

City & Town

JULY 2021 VOL. 77, NO. 07

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE



How do you think new money becomes old money?



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Pine Bluff, AR*



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Cover photo by Ben Cline.



ON THE COVER—Speaking during one of the sessions of the 87th Annual Virtual Convention, held June 16-18, League Executive Director Mark R. Hayes covers legislation affecting municipalities passed during this year’s 93rd General Assembly. Read coverage of the convention and annual business meeting inside beginning on page 14. Read also about the U.S. Census Bureau’s release of apportionment data and what it means for Arkansas’ representation in Washington, D.C., and about what a delay in census data means for redrawing district and ward maps back here at home. And, as always, check out the timely and interesting info from our fantastic slate of regular columnists, who cover everything from protecting your skin under the summer sun to promoting the benefits of pocket parks and food forests as ways to build community and improve the quality of life in our cities and towns.—atm

Features

14 87th a wrap!
The League’s North Little Rock HQ was again transformed into a studio from which the 87th Annual Virtual Convention was broadcast June 16-18. Gathering together online, municipal officials and personnel discussed an array of issues important to cities and towns, elected a new slate of officers for 2021-2022, voted on a package of resolutions and adopted the League’s policies and goals statement.

36 Census bureau state apportionment count is in
Arkansas’ population ticked up 3.3 percent over the past decade, but its seats in the U.S. House of Representatives will hold steady at four according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2020 apportionment results released April 26, which are used to determine each state’s congressional representation.

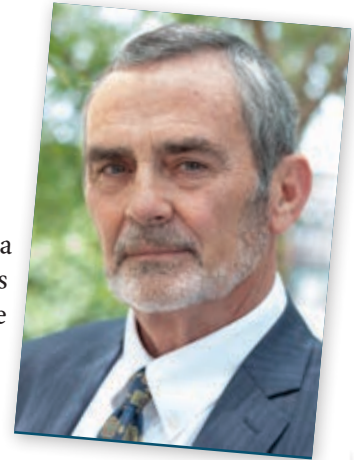
38 Redistricting 101
With the census data necessary to redraw the lines for local and statewide districts in Arkansas being delayed, it’s a good time to refresh your memory on redistricting basics, courtesy of the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service’s Public Policy Center.

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Dear fellow municipal officials,

I can't tell you how much of an honor it is to be chosen to serve as the Arkansas Municipal League president for the coming year. I am truly humbled by your confidence in me to hold this position, especially when I look back at so many past presidents I admire and respect. Our immediate past president, Mayor Gary Baxter, did an outstanding job during some of the most trying times I can recall in my 30-plus years as a mayor. Gary served the League with dignity, honor and integrity and was always available for whatever the League needed. On behalf of the League members and staff, thank you for your service to the League, and thank you, Kay, for your support of Gary through all he has done. I know how much the support and encouragement of a spouse like you means to a mayor or any elected official.



The COVID-19 pandemic changed almost everything we do. On top of having to deal with the pandemic itself, we have had to deal with the fact that so many have made this a political issue as much as a public safety issue. Hopefully, we are nearing the end of this and will soon be able to meet and break bread at the same table. I encourage all municipal officials to join our governor in encouraging everyone to get their vaccine. There is a way for us to move past this pandemic, and it is by listening to the science and to the medical experts we have been blessed with in this country, and not the Facebook sages who seem to know everything about everything.

The League staff has done an outstanding job of adjusting to the pandemic. Going from an in-person convention to a virtual one took a lot of work and, as always, our staff rose to the occasion, making our virtual convention equally informative and educational as those in the past. Besides the work of producing the convention, our staff has kept us informed regarding current issues related to federal funding, operating effectively under COVID restrictions, legislative issues and a host of other things we deal with daily. There are far too many individuals to mention here, but on behalf of all members of the League I just want to say, Mark, you have a great staff, and we want to thank all of you as you have led us through this pandemic. It has truly been a great team effort.

