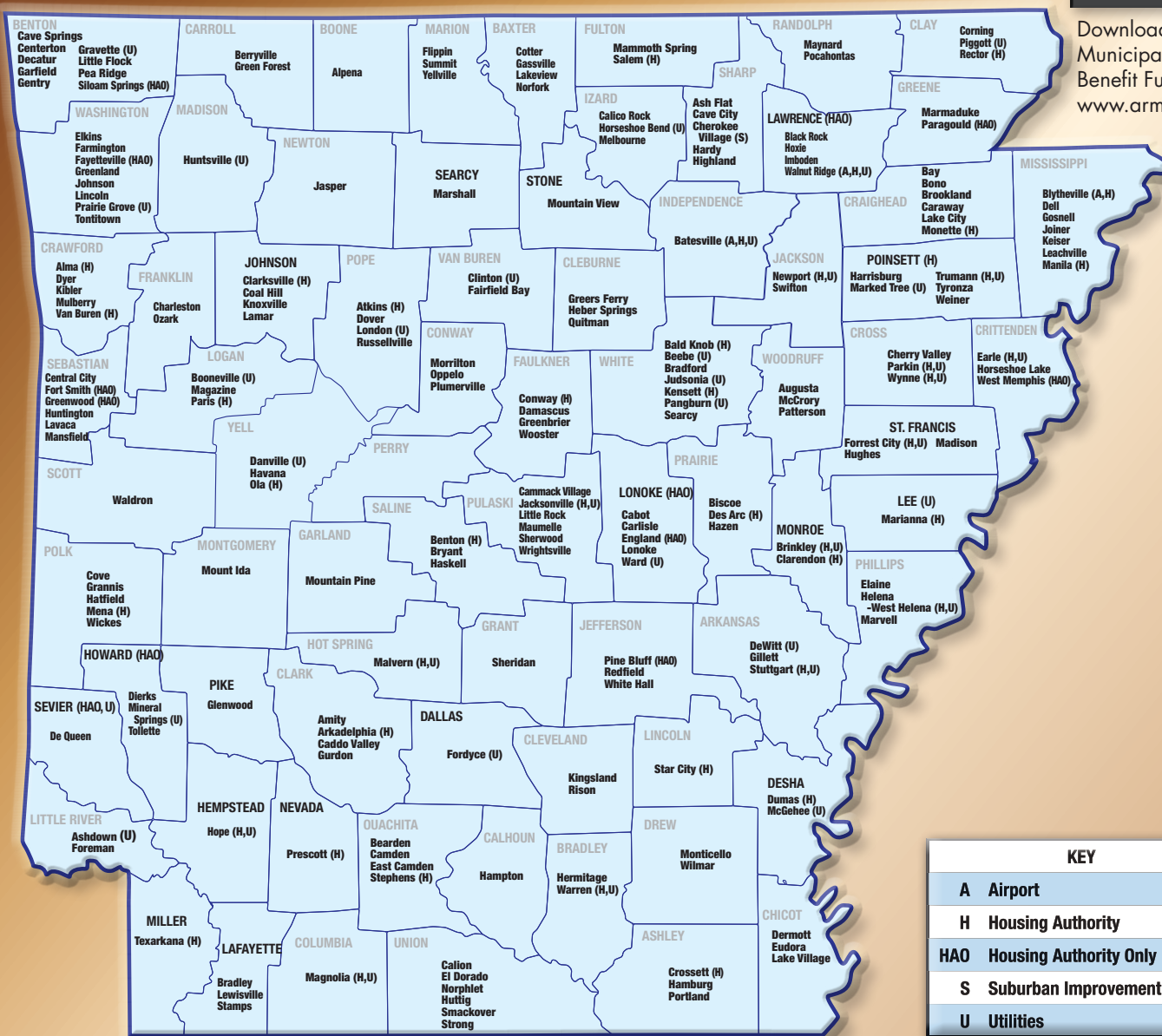




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Download the Municipal Health Benefit Fund booklet at: [www.arml.org/mhbf](http://www.arml.org/mhbf)



### Other Municipal Entities Covered by MHBF

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Barton-Lexa Water Association .....	Phillips County	Little Rock Metroplan .....	Little Rock	Ozark Mountain Regional Public Water .....	Diamond City
Boston Mountain Solid Waste .....	Prairie Grove	Little Rock Port Authority .....	Little Rock	Ozark Regional Transit .....	Ozark
Central Arkansas Planning & Development District .....	Lonoke	Little Rock Workforce Investments .....	Little Rock	Piggott Community Hospital .....	Piggott
Eighth Judicial Drug Task Force .....	De Queen	Local Police & Fire Retirement System .....	Little Rock	Regional Recycling & Waste Reduction District .....	Pulaski County
Fifth Judicial District Prosecuting Attorney .....	Russellville	Magnolia Regional Medical Center .....	Magnolia	SE AR Economic Development District .....	Pine Bluff
Fifth Judicial District .....	Russellville	Mena Regional Health System .....	Mena	Sevier County Water Association .....	De Queen
Grand Prairie/Bayou Two Water .....	Lonoke and Prairie Counties	Montgomery County Nursing Home .....	Mount Ida	Third Judicial District Drug Task Force .....	Jackson County
Holiday Island Suburban Improvement District .....	Carroll County	NE AR Region Solid Waste Management District .....	Paragould	Thirteenth Judicial District Drug Task Force .....	Camden
Ladd Water Users Association .....	Pine Bluff	North Little Rock - Library .....	North Little Rock	Upper SW Regional Solid Waste Management District .....	Nashville
Lakeview Midway Public Water .....	Lakeview	North Little Rock - Sewer/Waste Water .....	North Little Rock	Waldron Housing Authority .....	Waldron
Lee County Water Association .....	Marianna	Northwest Public Water .....	Mountain Home	Western AR Planning & Development District .....	Fort Smith
Little Rock Arts Center .....	Little Rock	Northwest AR Conservation Authority .....	Rogers	White River Regional Housing .....	Melbourne
Little Rock Downtown Partner .....	Little Rock	Northwest AR Economic Development District .....	Harrison	Yorktown Water Association .....	Star City

# Municipal Attorneys: What we do and why we do it

By Kelly Butler

Somewhere between law school graduation and the date of this writing, I became a municipal lawyer. I don't think I really meant to do it, but here I am just the same. I'd lay money that most municipal attorneys didn't hit the doors as a first-year law student aiming to set the legal world on fire by sitting behind our computers writing and writing and writing until carpal tunnel surgery is the only way to stop small children from shrieking at the sight of our claw-like hands. And I'm pretty sure we didn't take Conflict of Laws so that we could settle political squabbles that are really better suited for the playground or a Jell-O pit. But somehow, somehow, at some point, municipal law found me just like it found many others ... and we just couldn't let it go.

Maybe it provided a measure of stability to an otherwise unstable bottom line in a solo practice. Or maybe a box of files greeted us at the door on our first day as a "BigLaw" associate, said box handed over by a giggling partner who we'd swear skipped a little as he made his hasty retreat from our ~~supply closet~~ cozy office. Or maybe we had an opportunity fall in our lap at the right point in our career and managed, amazingly, to not screw it up.

I realized pretty quickly what every other municipal lawyer already knew: that we are the redheaded stepchildren of the legal world. Our little part of the profession accounts for a tiny-point-tiny percent of the country's lawyers and, for the most part, we get treated like even less. If you really look at us, though, we are an interesting microcosm of the larger Bar, sort of like the adult males left to fend for themselves on the *Titanic*. We come from all walks of life, a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, and varied cultures, but none of that matters when we go looking for help. Generally, we are left to fend for ourselves. I think that's why we have such unique personalities in the practice of municipal law—we have to be strong (or weird) enough to be okay with watching everybody else get the lifeboats while we're clinging to the random timber that floats by in the dark. (Shout out to the state municipal leagues for being the biggest and strongest timber we could ever ask for, by the way.)

## What do we do? Seriously...

When I clerked for my judge, and later when I was in private practice, I didn't need to say much to explain my job to High-School-Classmate-I-Haven't-Seen-in-Years: "I work for a judge" seemed to sufficiently explain my work



and impress those who wondered what I'd been up to since I ran screaming from graduation. Later, during the years of private practice, I found I had to expound a little to help others understand my career choice: "I own a small boutique firm (I have an office that looks really cool but I haven't paid myself in four months) where I specialize in a wide range of business-related transactions (I write boring documents that would make your brain melt and I also clean the toilets) and represent a select list of high-profile defendants (most of my clients are career losers selected for me by the presiding judge from the tall stack of indigent defense requests) and private clients who pay top dollar to have me on their side (I once got paid with a deep-fried turkey ... and it was delicious)."

Since February 6, 2001, though, the answer has been way more difficult to give. I get the "what do you do" question quite often from non-lawyer friends and family and, more often than I find comfortable, from fellow municipal employees and elected officials. Fourteen years as a municipal lawyer and I still don't have a good answer. And by "good answer," I mean an answer that makes me sound really cool, because, let's face it, the truth is pretty boring. I mean, come on ... I write ordinances and resolutions and legislation and contracts and leases and deeds and bid documents and all kinds of stuff that nobody—and I do mean NOBODY—else cares about until they get a question from a reporter or a subpoena from the sheriff. And the rest of what I do from day to day—which is especially true for those of us who are in-house (read: easily accessible and not on a clock)—is akin to being an ER doctor. One of the ways I describe my department is that it's like a triage ward—we treat 'em and street 'em and get our people back to work as quickly as possible, hopefully healed and now armed with better information than they had when they got to us.

Usually, though, the most accurate descriptions of what I do are in terms nobody else understands ("I spent all day drafting a revamp of our SOPs for street cuts and a revision of our SOGs for processing trench failure complaints") and in terms nobody wants to hear ("Let me break down WHY we shouldn't enter into this 91-page agreement for a multi-million-dollar deal without reading it first"). However, because we are all drifting in this icy municipal water together, I offer 15 painfully accurate, bite-size, somewhat dignified answers about my beloved legal niche, each suitable for dinner parties and family

gatherings when the inevitable, “So what DO you do?” comes up:

1. I read. A lot.
2. I write. A lot more.
3. I talk on the phone, but only when threatened with physical harm.
4. I receive 1.2 million emails every day and have time to answer four of them.
5. I answer lots of questions from people in my doorway who wonder if I have a minute and then leave an hour later.
6. I counsel and console.
7. I reprimand and admonish.
8. I advise (and get ignored).
9. I advise again (and get ignored again).
10. I try to convince coworkers that I truly don’t remember anything about divorce law.
11. I hand out a lot of phone numbers for lawyers that do divorces.
12. I get ignored some more.
13. I pick my battles and refuse to be ignored when it really matters.
14. I protect my city’s representatives to the extent they are watching out for its best interests.
15. I protect my faceless client like a fat kid covers the last piece of cake.

## Okay. But why?

I suppose, if I’m completely honest with myself, I like being part of something as critically important as local government. We’re never going to be wealthy lawyers by the world’s standards and most of us are never going to be legendary legal gods, two things that, I sheepishly confess, bothered me the first few years of my municipal career. I guess it’s true, though, that with age comes wisdom and I have left those concerns further and further behind me as I’ve become more and more aware of the direct impact local government has on the quality of life for the people around me.

I have to say, though, that my “why” recently has become clearer. When I began writing this article, things were rolling along as usual: too much to do and not enough time to do it, but it all was general, garden-variety municipal work. And then, in a moment, everything changed and attention shifted to matters larger and more intense than I could have ever imagined.

The details of my Moment aren’t important because, for each municipal attorney, there has been or will be a Moment that defines our “why.” A Moment may be the result of a natural disaster ravaging our city or a school shooting or a bad decision or a political scandal or one of the billion other things completely outside of the individual, direct control of a city attorney. Trust me: The genesis doesn’t matter when we define our “why.” Nothing matters as we realize that our presence as legal counsel for

our city right then, in that Moment, matters more than anything else we’ve done in our career and, instinctively, we know that it will greatly matter in all of the hours and days and weeks and months to follow. Our presence, our help, our mind, our experience will make a difference for our city and its people and we suddenly realize why we do this. It’s because protecting this faceless client is as much a part of who we are as the color of our eyes and we know that this is why we were put on this spinning terrarium—to protect and serve and defend in this Moment and in all the little “m” moments to follow.

Municipal attorneys were put here to pick up these pieces and help our city put itself back together. We are here to handle the Moment and the moments, counsel shaken employees who are suddenly willing to listen, and send them back to the comfort of their daily work with the confidence and knowledge that, whatever the problem might be, it is now safely in our hands.