Local government is by far the most trusted level of government in our nation. I believe this is because we live, worship and work with the people we represent every day. One challenge I want to put before all of you is to make it your number-one priority every day to serve the people who elected you. We are all elected to serve the people—not a political party, not some issue we cannot change at the local level, nor any one person or movement. Let's set an example of what service to the people really is and show our peers at the state and national level what can be accomplished by working together for the good of all instead of the wants of a few.

Respectfully,

Tim McKinney
Mayor, Berryville
President, Arkansas Municipal League

Mayor Tim McKinney, **Berryville**..... President
 Mayor Virginia Young, **Sherwood**.....First Vice President
 Mayor Dennis Behling, **Lakeview** Vice President, District 1
 City Clerk/Treasurer Carol Westergren, **Beebe**... Vice President, District 2
 Mayor Peter A. Christie, **Bella Vista** Vice President, District 3
 Council Member James Turner, **Mena** Vice President, District 4
 Mark R. HayesExecutive Director

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CITIES OF THE LARGE FIRST CLASS ADVISORY COUNCIL: TBA

CITIES OF THE FIRST CLASS ADVISORY COUNCIL: TBA

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL: TBA

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

CHANGE, CHANGES, CHANGING: The ups, downs and sideways of 2020 and 2021.



I must admit, this has been one of the toughest columns for me to write. The life changes my local controller and I have seen in past several months alone are enough to cause one to slow down or come to a complete stop in order to rest. For the first time since 1983, I'm no longer a resident of Little Rock. The local controller and I, along with the small petting zoo we maintain, are now officially residents of Hot Springs! We went from a 4,500-square-foot home with a massive yard to 1,100 square feet of condo space and strict POA leash rules for the doggos.^{1 2} A side note: We bought the cat-dog a harness and leash in hopes that she'd join us for our daily outings. It didn't go well unless you consider backing into the wall and then walking backwards a success. I digress and the local controller is already fidgety.

The point I'm making is we are facing yet again another change. When I hit the reverse play button on the past year-and-a-half it's hard to conceptualize all that our state and nation have seen. Consider this list:

- The COVID-19 pandemic becomes a reality for the world in January of 2020 and by February a national health crisis is declared in the United States.³
- In May, after the tragic death of George Floyd, protests against racial bias in the law enforcement and judicial arenas explode across the country.⁴
- A presidential race that was perhaps the most contentious and incendiary to have ever occurred in our country.
- An election night, vote count, post-election litigation-protest-recount and "the big lie," all culminating in the criminal attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021.^{5 6 7}
- Miracle COVID vaccines are invented and distributed in record time.⁸
- Millions of Americans get vaccinated,⁹ but millions more *won't* do so in large part because the pandemic has been politicized,¹⁰ along with rampant conspiracy theories such as micro...macro...computer chips being put in the vaccines so that "they" can track "us."¹¹
- COVID variants pop up that are more contagious and deadly than the original virus.¹²
- The variants cause countries and places in the U.S. to shut down all over again or at least slow down the opening up.¹³
- The Delta variant emerges as the nastiest of the group.¹⁴

¹ There are also "bagging" rules, but I'll spare you a full description.

² We also have five storage units. Two in LR and three in the Spa City. Don't judge.

³ <https://www.ajmc.com/view/a-timeline-of-covid19-developments-in-2020>

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Floyd_protests

⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/19/politics/donald-trump-big-lie-explainer/index.html>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/may/19/us-january-6-commission-house-republicans-trump>

⁷ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/chenev-hits-back-trump-over-election-big-lie-n1266143>

⁸ <https://connect.uclahealth.org/2020/12/10/the-fastest-vaccine-in-history/>

⁹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/covid-vaccine-tracker-global-distribution/>