## We do it because that’s who we are. It’s who we were made to be.

And after everyone else has moved past the Moment, we will continue to deal with it and its consequences and its mind-numbing minutiae that nobody else will ever see. But we see it, live it, breathe it, lose sleep because of it ... because we’re still there, camped out in the Moment long after it’s over.

That’s just what we do.

In fact, we’ve been critically deep in the Moment from the time it happened and we know we’ll stay in it until the file is finally closed and stored away. We’ll do that for the employees and the electeds and the department heads so they can return to the important work they do for our city and for its citizens. We’ll handle the Moment and still manage the zillion other issues that won’t stop coming just because we’ve had our Moment. We’ll keep going because our city and its operation under the unique laws that govern its ultimate success or failure is in our hands. We’ll stay in that Moment for as long as it takes because municipal law found us and we couldn’t let it go and now it’s who we are. It’s what we proudly do even if it seems nobody will ever understand that municipal attorneys float on the random timbers to keep our clients in the lifeboats.

We take on the icy municipal waters so our clients don’t drown. It’s what we do because that’s just who we are.

*Kelly Butler is the city attorney for the City of Madison, Alabama, and is vice president of the Alabama Association of Municipal Attorneys.*

*This article originally appeared in the May/June 2015 issue of The Alabama Municipal Journal and is reprinted with permission. Original artwork by Karl Franklin.*

# 8 meeting commandments we all need to follow

By Dan McCarthy

**W**e all like to complain about meetings. Meetings are a waste of time, boring, inefficient, run too long, nothing gets accomplished, etc. Complaining is easy but never makes things better. The solution to bad meetings? How about a day of meeting training? How about if we improve our meeting process? Maybe it's the leader's fault, and they need to learn how to run better meetings. Their agendas are too long, or they don't know how to facilitate a discussion. Maybe it's the uncomfortable chairs or the cramped, smelly, dark room.

While any or all of those reasons can result in a bad meeting, perhaps the one thing we have the most control over fixing is our own meeting behavior. Maybe, just maybe, if we all did an honest self-assessment of our meeting behaviors and upped our own game, the time we spend in meetings might get better.

Here are eight things that anyone can do—or stop doing—to make meetings a little more tolerable, and maybe even more productive!

- I. Show up on time.** Showing up on time is probably the easiest thing to take responsibility for and fix, yet it has remained on the list of annoying meeting behaviors since the dawn of time, when cavemen would go hungry because their tribe mates arrived late for the woolly mammoth hunt. I sometimes wonder if people think they look more important when they arrive late? It's as if their time is more important than anyone else's, or they are busier than everyone else. In fact, what it really does is delay the start of the meeting, waste the time of others in getting them caught up, makes them look stupid when they try to contribute after missing important information up front, and shows a lack of respect for the meeting leader and everyone else. If you are arriving late for meetings more often than not, then do yourself and everyone else a favor and make a resolution to leave 10 minutes earlier for every meeting until you curb the bad habit.
- II. Keep your status updates brief, to the point, and upbeat.** Status updates are a regular agenda item for most meetings. Don't be "that guy" who consistently takes way more time than everyone else and drones and whines on and on about every little detail of their work. Prior to the meeting, jot down a few items to share that would be of interest to everyone in attendance. Keep it to two or three minutes, tops. Offer to go first — that way, you set the example and pace for everyone else. Put some enthusiasm in your updates, even a little humor, and it will raise the energy level and lighten the mood.
- III. Pay attention to your body language.** Next time you go to a meeting, try observing the body language of everyone around the room. Are they paying attention, making eye contact, leaning forward, and taking notes? Or are they slumped in their chair, rolling their eyes, checking their emails, or daydreaming? Great meetings are all about the collective energy level of every single person in the room. Your appearance can add energy or can suck the life out of the room. Others will feed off you, either in a positive or negative way.
- IV. Stop with the side comments.** When someone else is talking or presenting, seeing someone make a side comment to his or her neighbor can be incredibly distracting and annoying. You wonder what they are saying and usually assume the worst. If you have something important to say, then wait for the appropriate time and say it to everyone. The same goes for texting—it's childish and rude.
- V. No hand grenades.** A meeting hand grenade is when someone has to leave the meeting early, or the meeting is just about to end, and they toss an incredibly complex issue on the table or say something controversial or rude without leaving time for anyone to respond. If you're going to bring something like that up, consult with the meeting leader ahead of time and ask to include it on the agenda with ample time to address it.



**VI. Add value.** If you are invited to a meeting, then you are not only there to soak up everyone else’s contributions, you are expected to add value. Set a goal to make at least one constructive contribution to every meeting. Suggest a solution to a problem, offer to take an action item, support one of your co-worker’s ideas, or ask an intelligent question.

**VII. Come prepared and follow up on your commitments.** This one is my personal pet peeve. When we all leave a meeting with action items, there is an expectation that everyone comes to the next meeting with completed homework assignments. When the same person either consistently “forgets” their assignment or makes lame excuses, I want to reach across the table and slap them. Don’t make your responsible co-workers want to slap you—keep your commitments.

**VIII. Bring food.** When all else fails, bring snacks to your meetings. Your co-workers will thank you and maybe even cut you some slack for occasionally violating any of the above commandments. Don’t be that little piggy who devours everyone else’s goodies but never contributes anything. If everyone followed all of these commandments, our time spent in meetings would be way less painful and we might even get some real work done.

*Dan McCarthy is the Director of Executive Development Programs at the University of New Hampshire. He is an executive coach, speaker, writes the award winning leadership development blog Great Leadership and is a contributing writer for About.com Management and Leadership. You can follow Dan on Twitter: @greatleadership and email him at danmccarth@gmail.com.*

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**Got City News to Share?**

Contact  
Whitnee Bullerwell  
at [WVB@arml.org](mailto:WVB@arml.org)



# LIFE IS BETTER WITH A SOUTHERN ACCENT.

Like spectacular fireworks bursting above Little Rock's illuminated downtown bridges, our trip to Little Rock was a delight we will always remember. The trolley rides to museums within the vibrant River Market District. Taking in the lush Southern scenery while hiking the Arkansas River Trail. Enjoying the best local restaurants and the city's artisanal food scene, and then settling down into the city's most comfortable hotels. These are the memories of a new Southern style. You can see it all here. You can see it all in Little Rock.

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City of Little Rock

Mark Stodola  
Mayor

City Hall, Room 203  
500 W. Markham  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-1427  
Phone: (501) 371-4510  
Fax: (501) 371-4498  
[www.littlerock.org](http://www.littlerock.org)



June 24-26, 2015

Arkansas Municipal League  
81st Convention

Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Little Rock for the 81<sup>st</sup> Convention of the Arkansas Municipal League. As local officials, we know the challenges our communities face and the best strategies for overcoming the obstacles that stand in the way of success. This convention is an opportunity for all of us to share best practices, build relationships and find common ground that will help us to make our cities the best place they can be for all of our residents.

While you are in Little Rock, I hope you will explore many of the interesting attractions our city has to offer. Many museums are short walk from the Little Rock Marriott, including the William J. Clinton Presidential Library and the Old Statehouse Museum. Nearby, you will also find the Historic Arkansas Museum, the Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center, the Central High National Historic Site, the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center and the Arkansas Arts Center. You will also find the River Market District has many shops and attractions as well as a vibrant nightlife.

Welcome to Little Rock! I look forward to seeing you at the convention!

Sincerely,

Mark Stodola  
Mayor

# A destination for all seasons!



The Old Mill at T.R. Pugh Park

Enjoy the outdoors at The Old Mill from *Gone with the Wind* or watch baseball at Dickey-Stephens Park. Shop and dine in the McCain Mall area or Argenta Arts District, stay cool at Wild River Country or climb into a real World War II submarine.



Call 501-758-1424 or visit [www.NorthLittleRock.org](http://www.NorthLittleRock.org) to plan your trip.

   #ExploreNLR



USS *Razorback* Submarine • Wild River Country Waterpark • Arkansas Travelers Baseball



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



JOE A. SMITH  
MAYOR  
mayor@nlr.ar.gov

PHONE (501) 975-8601  
FAX (501) 975-8633

CITY HALL  
P.O. BOX 5757  
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72119-5757  
website: [www.nlr.ar.gov](http://www.nlr.ar.gov)

Arkansas Municipal League  
81<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention  
June 24-26, 2015

Greetings!

As Mayor, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention of the Arkansas Municipal League. During your stay, we hope you can include some or all of the following points of interest in North Little Rock:

- **Argenta Arts & Entertainment District** – Stroll North Little Rock's Main Street, lined with art galleries, restaurants, The Joint Comedy Theater and the North Little Rock Heritage Center.
- **Dickey-Stephens Park** – home of the Arkansas Travelers and the finest facility in minor league baseball. Great family entertainment!
- **Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum** – Tour a real World War II-era submarine, USS *Razorback* (SS394) and learn about the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, cruiser USS *Arkansas* and tugboat USS *Hoga*.
- **River Rail Trolleys** – allow visitors to travel across the Arkansas River in style and stop for shopping and dining in the Argenta Arts & Entertainment District in North Little Rock and River Market District in Little Rock.
- **Burns Park** – Encompassing 1,700 acres and one of the largest city parks in the nation, Burns Park hosts tennis, baseball, softball and soccer tournaments.
- **The Old Mill at T.R. Pugh Memorial Park** – a 1930s replica of a 1800s gristmill, presumed to be the last standing structure from *Gone with the Wind*.

For non-stop shopping and dining, visit the newly-renovated McCain Mall – the largest enclosed shopping center in Central Arkansas. Other dining and shopping opportunities are located in close proximity.

On behalf of the City of North Little Rock, I welcome you and extend our best wishes on a fun and successful conference.

Sincerely,

Joe A. Smith  
Mayor

*"An Equal Opportunity Employer"*



# 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention

Marriott Hotel/Statehouse Convention Center, June 24-26, 2015

MONTHS	DAYS	HOURS	MINUTES
00	19	10	59

**Countdown to Convention.**

June 24-26—Little Rock, Ark.

See next page for more information.

Register online at [www.arml.org](http://www.arml.org).

Contact Whitnee Bullerwell  
at 501-978-6105.

Cost for 10' x 10' exhibit space is \$550.  
Cost for Large Equipment Space is \$1,100.

## RESOLUTIONS

Suggested Convention Resolutions for consideration at the 81st Annual Convention should be mailed to:

81st Convention Resolutions  
Arkansas Municipal League  
P.O. Box 38  
North Little Rock, AR 72115-0038

**The deadline for Resolution submission is Friday, May 15.**

Resolutions may be drafted by an official of any member city or town and can relate to any matter of municipal concern. See your **2014-2015 Policies and Goals** for resolutions adopted at the 80th Convention.

## WANTED: Elected City officials with 25 years of service

Did you begin serving your city or town in 1990? 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 at the 81st League Convention, June 24-26, in Little Rock.

**Names must be submitted to the League by May 22.**

Call Ken Wasson at 501-374-3484, ext. 211; Sheila Boyd, ext. 218; or write to P.O. Box 38, North Little Rock, AR 72115-0038.

## NOTICE TO EXHIBITORS

At the 81st Convention, a special Exhibit Hall is available for businesses, companies and manufacturers to display their products and services that are available to Arkansas municipalities.

To guarantee your firm's exhibit area, contact the League immediately to reserve space for your display. Your name will be added to the list of exhibitors, and we will reserve a space for your exhibit when you arrive.

The cost this year is \$550 for a regular exhibit space or \$1,100 for a large exhibit space. We cannot guarantee space for companies that do not register before June 8.

Call Whitnee Bullerwell at 501-978-6105, or write to Arkansas Municipal League, P.O. Box 38, North Little Rock, AR 72115-0038.

ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE



GREAT CITIES MAKE A GREAT STATE

## CLE Offered at League Convention

Twelve (12) hours of continuing legal education (CLE) will be available for city attorneys who attend the 81st Arkansas Municipal League Convention, June 24-26, at the Little Rock Convention Center. The Arkansas City Attorney's Association (ACAA) sponsors the CLE.

Joe Summerford, Bethel Heights city attorney and the current ACAA president, urges members to register for the Convention as soon as possible. A registration form is in this issue of City & Town and copies are also being mailed to city attorneys.

The 12 hours are offered June 25 and 26, and the tentative CLE agenda includes topics such as RFRA, the FOIA, and the recent legislation on takings, as well as Act 137, among other topics. Additionally, the program will include one (1) hour of ethics. **This summer's CLE will be held at the League's headquarters in North Little Rock.**

To attend the CLE program, registration is required at the League Convention. For registration information, call Whitnee Bullerwell at 501-374-3484, Ext. 206. For CLE information, call Mark Hayes, ACAA secretary/treasurer and League general counsel at 501-978-6102 or Jamie Adams at 501-978-6124.



# 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention

Marriott Hotel / Statehouse Convention Center, June 24-26, 2015

REGISTRATION

**Registration and payment must be received in League office by Monday, June 8, 2015, to qualify for Pre-registration rates.**

Pre-registration for municipal officials . . . . .	\$150
Registration fee after <b>June 8, 2015</b> , and on-site registration for municipal officials . . . . .	\$175
Pre-registration for guests . . . . .	\$75
Registration fee after <b>June 8, 2015</b> , and on-site registration for guests . . . . .	\$100
Other registrants . . . . .	\$200

- Registration will be processed **ONLY** with accompanying payment in full. Make checks payable to the Arkansas Municipal League.
- Registration includes meals, activities and a copy of **2015 General Acts Affecting Arkansas Municipalities**.
- No daily registration is available.
- Registration must come through the League office. No telephone registrations will be accepted.
- **No refunds after June 8, 2015.**
- Cancellation letters must be postmarked by **June 8, 2015**.
- **Marriott guests:** In order to avoid a cancellation penalty of one night's room and tax, reservations must be cancelled at least seven (7) days prior to arrival.

HOTEL RESERVATION

## Hotel Room Rates

<b>Marriott Hotel</b> (headquarters hotel) <i>formerly the Peabody Hotel</i>		
Single/Double. <b>SOLD OUT</b> . . . . .	<del>\$129</del>	Check-in . . . . . 3 p.m.
<b>Capital Hotel</b>		
Single/Double. <b>SOLD OUT</b> . . . . .	<del>\$174</del>	Check-in . . . . . 3 p.m.
<b>Doubletree Hotel</b>		
Single/Double. <b>SOLD OUT</b> . . . . .	<del>\$136</del>	Check-in . . . . . 3 p.m.
<b>Wyndham Hotel</b>		
Single/Double. <b>SOLD OUT</b> . . . . .	<del>\$104</del>	Check-in . . . . . 3 p.m.

- Cut-off date for hotel reservations is **June 8, 2015**.
- Rooms in Little Rock are subject to an 13 percent tax.
- Rooms will be held until 6 p.m. and then released unless guaranteed by credit card.
- Contact the hotel directly to make changes or cancellations in hotel accommodations.
- Hotel confirmation number will come directly from the hotel.
- Please check on cancellation policy for your hotel.

# TWO WAYS TO REGISTER

**1** Register online at [www.arml.org](http://www.arml.org) and pay by credit card.

**OR**

**2**

Complete the steps and **mail with payment** to:  
 ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE  
 Attn: 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention  
 P.O. Box 38  
 North Little Rock, AR 72115-0038

## Step 1: Delegate Information

Name: .....

Title: ..... City of: .....

Address: .....

City: ..... State: .... Zip: ..... Telephone: .....

Email (required) ..... cc email .....

Guests will attend:  Yes  No Name: .....

Name: .....

## Step 2: Payment Information

• **WHAT IS YOUR TOTAL?** (see opposite page for fees)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-registration for Delegate \$ 1 5 0	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-registration for Guest \$ 7 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Registrants \$ 2 0 0	Pre-registration Total \$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular Registration for Delegate \$ 1 7 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular Registration for Guest \$ 1 0 0	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Registrants \$ 2 0 0	Reg. Registration Total \$ _____

• **HOW ARE YOU PAYING?**

**Check**

Mail payment and form to: Arkansas Municipal League  
 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention  
 P.O. Box 38  
 North Little Rock, AR 72115

**Credit Card** Complete information below and send to address above.

Credit Card:  Visa  MasterCard  Discover

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_\_\_

Card Holder Name (as it appears on card): .....

Billing address (as it appears on statement): .....

City: ..... State: .... Zip: ..... Telephone: .....

E-mail address (required for credit card payment) .....

## Step 3: Hotel Reservations

To obtain hotel reservations, registered delegates must directly contact participating hotels listed below. Please mention that you are with the Arkansas Municipal League to get the negotiated hotel rate.

**Marriott Hotel** **SOLD OUT** Reservations ..... 877-759-6290

**Capital Hotel** ..... **SOLD OUT** Reservations ..... 877-637-0037 or 501-374-7474

**Doubletree Hotel** **SOLD OUT** Reservations ..... 800-222-8733 or 501-372-4371

**Wyndham Hotel** **SOLD OUT** Reservations ..... 866-657-4458 or 501-371-9000

**To be placed on the Marriott Hotel waiting list, call Ashley Hartzell, 501-399-8048**

# 81<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE JUNE 24 - 26, 2015

## WEDNESDAY, June 24, 2015

### 1:30 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.

ARKANSAS CITY CLERKS, RECORDERS, AND  
TREASURERS ASSOCIATION ..... Conway Room, Marriott

### 1:30 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

REGISTRATION ..... Osage & Caddo Rooms, SCC

### 1:30 P.M. to 6:45 P.M.

MEET YOUR EXHIBITORS/  
RENEW ACQUAINTANCES ..... Governor's Halls I - III, SCC

*Use this time to meet the exhibitors and see what products and services they have that could benefit your city. Popcorn and beverages will be served throughout the afternoon. Also, take the time to renew acquaintances with fellow municipal officials while relaxing in the Exhibit Hall.*

### 1:30 P.M. to 6:45 P.M.

SOCIAL MEDIA LAB ..... Quapaw Room, SCC

*Do you want to build a social media presence to promote your municipality? Do Friends, Fans and Followers confuse you? Let League staffers walk you through the process of creating a social media presence using our lab.*

### 3:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.

CITY PRIDE: WAYS TO PROMOTE  
AND ENHANCE YOUR CITY ..... Governor's Hall IV, SCC

*Good Planning makes good economic sense. How can you go about promoting your city? Are there steps you can take to revitalize Main Street? A variety of speakers share their ideas on ways to promote your city. (Attendees will receive 2 hours of Certified Continuing Education credit.)*

Presiding: Mayor Mark Stodola, Little Rock  
President, Arkansas Municipal League

Speakers: Jim von Tungeln, Staff Planning Consultant  
Arkansas Municipal League  
Steve Luoni, Director, Community Design Center  
University of Arkansas  
Troy Galloway, Planning Director, Bentonville  
C. Kelly Cofer, President/CEO of The Retail Coach

### 3:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.

INTERIM JOINT CITY, COUNTY,  
LOCAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ..... Fulton Room, SCC

*The Interim Committee welcomes all city officials to attend this committee meeting.*

### 5:30 P.M. to 6:45 P.M.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ..... Governor's Hall IV, SCC

*Each municipality has a designated representative who is a member of the Resolutions Committee.*

Presiding: Mayor Rick Elumbaugh, Batesville  
First Vice President, Arkansas Municipal League

### 7:00 P.M.

OPENING NIGHT BANQUET ..... Wally Allen Ballroom, SCC

*Welcome to the 81st Annual Convention's Opening Night Banquet. Enjoy a delicious meal and visit with fellow delegates. At the conclusion of the banquet we will recognize various municipalities and individuals who have made significant contributions to the AML this past year.*

Presiding: Mayor Mark Stodola, Little Rock  
President, Arkansas Municipal League

Invocating: TBA

Speaker: Governor Asa Hutchinson  
State of Arkansas

### 8:30 P.M. to 10:00 P.M.

PRESIDENT'S DESSERT RECEPTION ..... Capital Hotel

*After the opening night banquet, walk across the street to the Capital Hotel and enjoy delicious desserts.*

**Sponsored by: Stephens Inc.**

## THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2015

### 6:30 A.M. to 7:00 A.M.

PRE-BREAKFAST EXERCISE WALK/JOG ..... Marriott Lobby

*Meet in the Grand Lobby of the Marriott Hotel.*

### 7:15 A.M. to 7:30 A.M.

VOLUNTARY PRAYER SESSION ..... Fulton Room, SCC

*This is a brief time set aside for those who wish to gather to pray for our national, state and local leaders.*

### 7:15 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

REGISTRATION ..... Osage & Caddo Rooms, SCC

### 7:15 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

EXHIBITS OPEN ..... Governor's Halls I - III, SCC

### 7:15 A.M. to 8:45 A.M.

HOST CITY BREAKFAST BUFFET ..... Governor's Halls I - III, SCC

*Country-style breakfast buffet will be served, courtesy of our Host City of Little Rock.*

### 8:30 A.M. to NOON

CITY ATTORNEYS ..... TBA

*City attorneys will receive 12 hours of CLE credit for participating in two days of meetings.*

### 8:45 A.M. to 10:00 A.M.

OPENING GENERAL SESSION ..... Governor's Hall IV, SCC

*The 81st Annual Convention begins with the posting of the colors and the singing of the National Anthem, followed by a Host City Welcome from Mayor Mark Stodola of Little Rock. This morning we are honored to have NLC 2nd Vice President Matt Zone and the leadership of the House and Senate address our Opening General Session.*

### PRESENTATION OF COLORS

Color Guard by: TBA

Singing the National Anthem: TBA

Host City Welcome Address: Mayor Mark Stodola, Little Rock

Presiding: Mayor Mark Stodola, Little Rock  
President, Arkansas Municipal League

Speakers: Alderman Matt Zone, Cleveland  
Second Vice President, National League of Cities

State Senator Jonathan Dismang, District 28  
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

State Representative Jeremy Gillam, District 45  
Speaker of the House

State Senator Jim Hendren, District 2  
Majority Leader of the Senate

### 10:00 A.M. to 10:15 A.M.

BREAK ..... Governor's Halls I - III, SCC

## CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

### 10:15 A.M. to 11:15 A.M.

#### GENERAL SESSION 2, THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION:

WHAT HAPPENED.....Governor's Hall IV, SCC

*This past legislative session brought several significant changes to laws that affect Arkansas municipalities. Bring your Acts book and listen as Executive Director Don Zimmerman explains some of the new Acts. (Attendees will receive 1 hour of Certified Continuing Education credit or 1 hour of Continuing Legal Education credit.)*

Presiding: Mayor Rick Elumbaugh, Batesville  
First Vice President, Arkansas Municipal League

Speakers: Don Zimmerman, Executive Director  
Arkansas Municipal League

### 11:15 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.

BREAK.....Governor's Halls I - III, SCC

*Exhibit Hall will close after this break so that the Marriott staff can prepare for lunch.*

### 11:30 A.M. to Noon

#### GENERAL SESSION 3, SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL:

THE GHANA EXPERIENCE.....Governor's Hall IV, SCC

Presiding: Mayor Mark Stodola, Little Rock  
President, Arkansas Municipal League

Speakers: Sherman Banks, Past President  
Sister Cities International

Prince Kwame Kludjeson, President  
Africa Global Sister Cities Foundation

Honorable Helen Adjoa Ntoso (MP)  
Governor, Volta Region of Ghana

### Noon to 1:15 P.M.

LUNCHEON BUFFET.....Governor's Halls I - III, SCC

### 1:00 P.M. to 5:15 P.M.

CITY ATTORNEYS.....TBA

### 1:30 P.M. to 5:30 P.M.

SOCIAL MEDIA LAB..... Quapaw Room, SCC

*Do you want to build a social media presence to promote your municipality? Do Friends, Fans and Followers confuse you? Let League staffers walk you through the process of creating a social media presence using our lab.*

### 1:30 P.M. to 2:45 P.M.

1. PAVEMENT MAINTENANCE AND TRAFFIC CONTROL CHALLENGES..... Miller Room

*Keeping your streets maintained is a challenge as is regulating an orderly flow of traffic. Could roundabouts be a safer choice?*

Presiding: Mayor Tab Townsell, Conway

Speakers: Sarah Tamayo, Arkansas Highway Department  
Finley Vinson, Street Superintendent, Conway

2. LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CITIZENS: RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING..... Governor's Hall IV

*In the aftermath of recent highly publicized events, police departments across the country have come under increased scrutiny. Are there steps you could take to avoid or prevent tragic police and citizen confrontations? Would a state accreditation program and model policies be of benefit to all police departments? Police chiefs from a large and small cities will discuss.*