¹⁰ <https://bit.ly/3ha8eoc>

¹¹ <https://bit.ly/2UcqDaO>

¹² <https://bit.ly/3hnuY2V>

¹³ <https://wapo.st/2UflM8W>

¹⁴ <https://on.wsj.com/3jyvtK7>

- In Arkansas, and other places around the country, COVID case numbers are climbing dramatically and those getting sick are primarily those who aren't vaccinated.^{15 16 17}
- The League's annual meetings move from first-time virtual with limited bells and whistles to the 2021 Convention that approached Hollywood-style production.
- Mayor Gary Baxter of Mulberry served as the League's president during this tumultuous year and Mayor Tim McKinney of Berryville takes over with hopes of normalcy despite the uncertainty of variants and the vaccine hesitancy of so many Arkansans.¹⁸

With all of that, and more, to say we've had to adjust—to change—is an understatement. We made changes, changed those changes, made another change or two and changed those changes yet again. Up. Down. Sideways. It really is difficult to keep up with everything the League has done and even more difficult to keep up with what municipalities have had to do. Yet here we are still doing what the League and cities and towns do, albeit with a great many changes here, there and everywhere. Whew, that was exhausting to write. I hope I don't run you off, dear readers.

As I've mentioned many times, I love movies and music. David Bowie recorded the song "Changes" in the summer of 1971, and it was released in January of 1972.¹⁹ I was 12. Ouch. Moving on, the lyrics have always fascinated me. They seem most relevant now, particularly the chorus:

"Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes
 Turn and face the strange
 Ch-ch-changes
 Don't want to be a richer man
 Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes
 Turn and face the strange
 Ch-ch-changes
 Just gonna have to be a different man
 Time may change me
 But I can't trace time."

Setting aside my "artsy" side, I've always believed the message here is to face change positively. To embrace the change not run or cower from it. Whatever "strange" happenings may occur we must become "different" to adapt and overcome. Like all of you my life has seen many changes in my 61 years. College, law school, marriage, children, career, rheumatoid arthritis, two dogs, a dog-like cat...you get the idea. However, none of that could have prepared me, or you I suspect, for the upheavals of the past 18-plus months. Nevertheless, we changed and did so for the good of our cities and towns. That's an incredible legacy.

¹⁵ <https://bit.ly/3hbNVXa>

¹⁶ <https://khn.org/morning-breakout/nearly-every-one-of-the-recent-covid-dead-were-unvaccinated/>

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKTq1JA6XdU&t=405s>

¹⁸ <https://bit.ly/3yj3fr3>

¹⁹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Changes_\(David_Bowie_song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Changes_(David_Bowie_song)) Of note, the song didn't crack the top 40 but it became, in many ways, Bowie's moniker for his continuous changes in musical and theatrical style. Think Ziggy Stardust and compare it with his duet with Bing Crosby of the Christmas classic "The Little Drummer Boy."

Many musical artists have sung of change and the need to embrace change.

The Newsboys, “That’s How You Change the World”²⁰

“It’s a prayer in an empty room
Little things we do when nobody’s around
A hand reaching out
To a heart in doubt
It’s the smallest spark
That can light the dark
That’s how you change the world....”

Bob Dylan, “The Times They Are-A-Changing”²¹

“Come senators, congressmen, please heed the call
Don’t stand in your doorway, don’t block up the hall
For he that gets hurt, will be he who has stalled
‘Cause the battle outside ragin’
Will soon shake your windows and rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin’.”

As I read back through these lyrics, I see so much in what you, municipal officials and personnel, do each and every day. You do the little things that nobody sees. You test the water, check the hoses at the fire station, make sure supplies are ordered for pothole filling and crunch the budget to its last penny. Those little sparks give light to your citizens. There are naysayers and gadflies that routinely say “it” can’t be done, or you did “it” wrong. Yet, you persevere and adjust. Often alone or with other fellow officials and personnel, it’s your love of what you do that makes a difference. Your changes, small though they may be, make a difference. You sit on the front lines of the pandemic, the overly politicized and the many divisions in our country, but you face the times that “are a-changin’.” You overcome the obstacles and face the truth of your circumstances. The police department is better because of those changes and efforts, as is the fire department, the water department, public works, sanitation and the list goes on and on.