Presiding: Mayor James Sanders, Blytheville

Speakers: Police Chief Mike Davis, North Little Rock  
Police Chief Percy Wilburn, Lake Village  
Police Chief J.R. Wilson, Hope

3. IMPROVING DOWNTOWN: WAYS TO IMPROVE MAIN STREET ..... Pope Room

*Enhancing downtown enhances your entire city. How do you deal with old dilapidated buildings? Wednesday afternoon's speaker, Kelly Cofer will be available to contribute to the discussion.*

Presiding: Mayor Frank Hash, El Dorado

Speakers: Kelly Cofer, CCIM – President of the Retail Coach  
Alan Leveritt, Arkansas Business Publishing Group  
Patricia Blik, Assistant Director  
Arkansas Department of Natural Heritage

4. AVOIDING LAWSUITS..... Fulton Room

*Cities of all sizes continue to get sued for a variety of reasons. Will new acts dealing with religious freedom, "takings," and whistleblowing increase the likelihood of lawsuits? The AML legal staff explains these new acts and gives advice on avoiding lawsuits.*

Presiding: Mayor Jimmy Williams, Marianna

Speakers: Arkansas Municipal League Legal Staff

5. SISTER CITIES: DEVELOPING RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL CITIES.....Caraway I-III

*The delegation from Ghana will inform the attendees about Ghanaian culture and the benefits of sister cities. They will describe opportunities for culture exchanges and shared experiences in municipal government.*

Presiding: Mayor Gary Fletcher, Jacksonville

Speakers: Sherman Banks, Former President  
Sister Cities International  
Prince Kwame Kludjeson, President  
Africa Global Sister Cities Foundation  
Governor Helen Adjoa Ntoso, MP Governor  
Volta Region of Ghana

6. STATE AID CITY STREET GRANTS AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES ..... Iazard Room  
*There are still grants available for streets through the State Aid Street Program. Other grants may also be available. How do you go about getting grants? The speakers explain.*  
 Presiding: Mayor Mike Gaskill, Paragould  
 Speakers: Steve Napper, Attorney  
 State Aid Street Committee  
 Kevin Smith, Chairman and CEO  
 The Grant Book Company  
 Chad Gallagher, Principal  
 Legacy Consulting

**2:45 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.**

BREAK ..... Governor's Exhibit Halls I - III, SCC  
 Soft drinks and coffee available in the Exhibit Hall.

**3:00 P.M. to 4:15 P.M.**

1. MAYOR/COUNCIL - MANAGER/BOARD HOW IT IS SUPPOSED TO WORK ..... Governor's Hall IV  
*Conflicts and misunderstandings between the mayor and the council and the city manager and the city board seem to be all too common. How is it supposed to work? What steps can you take to avoid conflict and misunderstanding?*  
 Presiding: Mayor David Morris, Searcy  
 Speakers: Mark Hayes, Director of Legal Services  
 Arkansas Municipal League Staff  
 Ken Wasson, Director of Operations  
 Arkansas Municipal League Staff

2. ANIMAL CONTROL: DEALING WITH VICIOUS DOGS.... Fulton Room  
*Managing an animal control department including dealing with vicious dogs will be the focus of this workshop.*  
 Presiding: Mayor Billy Ray McKelvy, De Queen  
 Speakers: Cindy Turnquist, Glenwood Animal Control Shelter  
 Edwin Creekmore, President  
 Arkansas Animal Control Association

3. MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND LAND USE CHALLENGES ..... Caraway H-I  
*Will planning and zoning work for smaller communities? Are there simple steps you can take to define your city? What were some of the new acts that were passed this past legislative session that might impact your ability to plan? The speakers will explain.*  
 Presiding: Alderman Bill Eaton, Russellville  
 Speakers: Jim von Tungeln, Staff Planning Consultant  
 Arkansas Municipal League  
 Troy Galloway, Bentonville Planning Director.

4. EMPLOYEE WELLNESS AND WORKPLACE SAFETY..... Iazard Room  
*Striving for a safe and healthy employee workforce can be a challenge. However, there are rewards including lower premiums. What could you do to get started in implementing workplace safety and healthy lifestyles? The panel explains.*  
 Presiding: Clerk/Treasure Mitri Greenhill, Stuttgart  
 Speakers: David Baxter, Arkansas Municipal League Staff  
 Neil Foreman, Arkansas Municipal League Staff  
 Mayor Jill Dabbs, Bryant

5. FINANCING CAPITAL PROJECTS ..... Pope Room  
*What are some of the basics of financing large capital projects that you need to know before starting on your new water/wastewater upgrades or your new recreational facility?*  
 Presiding: Mayor Harold Perrin, Jonesboro  
 Speakers: Ryan Bowman, Partner  
 Friday, Eldredge & Clark, LLP  
 Paul Phillips, Senior Managing Director  
 Crews & Associates  
 Michael McBryde, Banker  
 Stephens Inc.

6. PENSION PROGRAMS/LEGISLATIVE AUDITS/ THE ARKANSAS DIAMOND PLAN ..... Miller Room  
*Were there new laws passed that affect your municipal pension program? LOPFI, APERS and the Arkansas Diamond plan are discussed in the workshop.*  
 Presiding: Finance Director Karen Scott, North Little Rock  
 Speakers: Gail H. Stone, Executive Director, APERS  
 David B. Clark, Executive Director, LOPFI  
 Nancy Lewis, Plan Consultant  
 Arkansas Diamond Plan

**4:15 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.**

BREAK ..... Governor's Exhibit Halls I - III, SCC  
 Soft drinks and coffee available in the Exhibit Hall.

**4:30 P.M. to 5:30 P.M.**

1. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ..... Fulton Room  
*Various types of disasters can strike your city at any time. What can you do to prepare for disasters and what can you do after disaster strikes?*  
 Presiding: Mayor James Firestone, Vilonia  
 Speakers: Spokesperson, ADEM  
 Mayor Randy Holland, Mayflower  
 Fire Chief Chad Mosby, El Dorado

2. TRENDS OR FADS: UBER, FOOD TRUCKS AND FARMERS MARKETS ..... Miller Room  
*Uber transportation, food trucks, and farmers markets: Are they trends or are they here to stay? Are regulations necessary?*  
 Presiding: City Manager David Watkins, Hot Springs  
 Speakers: Alderman Adella Gray, Fayetteville  
 Kevin Settle, City Board Member, Fort Smith  
 Mayor Sonny Hudson, Prairie Grove

3. THE BENEFITS OF A WELL-ROUNDED PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAM ..... Pope Room  
*Bike trails and pedestrian walkways are some of the ways that citizens benefit from the opportunities afforded them by parks and recreation programs. How about ways to enjoy the night sky? Some of these benefits are explained.*  
 Presiding: Parks Commissioner, Terry Bracy, Malvern  
 Speakers: Alderman Charlie Hight, North Little Rock  
 Representative Steven Meeks, District 67  
 Greenbrier

4. COMMON WORKPLACE CHALLENGES..... Iazard Room  
*Understanding generational and cultural differences in the workplace, establishing a drug testing program, and other current HR challenges will be discussed in this workshop.*  
 Presiding: Alderman Reedie Ray, Jacksonville  
 Speakers: Kathy Kirk, HR Director, Benton  
 David Baxter, Arkansas Municipal League Staff  
 David Schoen, Arkansas Municipal League Attorney



5. HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND UNDERSTANDING THE NEW SEX OFFENDER LAWS.....Caraway I-III

*The crime of human trafficking, which preys upon the most vulnerable in our society, is an issue we need to be aware of. What can we do to alert our citizens about these concerns? What about the new sex offender laws? Will they help?*

Presiding: Alderman Dorothy Henderson, Warren

Speakers. Reagan Stanford, Crime Victim Services Coordinator for Catholic Charities.

Staff Attorneys

Arkansas Municipal League

6. COMMON I.T. PROBLEMS AND WAYS TO SOLVE THEM ..... Arkansas Ballroom

*Every year municipalities become more and more dependent on technology to assist us in providing better and more efficient services to our citizens. However, the world of IT is not without its challenges. This workshop is about the sharing of challenges and solutions to many of these common issues.*

Presiding: Becca Clark, City Board Member, Hot Springs

Speakers Randy Foshee, Director of Information Technology Little Rock

David Coles, Information Systems Supervisor Division of Legislative Audit, State of Arkansas

Courtney Dettlinger, ACOOP Arkansas Department of Information Systems

**4:30 P.M. to 5:30 P.M.**

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE.....Governor’s Hall IV, SCC

*Each municipality has a designated representative who is a member of the Resolutions Committee.*

Presiding: Mayor Rick Elumbaugh, Batesville First Vice President, Arkansas Municipal League

**5:30 P.M.**

The exhibit hall will close for the day.

**6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.**

RECEPTION ..... First Security Amphitheater

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FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2015

**6:30 A.M.**

PRE-BREAKFAST EXERCISE WALK/JOG.....Marriott Lobby

*Meet in the Grand Lobby of the Marriott Hotel.*

**7:15 A.M. to 8:45 A.M.**

SOCIAL MEDIA LAB..... Quapaw Room, SCC

*Do you want to build a social media presence to promote your municipality? Do Friends, Fans and Followers confuse you? Let League staffers walk you through the process of creating a social media presence using our lab.*

**7:15 A.M. to NOON**

REGISTRATION OPENS..... Osage Room, SCC

**7:15 A.M. to 10:45 A.M.**

EXHIBITS OPEN.....Governor’s Halls I - III, SCC

*(Exhibit Hall will close at 10:30 A.M. for the remainder of the Convention.)*

**7:15 A.M. to 8:45 A.M.**

BUFFET BREAKFAST.....Governor’s Halls I - III, SCC

**8:30 A.M. to 3:15 P.M.**

CITY ATTORNEYS.....TBA

**8:45 A.M. to 10:15 A.M.**

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING..... Governor’s Hall IV, SCC

*President Stodola will give his Presidential Address. Executive Director Don Zimmerman will give his annual report followed by the Annual Business Meeting. During the business meeting, the League’s Policies and Goals are presented and voted on. The nominating committee presents their recommended slate of new officers for the upcoming year, which will be followed by the annual business meetings for Municipal League Workers’ Compensation Trust, Municipal Health Benefit Fund, Municipal Vehicle Program, and Municipal Property Program. New health insurance reporting requirements will be briefly explained during the Municipal Health Benefit Fund portion of the business meeting.*

**10:15 A.M. to 10:45 A.M.**

BREAK.....Governor’s Halls I - III, SCC

*Governor’s Halls I - III will close at the conclusion of the 10:15 A.M. to 10:45 A.M. break.*

**10:45 A.M. to 11:45 A.M.**

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE AML LEGAL DEPARTMENT..... Marriott Grand Ballroom III

*Listen to some phone conversations between Mark and "Mayor Jones" of Midtown, Arkansas. This session promises to be full of information and humor.*

Presiding: Mayor Rick Elumbaugh, Batesville First Vice President, Arkansas Municipal League

Speakers: Mark Hayes, Director of Legal Services Arkansas Municipal League

Ken Wasson, Director of Operations Arkansas Municipal League

**NOON to 1:30 P.M.**

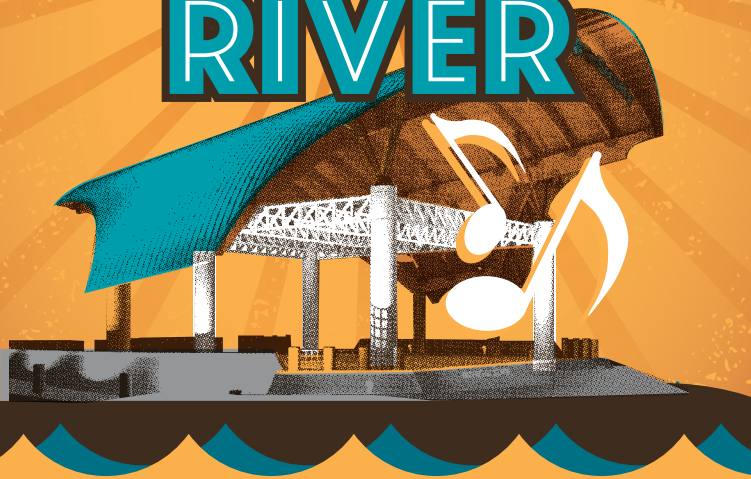
AWARDS AND NEW OFFICERS’

LUNCHEON .....Marriott Grand Ballrooms I & II

*Municipalities and individuals are honored for their many successes and contributions during this past year. The new League president and officers will be introduced to the Convention delegates.*



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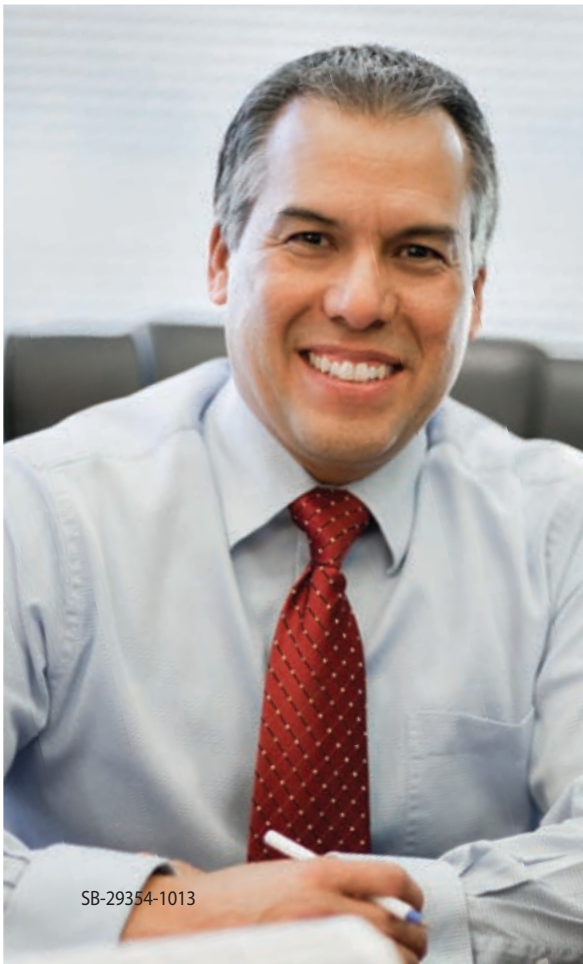
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## ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE SOCIAL MEDIA LAB

Do you want to build a social media presence to promote your municipality? Do Friends, Fans and Followers confuse you? Let League staffers walk you through the process of creating a social media presence using our lab.



Join us for the Social Media Lab at 1:30 P.M. to 6:45 P.M. Wednesday, June 24; 1:30 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. Thursday, June 25; and 7:15 A.M. to 8:45 A.M. Friday, June 26 in the Quapaw Room.



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# Break away from the screens

By Glenn Mesman, Ph.D.

**L**ook around. They are everywhere—at our jobs, at school, in our homes, and even in our cars. These screens, in all their forms, seem to be what our lives revolve around.

But how is all this screen time affecting us? Do we even realize the health and social impacts it has on our lives? Let's take our kids, for example.

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests children 3-18 years old get no more than two hours of screen time, preferably educational programming, each day. The actual amount of screen time our children get is a different story.

Recent studies show children ages 8-10 get five and a half hours of screen time each day. Kids ages 11-14 get eight and a half hours a day and those 14-18 spend eight hours a day in front of a screen. This includes time in front of the television, computer, smartphone, and tablet. Any way you slice it, that's a lot of screen time.

All this screen time has a plethora of risk factors. With so much time spent performing a sedentary activity, childhood obesity is the greatest risk. There are also socialization concerns with children spending so much of their day in isolation. Even with video games where kids can talk to one another as they play, it's still not face-to-face interaction.

A recent study of sixth graders by the University of California at Los Angeles took one group to a five-day educational, outdoor camp where they had no access to screen time while a second group continued normal life.

At the beginning of the week, each child completed a task to identify emotions in pictures. At the end of the week, the children repeated the process and those who participated in the outdoor camp performed better than those who did not. This revelation led researchers to believe the reasoning for the results was because the camp kids were spending time engaging with one another and were better equipped to detect non-verbal cues and emotions.

While this is not the end-all, be-all of screen-time research, it still makes you stop and wonder: Is my child getting too much screen time?

One important way to minimize your child's screen time is taking away bedroom access since kids spend their most time there. No one said it would be easy to cut down screen time, but this is a key point to affecting change.

There are a few easier ways to cut down screen time, for instance, when the television is just on in the background while the kids eat or do homework. Encouraging your child to have a friend over, go to a friend's house, or to join a sports team are other ways to cut down on screen time.

Another way is to practice what you preach to your kids.

Our children are not the only ones getting too much screen time. On average, adults spend four to five hours of leisure screen time a day. That's on top of the hours you spend at work in front of a computer screen. Just like with your children, obesity and poor overall health are the risk factors for adults. It can also affect your vision and sleep.

Families, as a whole, can do a lot to help each other. Do activities together—card-game nights, outdoor fun, whatever it may be—just make sure the focal point is interaction, not the television or computer.

There are several forms of media pulling our families in all sorts of directions. It's important to be mindful, so we can head back in the right direction.



*Glenn Mesman, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor, UAMS Psychiatric Research Institute.*

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# CALENDAR

## Arkansas Municipal League

81st Convention

Wednesday-Friday

June 24-26, 2015

Statehouse Convention Center

Little Rock, AR

## National League of Cities

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Wednesday-Saturday

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# Changes to 2015 Directory, Arkansas Municipal Officials

Submit changes to *Whitnee Bullerwell, wvb@arml.org.*

## Alexander

Delete R/T Sharon Bankhead  
Add R Sharon Bankhead  
Add T Ken Miller

## Altheimer

Delete R/T Jeanetta McClinton  
Add R/T Angela Williams

## Bradley

Delete M J.C. Williams  
Add M Alice Carlson

## Cotton Plant

Delete T (Vacant)  
Add T Tabitha Floyd

## Damascus

Delete R/T Clariece Brown  
Add R/T Wendi Payne

## Des Arc

Delete PC Darrell Turner  
Add PC Rick Parson  
Delete FC Keith Knupp  
Add FC Don Harvey

## Fayetteville

Delete PD Missy Leflar  
Add /A/PD Michele Bechhold  
Delete DJ David Stewart  
Add DJ William Storey  
Delete BI David Molaschi  
Add BI Mark Whitaker  
Delete PLD Jeremy Pate  
Add PLD Andrew Garner  
Add IT Keith Macedo  
Add RCY Brian Pugh  
Add SAN Kyle McCarty  
Add SS Terry Gulley  
Add SOL Jeff Coles  
Add UTIL Tim Nyander  
Delete AL Rhonda Adams  
Add AL John LaTour

## Fort Smith

Delete PRD (Vacant)  
Add PRD Doug Reinert

## Gateway

Add CA Joanne McCracken

## Gould

Delete AL (Vacant)  
Add AL Lee Dale  
Delete AL (Vacant)  
Add AL Matthew Smith

## Gravette

Delete FO Patrick Hall  
Add FO Chris Speights

## Knoxville

Add AL Lance Clubb

## Norfolk

Add BI David Miller

## Searcy

Add AIR Roger Pearson  
Delete PD Jay Shock  
Add PD Hollie Laws  
Delete PRD Brian Smith  
Add PRD Michael Parson



# A new way of counting

By Jim von Tungeln

**E**lected officials from all over our state will meet this month for the Arkansas Municipal League's 81st Annual Convention. They will discuss, with one another, the successes of their various communities, no doubt mentioning the usual measurements: population growth, financial soundness, infrastructure improvements, economic gains, and an up-to-date regulatory structure. These are fine measurements without question. In anticipation of the Convention, however, let us propose a new standard. This one deals with the growth of the people in our community.

Unlike the most common standard by which we judge a community's success, population growth, the goal of growing the people of our cities is one that is under our direct control. We might start by defining what we mean by "growing our people." In simple terms, it means documenting a number of factors that measure the well being of our citizens, developing plans to improve those factors, implementing strategies to carry out those plans, and measuring our progress.

We might call this "people-centered planning." It would be a return to some aspects of the older days of the 1950s and 1960s before "commerce-centered planning," "vehicle-centered planning," and, more recently, "design-centered planning" became fashionable.

Excellent guidance for this approach comes not from a planning institution, but from the AARP Public Policy Institute. The institute has developed what it calls "a livability index" that, in its words, "... scores

neighborhoods and communities across the U.S. for the services and amenities that impact your life the most."

Isn't that interesting?

The index involves several categories that are measured within a city and measured against national averages. Following is a brief summary of those categories making up the overall index.

- 1. Housing:** Affordability and access. Planners in cities around the country find it alarming that housing costs within their cities are rising to levels whereby entry-level and middle-class workers cannot afford to live there. Not only does this prohibit some families from choosing a particular city in which to live, it can place undue pressures on transportation systems. City leaders might begin by addressing the protection of older neighborhoods, long a source of housing for families and individuals on limited incomes, many of whom fill the need for service workers. The livability index also points out the need for multi-family housing.
- 2. Neighborhood:** Access to life, work, and play. The previous factor leads us into the area of neighborhood quality. On the lower end of the income spectrum, neighborhoods can become forgotten and neglected dumping grounds for uses that aren't compatible with quality residential life. "It would be an improvement to that area," is often the standard by which we allow such incompatible uses to promote urban decay.



The Grant County Museum in Sheridan illustrates how a cooperative effort among governments can increase the cultural livability of all area residents and bring visitors to a community.



3. **Transportation:** Safe and convenient options. This standard employs diverse metrics, including convenient transportation options, transit service, congestion, transportation costs, safe streets, and ADA accessibility among others. This certainly implies that there is more to transportation planning than seeing that vehicles can move unobstructed through our cities at the fastest speed possible, an approach that has destroyed, and continues to destroy, countless viable neighborhoods.
4. **Environment:** Clean air and water. As the AARP Policy Institute's website states, "Great communities enact policies to improve and protect the environment for generations to come."
5. **Health:** Prevention, access, and quality. Some metrics affecting this category deal with healthy behaviors. This is important as our state ranks high in childhood obesity and our cities, until recently, paid little attention to non-vehicular modes of transportation. Other metrics within this category deal with both the availability and quality of health care.
6. **Engagement:** Civic and social involvement. This is a broad-based standard that includes Internet access, an extremely important function for the future. With increasing numbers of people working from home, a community that can't attract industry could improve its economy with combination of a pleasant living environment and state-of-the art broadband service. The City of Fairfield Bay is making a concerted effort in this area. The community already meets the "pleasant environment" standard and plans to couple it with an excellent broadband system. This category also measures opportunity for civic involvement, voting rates, and social engagement. Finally, it measures cultural, arts, and entertainment institutions.
7. **Opportunity:** Inclusion and possibilities. The Institute's website says it best: "America was built on opportunity—and our nation's many thriving communities are no different. The degree to which a community embraces diversity and offers opportunities to residents of all ages and backgrounds is important to overall livability."

Complete information about the AARP's Public Policy Institute's Livability Index can be found at: [livabilityindex.aarp.org](http://livabilityindex.aarp.org). One can find the rating for any particular city or ZIP code. In addition to the overall livability score, the scores for the seven individual

categories appear. City leaders can easily see areas in which they might concentrate efforts.

What is fascinating about this system of community evaluation is its basic equity. As we all know, the rains of economic fortune do not fall equally upon all cities within our state. Using the livability index as a guide, however, any community in our state could improve itself in one or several areas. Almost all of the metrics covered are within the control of community leaders and elected officials.

A previous column, for example, mentioned the efforts of the small Arkansas Delta city of McCrory and the efforts of local leaders to build a library. Another outlined the work of the Bill and Sharon Arnold Foundation in DeValls Bluff. Residents there now enjoy movies on the weekend in a renovated auditorium that was once part of the city's school campus. Newspapers recently reported that a group of private individuals in Batesville purchased the Melba movie theater and plans to restore it. Then there is the World War II Japanese American Internment Museum in McGehee, a must see.

There are many other examples around the state, but these serve to illustrate that there are always steps by which concerned citizens and progressive leadership can improve a city's ability to meet the issues of the modern world. Earlier in this column, we mentioned the urban plans of earlier days. There was optimism about those plans, a sense that planning could create a better world for all economic levels. The drawback was that, far too often, the solutions relied on grants and loans. These may not ever be available to the extent they were back then. This places even more emphasis on a strong bond between municipal government, other levels of government, business, institutions, and local leaders.

It offers an exciting opportunity. As my friend and colleague Rob Middleton puts it, we may institute the "City Livable Movement." With work, our successors may, at a League Convention in the future, talk to one another about gains their cities have made in raising their livability index. Doesn't this sound better than talking about new regulations that may or may not work and are costly, if not impossible, to enforce?