We are certainly facing difficult times. COVID numbers are up and vaccinations are down. What was opening may soon be closing. Masks continue as does social distancing. Hand washing? Well, you were good at that before the pandemic. The League’s convention was totally virtual and I’m proud to say it was a hit! With some luck we’ll soon see some positive changes and we can return to face-to-face meetings, conferences and conventions. Of course, there will always be a virtual component but hey, that’s a change for us. Or is it? We’ve seen change, changes and again changing. Up. Down. Sideway. Cities and towns change with the very best. In fact, you are the best.

I leave you with a beautiful thought and gorgeous sound. Puccini’s aria from *Turandot*: “Nessun Dorma.” Please listen. Even if you dislike opera, this is an amazing thing to behold.²² Remember what Sheryl Crow once sang: “**A change will do you good!**”

Until next month, Peace.



Mark R. Hayes
Executive Director
Arkansas Municipal League

²⁰ <https://binged.it/3qJc3nh>

²¹ <https://binged.it/3qFkBvl>

²² This is Luciano Pavarotti’s version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cWc7vYjgnTs>
And this is the Three Tenors’ version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAZa2do8dYI>



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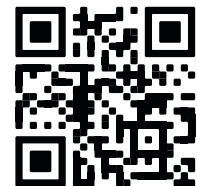
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Trendsetter City Awards 2021 now accepting applications

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

The competition is divided into three population categories: cities less than 5,000 population, 5,000-20,000 population and more than 20,000. Trendsetter City Award winners will be recognized in the following categories:

- **Public Safety:** Recognizes cities and towns being proactive and innovative to improve public safety.
- **Infrastructure/Water:** Recognizes cities and towns that have found innovative ways to preserve existing infrastructure and minimize repair costs for utilities, streets, public waterways, wastewater treatment and more.
- **Education/Workforce Development:** Recognizes unique public programs and public-private partnerships that are improving graduation rates, raising the education

standards in K-12 or developing a more-qualified work-force for employers.

- **Wellness and Fitness:** Recognizes city-led programs to improve the wellness of city employees and/or its citizens.
- **Tourism Development/Creative Culture:** Recognizes cities and towns that are building unique venues, attractions, museums and more to not only attract tourism but also improve the quality of life of citizens.
- **Environmental/Green Management Practices:** Recognizes cities and towns for their efforts to preserve or improve their environment.

Cities and towns can submit one application in each award category, and each entry must describe programs or projects brought to conclusion or showing significant results between July 2017 and July 2021. An official entry application must be submitted for each project. Applications must be received in the Arkansas Business office by 5 p.m. August 31 or be postmarked on or before that date. Winners will be notified in September. Entry forms can be submitted to: C/O Kelli Roy, Arkansas Business Publishing Group, 114 Scott Street, Little Rock, AR 72201. Applications may also be emailed to kroy@abpg.com or faxed to 501-375-7933.

Applications for the Trendsetter City Awards can be found at www.arkansasbusiness.com/trendsetter.

Meeting Calendar

November 18-20, 2021, National League of Cities City Summit, Salt Lake City, Utah

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

Obituaries

LAWRENCE WOODY ASHLOCK, Jr., 89, who served as mayor of Marked Tree for 18 years, died June 13.

RODNEY JOE COTHAM, 72, who served seven years as a council member for the city of Ash Flat, died February 25.

MARGARET MARTIN STEED, 66, who served seven years as a member of the Ash Flat Planning Commission, died February 7.