*Jim von Tungeln is staff planning consultant and available for consultation as a service of the Arkansas Municipal League. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners. Contact him at 501-944-3649. His website is [www.planyourcity.com](http://www.planyourcity.com).*

# Arkansas's oldest city gets green update

By Alison Litchy

“All the stories I’ll ever need are right here on Main Street” is a famous quote by American author Robert Cormier. It speaks to a time when every city could be measured by the quality of its downtown. Downtown is meant to be the heart of a city, but too many are now suffering, becoming shadows of their former selves. People still talk of how it used to be, but the memories are fading. It’s not too late to change that narrative. We can revitalize our historic Arkansas downtowns, and trees play a role.

Healthy, thriving downtowns are characterized by happy people walking about, enjoying the lush scenery while wandering in and out of the city’s shops. Tree management is an important aspect of this thriving picture, and it is an excellent area to start a revitalization effort. Trees have innumerable positive effects on downtowns. First, they slow traffic, which improves the walkability of the area. Walkability is an important part of a downtown, contributing to the sense of community and pride. Trees enable this by creating a vertical “wall” effect, providing a defined edge that helps motorists manage their speed and imparting a sense of safety to the walkers. These tree benefits combine to reduce accidents, reduce road rage, and even reduce blood pressure with their calming effects. Trees located in downtown areas

also have been found to increase time spent in shops, which has been measured to increase revenues for downtown businesses by 12 percent.

Trees provide other economic and aesthetic benefits to a downtown area, as well. For example, trees reduce the amount of storm drainage by absorbing the first 30 percent of precipitation through their leaf canopy, allowing evaporation back into the atmosphere, and up to another 30 percent of precipitation is absorbed in the ground and taken in by the root structure, reducing stormwater runoff. This amounts to nearly 60 percent less water for the downtown’s water management system to handle, reducing the bill for downtown property owners, and taking less of a toll on the city’s resources.

Another benefit is the shade and protection from the elements that trees provide. Trees can reduce temperatures by as much as 15 degrees on a hot day. They do this by absorbing pollution, up to nine times more than distant trees, and by providing shade. Evaporation of water from trees through the transpiration process also has a cooling effect, especially in hot climates or seasons. The combined effects of this reduce the heat island effect that can make downtowns seem like deserts. This reduction makes it more enticing for people to walk around and visit downtown businesses, while also reducing the



PHOTOS BY KENNETH SMOOTHERS, ARKANSAS FORESTRY

energy bills, and increasing pavement life which reduces maintenance costs. It's a triple economic benefit that also increases comfort! It is easy to see how the compounding financial benefits of downtown trees quickly cause them to pay for themselves, while at the same time providing a beautiful backdrop that a community can take pride in.

Batesville is an example of a city with a downtown that was on a downward slide. Their retail occupancy had fallen to 50 percent by 2012. With so many empty storefronts, not many people were walking around their



In these before-and-after pictures, it's easy to see how planting trees—a Kwanzan Cherry and Crepe Myrtle in this case—and landscaping has beautified Batesville's Main Street.

downtown. Knowing that a healthy downtown raises the value of surrounding property and attracts new businesses, Batesville started a revitalization effort. Batesville brought in an expert from the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute to assess their situation. Their assessment was clear: Batesville needed some work, but it had a good foundation. Batesville formed a committee and work began. They began to focus on people, not cars. They saw the value that a tree-filled downtown offers and gave downtown a greener look, which makes it more inviting and increases economic viability.

Batesville Mayor Rick Elumbaugh stated their goal as “revitalizing Main Street to keep our children in town.” So many of the residents leave town when they grow older and they need a reason to come back, which a more vibrant and opportunity-filled downtown will provide. Many changes are being made. They have redesigned downtown parking in a way that adds more parking as well as more green space. They lowered the speed limit and added new trees.

“Create an environment for people to enjoy,” Joel Williams, Main Street director stated as a goal for this project. New businesses have already started to move in, even though the project is still under way. Other major improvements are to follow, including refurbishing an old theater and fixing up buildings that need work. When one old building had to be removed, they created a pocket park in its place, which gives folks a new location to relax and enjoy the downtown area.

This is just the beginning of change for Arkansas's oldest city. There are also plans to expand parks, trails, and outdoor recreational opportunities along the White River. Batesville is on its way to bringing life back to the heart of the city.

Batesville is not the only city in Arkansas that is updating the downtown; there are many other good examples to look to. If your city would like assistance with urban trees, please contact us. We are here to help!



*Alison Litchy is urban forestry partnership coordinator with the Arkansas Forestry Commission. Call Alison at 501-984-5867 or email [alison.litchy@arkansas.gov](mailto:alison.litchy@arkansas.gov).*

# The construction observer's role

By Bruce Pattison

A construction project is usually a three-way partnership among the owner, the contractor, and the engineer. The contractor is naturally always on the construction site, and the owner is often either onsite or nearby, but not so with the engineer. The fulltime presence of the engineer onsite would not only be a financial burden for the owner, but also a poor allocation of the engineer's skills and knowledge. Nevertheless, the engineer is a critical component of the construction project. This need for a fulltime engineering presence on the construction site is fulfilled by the construction observer. The construction observer is the eyes, ears, and voice of the engineer and can be a value-added partner for both the owner and the contractor.

The construction observer should never see his responsibilities as adversarial. He is an integral partner on the construction site serving the interests of the owner and engineer, while facilitating a good working relationship with the contractor. Such a relationship results in a project that is highly beneficial to the owner and financially rewarding for the contractor.

For the owner, the construction observer acts as a sort of advocate looking out for the interests of the owner in a variety of ways. While working under the direct supervision of the project engineer, the observer has the responsibility of ensuring that the owner is receiving all materials and services agreed upon under the terms and conditions of the contract. The observer also keeps track of all the materials delivered to the site for which the contractor might wish to charge the owner as materials stored until incorporated into the project. He must also check that the materials stored are those approved by the engineer during the submittal process. He must review each month's pay requests to be the sure the contractor is only being paid for work completed to date. For items that are being paid as 'quantity used,' the observer must approve the quantities used by the contractor, such as size and number of linear feet of pipe installed or quantities of rock or asphalt or concrete used.

The evaluation of workmanship and normal construction practices, are also within the scope of the construction observer's responsibility. The observer supplies daily reports on manpower, weather, site conditions, equipment being used, construction photos (particularly

items that will be out of sight after construction is complete), including "as-built" records depicting any deviations from the original drawings. Lastly, the construction observer can be a ready resource for the owner to call upon when questions arise. The construction observer needs to be prepared to answer the owner's questions about, for instance, what construction materials are to be used, various terms and conditions in the contract, and general construction procedures as observed in the field. By being able to answer these questions, the construction observer saves the owner valuable time and prevents misunderstandings that might arise during the course of the project.

When problems arise in the process of construction, such as unforeseen conditions, problems with incorporating existing construction with the new additions, sizing issues, or field observations indicating a different construction material or method to be employed, the contractor turns to the construction observer to communicate these issues to the project engineer. This process frees the contractor to continue construction while a solution is worked out, saving both money and potential time delays. For the owner, this process also saves time and money, and it prevents unnecessary confusion and frustration resulting from trying to deal with an unfamiliar problem or condition.

Testing is another important, if not critical, responsibility of the construction observer. A construction observer needs a strong general knowledge of how customary field tests, such as soil density testing or concrete testing, should be conducted. Although licensed or certified technicians perform such tests, the observer should know what the test results indicate and, when there are deficiencies, it is his/her responsibility to immediately report these deficiencies to the project engineer. In addition, it is his/her responsibility to keep a record of these tests. It is of the utmost importance that the observer be fully aware of the frequency of any testing required under the terms of the contract as well as his/her latitude, under the contract, to require additional testing when conditions warrant. Lastly, an experienced observer should be prepared to share with the project engineer and the contractor suggestions on how to correct the deficiency based on his/her knowledge of how

similar conditions have been corrected in the past by other engineers and contractors.

The construction observer can also be of substantial value to the contractor who takes full advantage of the observer's skills and experience. The observer, as a result of his/her responsibility to be completely familiar with the contract and drawings, can alert the contractor to errors or omissions that could prove costly to the contractor if allowed to proceed. The construction supervisor who cultivates a good relationship with the observer not only has a second set of eyes watching the project, but he can draw on the observer's experience in how to address or overcome a construction problem. A good working relationship between the construction superintendent and the observer can go a long way in avoiding costly mistakes and delays, which also benefits the owner.

A construction observer needs to be very flexible in his/her approach to each construction project. No two projects are the same and require different areas of concentration on the part of the observer. Likewise, no two owners are the same. Some owners are very hands on while others want a turnkey project with little involvement in the day-to-day construction process. The observer must be responsive to the owner's needs.

Contractors, like owners, also come to the project with different levels of experience. It is not uncommon for a contractor to have varied general construction experience or no experience whatsoever with a particular type of project. In such cases, the experience and knowledge of the construction observer can be invaluable to the contractor.

It is key that the observer always maintain an "observer only" status and never direct the work in any manner, unless instructed by the project engineer. It is important that the "ways and means" of construction remain completely the responsibility of the contractor. And finally, the contractor and the owner must understand that the construction observer does not have the authority to change or amend any terms or conditions of the project contract.



*Bruce Pattison is a Construction Observer for McClelland Consulting Engineers. Bruce can be reached at our Little Rock office, 501-371-0272.*

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# Arkansas Chronic Disease Coordinating Council honors City of Bryant, Lake Village Mayor

**T**he Arkansas Chronic Disease Coordinating Council presented Trendsetter Awards to one Arkansas city, a mayor and the Arkansas Diabetes Advisory Council at its Chronic Disease Forum in Benton April 30.


The City of Bryant was presented with the 2015 Trendsetter Award for organizations in honor of the city's commitment to policies that ensure the community grows in a healthy and prosperous manner. Accepting the award for Bryant Mayor Jill Dabbs and the city was City Attorney Chris Madison.

Mayor JoAnne Bush of the City of Lake Village was presented the Trendsetter Award for individual achievement. Bush was honored for her work in making Lake Village a healthier place to live and for her commitment to actively participate in the healthy activities she promotes.

"We are so proud of Mayors Bush and Dabbs!" Joy Rockenbach, immediate past chair of ArCOP told the Arkansas Municipal League. "We are grateful they are setting the pace for implementing 'no-cost, low-cost, and some skin-in-the-game' projects. And we know we can count on them to lead the way."

The Trendsetter coalition award was presented to the Arkansas Diabetes Advisory Council, which has represented a variety of public and private partners in order to better promote education, awareness, and quality of care and to reduce the burden of complications as the result of diabetes.

More than 100 people from around the state convened for the 2015 Arkansas Chronic Disease Forum at the Benton Event Center. The forum's theme was "Prevention, Policy, and Practice in Action." Director and State Health Officer, Dr. Nate Smith, served as the keynote speaker, introducing the group to the Arkansas's Big Health Problems and How We Plan to Solve Them report.

For more information about the program, or to learn more about the Chronic Disease Coordinating Council, contact Becky Adams, 501-661-2334, [Becky.Adams2@arkansas.gov](mailto:Becky.Adams2@arkansas.gov), or visit [www.healthy.arkansas.gov](http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov). 



From left, Bonnie Bradley, public health nutrition consultant with the Arkansas Department of Health's Chronic Disease Prevention and Control branch; Bryant City Attorney Chris Madison; and Lake Village Mayor JoAnne Bush.

# NLR Mini Maker Faire showcases innovative technologies

The Arkansas Innovation Hub hosted the first-ever North Little Rock Mini Maker Faire May 2, an event that showcased hobbyists, tinkerers, and enthusiasts who are exploring innovative ideas, methods, and technologies, some of whom are ready to begin marketing their products. The Faire drew more than 3,500 attendees and featured more than 70 exhibitors. To learn more about the Mini Maker Faire and the Arkansas Innovation Hub, visit [www.arhub.org](http://www.arhub.org). 



PHOTO COURTESY ARKANSAS INNOVATION HUB

The Force was with the first-ever North Little Rock Mini Maker Faire, which drew more than 3,500 participants from near...and far, far away, including these *Star Wars* enthusiasts who utilized technology to craft remarkable costumes.

## Missed us?

You can download last month's issue or older issues of *City & Town* that you might have missed.

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# Dehydration affects the body and brain

**T**he average human body is 60 percent water. Your body uses water to perform a multitude of functions, including: regulating body temperature, lubricating joints, protecting organs, flushing out waste, carrying nutrients and oxygen to the cells, and dissolving minerals and nutrients. If you do not replenish your body's water supply by drinking plenty of fluids and you become dehydrated, your body will be unable to perform its normal functions including attention and memory. Dehydration affects sodium and electrolyte levels in the body, which has also been linked to cognitive changes.

There is limited literature available on how hydration affects human cognitive function, but the brain function most likely affected by dehydration are short-term memory and attention, says Laura DeFina, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Cooper Institute.

It isn't uncommon to see a marathon runner complete the race, only to receive medical treatment after becoming confused and disoriented. This is caused by a loss of sodium and electrolytes due to dehydration from strenuous exercise and heavy sweating.

"While there is conflicting information, it is pretty clear that hydration affects the brain, particularly in elderly adults and children," says Dr. DeFina.

Elderly adults tend to have more diseases and confounding factors, such as medication that affects hydration. In those who already have cognitive difficulties, when an older adult becomes dehydrated his or her cognitive function becomes even more inhibited. Disabled adults and young children rely on others to provide water. Thus, their thirst and need for hydration may not be addressed as quickly as it would be for an older child or adult, who is able to get a drink on their own when they are thirsty, leading to dehydration.

These brain-related effects of dehydration reinforce the fact that hydration is essential, not just for physical function, but intellectual and mental function.

## Tips to stay hydrated this summer

It is important to keep yourself hydrated, particularly if you live in a hot climate. Dr. DeFina suggests these tips to keep hydrated this summer:

- Make an effort to hydrate before exercise, during exercise and after exercise.
- Drink seven to 10 ounces of water every 10 to 15 minutes while exercising.
- Water is the best option, as it doesn't have unnecessary calories like many sports drinks. Generally, you only need the extra electrolytes in sports drinks after exercising more than an hour.
- Monitor your hydration based on how thirsty you are and the color of your urine. A well-hydrated person has pale yellow urine. Drink when you are thirsty, or if you notice your urine is darker than it should be.
- The recommendation of drinking at least six to eight glasses of water a day is a good rule of thumb, but it is not one size fits all.

Dr. DeFina also pointed out that there is no evidence that pickle juice, coconut water, or other "trendy" drinks are superior to water.

Research is conflicting on the long-term effects of dehydration on the brain. What we do know is that dehydration and a loss of sodium and electrolytes can cause acute changes in memory and attention. To prevent any loss of body or brain function, take steps to keep your body properly hydrated this summer.

*This article was published originally by the Cooper Aerobics Institute, [www.cooperaerobics.com](http://www.cooperaerobics.com), and is reprinted with permission.*



*David Baxter is the League's Health and Safety Coordinator. Email David at [dbaxter@arml.org](mailto:dbaxter@arml.org), or call 501-374-3484 Ext. 110.*



# Arkansas water works group presents honors

The Arkansas Water Works & Water Environment Association (AWW&WEA) has honored two wastewater and engineering professionals at its annual meeting held April 27 in Hot Springs. The AWW&WEA presented Bob Williams, an engineering construction manager for Jacksonville Wastewater, with the 2015 Arkansas Water Environment Association's Wastewater Collection System Award. Among his achievements, Williams spearheaded an effort to create a voluntary certification program for collection system operators in Arkansas that is certified by the Association of Boards of Certification.

The AWW&WEA presented the 2015 Water Environment Federation's Bedell Award for Personal Service to Aaron Benzing, P.E., a principal engineer at Hawkins-Weir Engineers and president of the AWEA. As president, Benzing was the force behind two specialty conferences for the organization, both of which saw record attendance. He also helped the new format of the organization's magazine, *The Digester*, and sponsorship packages to help financially support the group. 🏠



Hawkins-Weir Engineers' Aaron Benzing, left, and Jacksonville Wastewater's Bob Williams, right, were honored at the recent annual meeting of the Arkansas Water Works & Water Environment Association.



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# Good community branding adds value

By Shelby Fiegel

The current competitive economic environment is making it harder for communities to command attention and display relevancy. Thus, many Arkansas communities are getting lost in the crowd. One way these communities can redefine their situation and demand consideration is to develop a strong community brand. A community's brand aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence among other communities. A strong brand influences public perception, makes investment in the community attractive, supports tourism activities, and provides citizens with a sense of identity.

In the mind of a typical consumer, the concept of branding is most often associated with a logo or tagline—the Nike swoosh, the Chevrolet bowtie, Coca Cola's "Open happiness," "Like a good neighbor State Farm is there," or "Got Milk?" While logos and taglines are important in branding, they are not necessarily the most important part. This notion is especially true concerning community branding.

To create a community brand that generates top-of-mind awareness and "sticks" in the mind of consumers, a city cannot simply pluck a logo or tagline out of thin air because it looks/sounds cool or they "think" it represents their community; a community brand has to be developed through research and self-identification. A good brand should provide a community with added value by conveying a powerful identity and create consumer trust and respect.

Las Vegas is a solid example of a successful community brand (though maybe not one any given community could or would want to recreate). The city would not be known as "Sin City" if the residents of Las Vegas and the general public did not attribute the city with that description. Las Vegas delivers on its brand promise (benefits and experiences that are associated with a community in its current and prospective consumers' minds) by providing the experience, "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas." The city created brand success by understanding, playing off, and building its tourism-focused identity that is now known throughout the world.

So, how does a community in Arkansas compete with the big boys in branding? It starts with research. Review your community's history and identify its future direction. Do you have a strategic plan set in place? If so, draw upon it during brand development. Define your competitors, conduct case studies of other successfully branded communities of similar size, and map out your strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats. Make sure you ask yourself the right questions, such as:

- How do you define yourself as a community?
- What are the key features or unique attributes of your community?
- What are you selling (a good place to live, business environment, tourism, etc.)?
- What do residents think about your community?
- What do outsiders think about your community?
- What is your community vision or mission statement?
- What are your goals and objectives?

As you slowly accumulate this information, you will see your community brand take shape. Only after this research is complete and these questions are answered can a community begin to develop a logo or tagline.

As the branding process winds down and decisions are made, there are many key things to remember. Be aware of perception (inside and outside of your community) so you can stay true to your community's identity. Do not under deliver on your brand promise. If your brand falls short of its promise, you will lose the attention and trust of consumers and your brand will be unsuccessful. Most importantly, create a brand that adds value to your community and is consistent with your community's future plans.



*Shelby Fiegel is project coordinator of UCA's Center for Community and Economic Development. Contact her by phone at 501-450-5269, by email at [sfiegel@uca.edu](mailto:sfiegel@uca.edu), or visit the Center's website at [www.uca.edu/cced](http://www.uca.edu/cced).*

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# 2015 State Turnback Funds

Actual Totals Per Capita						
	STREET		SEVERANCE TAX		GENERAL	
MONTH	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
January	\$5.1428	\$4.8662	\$0.3163	\$0.5728	\$1.9533	\$2.0995
February	\$4.5811	\$4.8562	\$0.4833	\$0.4599	\$1.0052	\$1.0921
March	\$4.7165	\$5.1898	\$0.4463	\$0.2339	\$1.0055	\$1.0909
April	\$4.8363	\$4.7309	\$0.5347	\$0.6375	\$1.0055	\$1.1417
May	\$5.1527	\$5.2197	\$0.5897	\$0.2544	\$1.0053	\$1.0906
June	\$4.9881		\$0.6126		\$1.0050	
July	\$5.5230		\$0.5581		\$3.9543	
August	\$4.9486		\$0.6130		\$1.0932	
September	\$5.0410		\$0.5763		\$1.0910	
October	\$5.1889		\$0.5542		\$1.0930	
November	\$4.9326		\$0.4906		\$1.0928	
December	\$4.8110		\$0.4013		\$1.0919	
<b>Total Year</b>	<b>\$59.8626</b>	<b>\$24.8628</b>	<b>\$6.1764</b>	<b>\$2.1585</b>	<b>\$16.3960</b>	<b>\$6.5148</b>

Actual Totals Per Month						
	STREET		SEVERANCE TAX		GENERAL	
MONTH	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
January	\$9,666,249.40	\$9,159,751.23	\$594,574.44	\$1,078,253.79	*\$3,671,282.93	*\$3,951,880.56
February	\$8,610,432.52	\$9,140,972.61	\$908,313.92	\$865,620.02	\$1,889,234.55	\$2,055,766.00
March	\$8,864,931.29	\$9,768,890.51	\$838,837.95	\$440,227.94	\$1,889,913.97	\$2,053,376.13
April	\$9,090,103.48	\$8,905,034.06	\$1,005,050.29	\$1,199,954.61	\$1,889,913.97	\$2,149,094.75
May	\$9,684,675.50	\$9,840,348.46	\$1,108,429.75	\$479,664.03	\$1,889,592.55	\$2,056,091.57
June	\$9,380,093.69		\$1,151,947.00		\$1,889,914.20	
July	\$10,386,236.87		\$1,049,503.01		**\$7,436,192.77	
August	\$9,310,016.61		\$1,153,167.19		\$2,056,570.50	
September	\$9,483,759.74		\$1,084,169.71		\$2,052,581.22	
October	\$9,763,094.43		\$1,042,826.36		\$2,056,448.50	
November	\$9,282,963.15		\$923,263.56		\$2,056,540.00	
December	\$9,054,075.63		\$755,208.69		\$2,054,945.78	
<b>Total Year</b>	<b>\$112,576,632.31</b>	<b>\$46,814,996.87</b>	<b>\$11,615,291.87</b>	<b>\$4,063,720.39</b>	<b>\$30,833,130.94</b>	<b>12,266,209.01</b>

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

\*\* Includes \$3,516,800.29 supplemental and \$2 million appropriation from Category B of Budget Stabilization for July 2014

# Local Option Sales and Use Tax in Arkansas



KEY: Counties not collecting sales tax

Source: Rachel Graves, Office of State Treasurer

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

Sales and Use Tax Year-to-Date 2015 with 2014 Comparison (shaded gray)								
Month	Municipal Tax		County Tax		Total Tax		Interest	
January	\$48,260,965	\$44,899,051	\$42,805,543	\$41,135,484	\$91,066,508	\$86,034,535	\$12,222	\$4,805
February	\$57,956,453	\$51,556,660	\$50,071,410	\$46,326,186	\$108,027,863	\$97,882,846	\$12,659	\$5,765
March	\$46,032,300	\$41,142,676	\$41,404,634	\$37,596,230	\$87,436,935	\$78,738,906	\$19,161	\$5,571
April	\$46,694,339	\$44,819,678	\$42,176,819	\$41,824,879	\$88,871,158	\$86,644,557	\$15,459	\$6,185
May	\$52,104,723	\$48,373,032	\$46,560,371	\$43,431,803	\$98,665,094	\$91,804,835	\$4,827	\$6,011
June		\$45,121,494		\$40,770,568		\$85,892,061		\$7,080
July		\$50,985,699		\$45,660,838		\$96,646,537		\$7,291
August		\$48,591,520		\$44,364,160		\$92,955,680		\$7,038
September		\$48,279,490		\$43,224,258		\$91,503,748		\$9,120
October		\$50,649,942		\$45,482,360		\$96,132,302		\$8,604
November		\$48,903,456		\$44,043,654		\$92,947,110		\$19,648
December		\$49,348,276		\$44,623,076		\$93,971,352		\$14,221
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$251,048,780</b>	<b>\$572,670,974</b>	<b>\$223,018,777</b>	<b>\$518,483,496</b>	<b>\$474,067,558</b>	<b>\$1,091,154,469</b>	<b>\$64,328</b>	<b>\$101,339</b>
Averages	\$50,209,756	\$47,722,581	\$44,603,755	\$43,206,958	\$94,813,512	\$90,929,539	\$12,866	\$8,445





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**CHIEF OF POLICE**—The City of Bradley is now accepting applications for a full time police chief. Must be certified and meet all requirements of law enforcement standards and training. Send Resume to, or applications are available at: City of Bradley City Hall, P.O. Box 729, 410 Pullman Street, Bradley, AR 71826. Office hours are 8-4 Mon- Fri; 870-894-3464. EOE.

**CHIEF OF POLICE**—The City of Lonoke is accepting applications for Police Chief. Responsible for operation of police department with approximately 18 employees, under Mayor/Council form of government; population approximately 4,245. Applicant must meet all standards of certification for law enforcement officer. Must be experienced in management, administration and have extensive law enforcement experience. Requires strong direct leadership. Thorough background study. Salary DOE. All resumes and/or applications must be received by June 22, 2015. Send to Mayor Wayne McGee, 107 W. 2nd St., Lonoke, AR 72086.

**CHIEF OF POLICE**—The City of Marked Tree is accepting applications for the position of Chief of Police. Applications for this position may be picked up at Marked Tree City Hall 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. M-F from the Mayors' office and must be received by 5 p.m. Aug. 31. Please submit your résumé and completed application to: City of Marked Tree, Attn: Mayor Mary Ann Arnold, 1 Elm Street, Marked Tree, AR 72365. For more information you may call 870-358-3216. EOE.

**CHIEF OF POLICE**—The City of Tontitown is accepting applications for the position of Chief of Police. Applications may be found on our website at [www.tontitown.com](http://www.tontitown.com) or picked up in person at the Administration Building 201 E. Henri De Tonti Blvd 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. M-F. Please submit your resume and completed application along with a copy of your driver's license to: City of Tontitown, ATTN: Lori Bolen, P.O. Box 305, Tontitown, AR 72770. No phone calls please. EOE. Please be advised that your application and supporting documentation, if any, is a public record that may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR**—Jetmore, Kan. (pop. 879; \$3.4 million budget; 6 FTE's), is a friendly, tight-knit community located 25 miles north of Dodge City, Kan. The city is looking for a leader with strong personnel management skills, a bachelor's degree and some local government experience. Salary \$50K-\$60K DOQ. Send cover letter, résumé, and 3 professional references to [LEAPS-Jetmore@lkm.org](mailto:LEAPS-Jetmore@lkm.org) or LEAPS-Jetmore, 300 SW 8th, Topeka, KS, 66603. EOE. Open until filled. Application review begins July 6.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR**—Louisburg, Kan. (pop. 4,299; \$13.1 million budget; 30 FTE's), is a fast-growing community at the southern edge of the KC metro area. MPA and at least 3 years of city management experience required. Salary \$85K-\$100K DOQ. Send cover letter, resume, and 3 professional references to [LEAPS-Louisburg@lkm.org](mailto:LEAPS-Louisburg@lkm.org) or LEAPS-Louisburg, 300 SW 8th, Topeka, KS, 66603. EOE. Open until filled. Application review begins May 26.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR**—Roeland Park, Kan. (pop. 6,845; \$14.4 million budget; 29 FTE's), is a diverse, first-tier suburb located a few miles from Kansas City, MO., in northeast Johnson County. The City is looking for a strong, professional leader with an MPA and at least 4 years of city management experience. Salary \$85K-\$100K DOQ. Send cover letter, résumé, and 3 professional references to [LEAPS-Roeland Park@lkm.org](mailto:LEAPS-Roeland Park@lkm.org) or LEAPS-Roeland Park, 300 SW 8th, Topeka, KS, 66603. EOE. Open until filled. Application review begins July 6.

**FINANCE DIRECTOR**—Organization is accepting applications for Director of Finance. This position has the dual role of planning, organizing, managing and directing the financial operations and services for the business. The incumbent serves in a managerial capacity to ensure compliance with all regulatory financial statutes/guidelines and quality of departmental services. Responsible for annual budget of \$25,000,000 plus. Knowledge of principles/practices/methods of public finance administration and utility administration; knowledge of cost/revenue projection methods and techniques. Knowledge of investment options and risk management issues are needed. Qualifications include a Bachelor's in Finance or Accounting, MBA preferred, CPA a plus but not required. Two years related management experience needed. Salary DOE and will be negotiated during selection process. A competitive benefit package is also offered and includes a car allowance, medical, vision, dental and retirement package. Resumes can be sent to Human Resources, P.O. Box 443, Osceola, AR, 72370; or email [janes@osceolalightandpower.com](mailto:janes@osceolalightandpower.com). EOE.

**FINANCE/PAYROLL**—Centerton is accepting applications for Finance/Payroll. Responsible for finances, payroll, insurance, H/R, & administration duties for the City of Centerton. Must have at least 5 years of accounting and payroll experience. Experience in governmental accounting and software a plus. Submit resumes to: City of Centerton Attn: Bill Edwards, 290 N. Main Street, Centerton, AR 72719; or email [bedwards@centertonar.us](mailto:bedwards@centertonar.us). For questions, contact Bill Edwards or Jennifer Robinson at 479-795-2750.

**JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN**—Journeyman Lineman opening at City of Perry, Okla. Outstanding benefits include insurance; longevity pay; paid vacation, sick & holidays; and generous retirement plan. Duties include install, change, transfer, move and remove poles, pole line hardware, guys, transformers, lightning arresters, streetlight equipment, energized conductors, insulators, conduit, capacitor bank controls and any and all forms of electrical material and accessories utilized in the construction, maintenance, and operation of electric circuits. Requirements include: Journeyman certification, Class B CDL, HS graduate/GED, and ability to work in physically demanding conditions and unfavorable weather conditions while handling dangerous equipment. Successful applicant must be able to work nights, holidays, weekends, and emergencies. Twenty minute emergency response time preferred. Applications available at City Hall, 622 Cedar Street or on the website [www.cityofperryok.com](http://www.cityofperryok.com). Applications accepted until filled at: P.O. Drawer 798, Perry, OK 73077; email [hr@cityofperryok.com](mailto:hr@cityofperryok.com); fax 580-336-4111; or at 622 Cedar Street, Perry, OK 73077. EOE.

**SANITATION DIRECTOR**—Conway is seeking an experienced professional with proven leadership skills to serve as Director of the City of Conway Sanitation Department. The Sanitation Director reports directly to the Mayor and is responsible for overseeing all operations involving the collection of waste and recycling for over 21,000 homes and 800 businesses within the City of Conway; the Class I Landfill and mulching operation that is monitored by the State of Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality; fleet maintenance and the multi-million dollar recycling program (MRF). Responsibilities include but are not limited to accounting and financial reporting functions and preparation of the department's annual budget; ensuring the Sanitation department's compliance with city, state and federal laws, advising the Mayor, City Council, other City departments and the general public in reference to sanitation department issues and building relationships with the community, city employees, local, regional and state leaders. The City seeks a proac-



tive leader who is a superior communicator committed to inclusion and diversity. Education/ Experience: Prefer a Bachelor's in Business Admin., Public Admin. or a related field and 10 years of progressively responsible experience including 5 years in a Director position. Equivalent combinations of education, experience and certifications may be considered. Compensation includes a competitive salary and benefits package. Open until filled. Please submit resume to: Human Resources Director, City of Conway, 1201 Oak Street, Conway, AR 72032; email [lisa.williams@cityofconway.org](mailto:lisa.williams@cityofconway.org); fax 501-513-3503. Submitted resumes will be subject to disclosure under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act. EOE.

**WASTEWATER OPERATOR**—The Town of Menifee is accepting applications or proposals for a Wastewater Operations Operator. Qualifications: HS Diploma or GED; Class I Operator's License with ability to obtain Class II License within one year. Applicants must possess valid state DL. Wastewater Treatment Facility duties: submit discharge monitoring reports; coordinate with commercial laboratory for all required testing; maintain daily operating reports; maintain facility grounds and facility operation. Sewer Collection System Duties: maintain daily pump station operating reports, provide inspection of all residential/commercial sewer service connections, maintain collection system operation; approx. 20 hrs./wk. Send proposal/résumé to: Town of Menifee, P.O. Box 38, Menifee, AR 72107; Attn: Mayor Lee Smith; 501-354-0898. Open until filled.

**FOR SALE**—45 1500-watt Hubbell Light Fixtures with 440 volt ballast, \$50 each. Will make you a good deal! Also have six scoreboards for sale. Call Ashdown Mayor James Sutton, 870-898-2622.

**FOR SALE**—The City of Patterson has a 1981 Ford F-700 Fire Truck for sale for \$9,000.00. Truck has a 5-speed manual transmission with a 429 gas engine. Has front mount 750 gpm Darly pump with current pump test of 2014. If interested contact Fire Chief Robert Broughton, 870-919-3019.

**FOR SALE**—The Town of Poyen is taking bids on a 1954 Ford F-750 fire truck. Engine runs, needs breaks, pump is out, unknown if it can be rebuilt. Bids will be taken until 4 p.m. July 27, and opened at the council meeting that evening at 7 p.m. The town reserves the right to accept or deny any or all bids. Bids can be mailed to Town of Poyen, ATTN: Fire Truck Bid, P.O. Box 248, Poyen, AR 72128. For more information contact Chief Claude Hardin 501-467-4531.



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## Mountain Home added to economic index

Mountain Home is showing a strong economic performance, according to the Arkansas Tech Business Index. It's the newest Arkansas city to be listed in the index, the *Baxter Bulletin* reported May 4. January figures, the most recently listed on the ATBI, show Mountain Home with a rating of 100.36, making it one of the top nine cities in the state economically.


Generally the index focuses on larger Arkansas cities, but they picked Mountain Home for a variety of reasons, Dr. Marc Fusaro, associate professor of economics and overseer of the ABTI, said. One is the fact it's the largest city in the north central Arkansas region and it is an economic hub for the area. Another consideration was the tourism and retirement factors in the local economy, and the fact Mountain Home has so many banks, Fusaro said, including the area headquarters for Arvest Bank.

The ABTI measures the economic activity of 18 cities, encompassing labor, housing market, construction and retail sales data, according to the professor. Ratings above 100 indicate a city is doing better than the state average from 2009 to now. For the latest report, nine cities on the list rated about 100, including Fort Smith, which topped the list for January with a rating of 107.19. Other cities with a rating above 100 were Springdale (104.56), Fayetteville (103.82), Rogers (103.40), Hot Springs (101.56), Conway (101.42) and Van Buren (100.48).

Cities with ratings below Mountain Home included Russellville (99.87), Jonesboro (99.37), Searcy (98.90), Texarkana (97.48), North Little Rock (96.88), West Memphis (96.65), El Dorado (96.40), Little Rock (96.33) and Pine Bluff (95.32).

Fusaro said the index helps a city see how well its economy is doing. While this year is the first time Mountain Home has been included in the index, data has been collected on the city back to January 2009. Its index rating has topped 100 in 34 months since then, the highest 100.79 in October 2010.

## Rural Development funds secured for three Arkansas cities

U.S. Senators John Boozman and Tom Cotton along with Congressman Rick Crawford (AR-1) have announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded rural development grants to the communities of McCrory and Cotter for first responder vehicles and equipment, the *Newton County Times* reported May 24. USDA has approved a loan for the city of Brinkley to make improvements to its existing wastewater treatment plant. 

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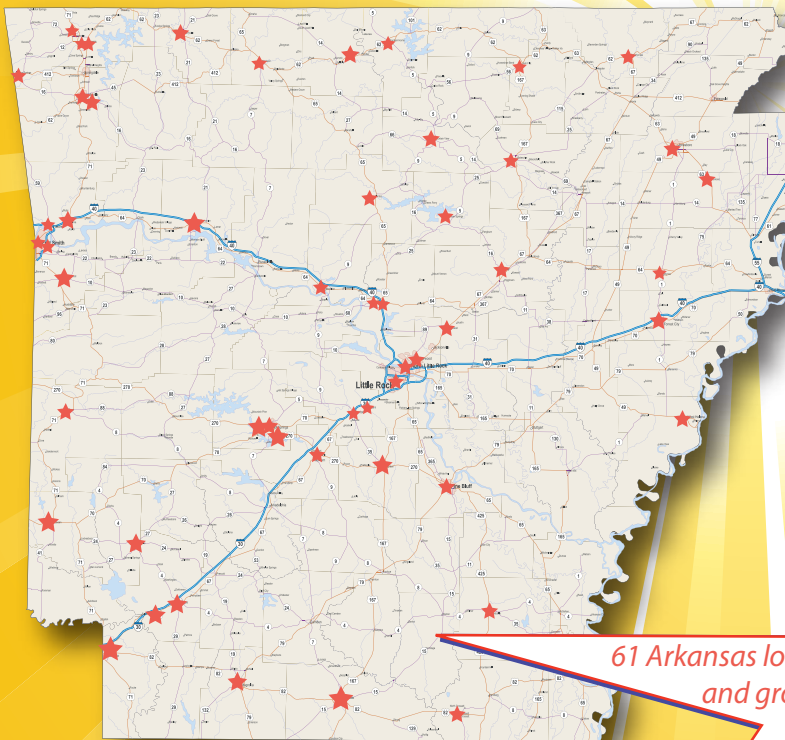
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