Summaries of Attorney General Opinions

Recent opinions that affect municipal government in Arkansas

From the office of Attorney General Leslie Rutledge

City employee salaries, hire dates, titles and more releasable under FOIA

Opinions: 2021-037, -038, -039, -040, -041, -043, -044, -047, -049

Requestors: Andrew Brigham, Levy Burris, Timothy L. Boyd, Lucas Hunt, Bob Tharp, Polly Killian, Steven Bain, Kahla Gudger, Trinitee Wilkins, et al.

Is the custodian’s decision to release records regarding the salary/compensation, hire date, position titles, and names of any and all employees for [a city] for the year 2020, in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, consistent with provisions of the FOIA? **RESPONSE:** Because I have not seen any records that would be responsive to the FOIA request, I cannot opine about the releasability of any specific document or the need to redact any specific piece of information from an otherwise releasable document. I can state generally, however, that the bulk of the information requested (salary/compensation, hire date, position titles, and employee names) is subject to inspection and copying under the FOIA. Additionally,

the custodian has correctly decided that sensitive personal information is not releasable.

Acts passed during 93rd General Assembly effective July 28

Opinion: 2021-029

Requestor: John Thurston, Secretary of State

Provided the 93rd General Assembly recesses for longer than ninety (90) days, what is the effective date of those acts of the 93rd General Assembly which were passed prior to the April 28, 2021, recess and which did not contain an emergency clause or specified effective date? Q2)

What is the earliest date the 93rd General Assembly may reconvene while satisfying the requirement that it “remain in extended recess for longer than ninety (90) days” in order for acts passed prior to the April 28, 2021, recess to become effective on the 91st day following the recess?

RESPONSE: The answer to both questions is July 28, 2021, in my opinion. 🏛️

To read full Attorney General opinions online, visit the “Opinions” page at www.arkansasag.gov or email oag@arkansas.gov.

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PHOTOS BY BEN CLINE AND ANDREW MORGAN

Members of the League’s legislative advocacy team and the directors of the Association of Arkansas Counties and the Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police present an overview of the 93rd General Assembly during the 87th Annual Virtual Convention.

League sets goals for year ahead, elects new officers at 87th Convention

By Andrew Morgan, League staff

The Arkansas Municipal League set its agenda for the next year, elected a new slate of officers and covered a variety of topics essential to municipalities during its 87th Annual Virtual Convention, June 16-18. Utilizing a new online platform with more features than previous virtual meetings, the League’s assembly hall, memorial boardroom and legal conference room were transformed into studios from which the convention—a mix of live and pre-recorded training sessions—was broadcast.

The 87th Annual Virtual Convention was offered at no cost to participants, and like last August’s 86th Convention and January’s Winter Conference, participation in the virtual convention was strong, with 884 total participants representing 237 cities and towns joining the online event. With the League’s new, more robust online platform for the 87th, we were pleased to be able to showcase 32 exhibitors and 11 sponsors, each with

their own virtual “booth” where convention attendees could learn about the services they offer, check out videos and other content, and connect via email. The convention also featured three hours of continuing education as part of the League’s voluntary certification program for municipal officials and personnel.

The League’s efforts for the first several months of 2021 were focused on advocating for cities and towns during the regular session of the 93rd General Assembly, which was in session from early January through the end of April. League Executive Director Mark R. Hayes led a continuing education workshop Wednesday, June 16, providing an overview of the Arkansas legislature’s work this year. It was one of three continuing education workshops presented during the convention.

It was a unique legislative session for several reasons, Hayes said. Protocols remained in place to help protect members and visitors against the coronavirus pandemic.



Hayes

The legislature was forced to recess for a week in mid-February due to a record-setting winter storm. And in late March, the legislature took a spring break, a possible first for the state's governing body.

League General Counsel John Wilkerson covered some of most prominent legislation affecting cities and towns, including several bidding laws that are good news for cities. "The two bidding bills are probably two of the biggest bills that passed for us this session," Wilkerson said. Act 440 increases the bid threshold for public improvement contracts, and Act 435 increases the bid threshold for commodities. It also grants cities and towns the same exemptions to commodities bidding that the counties have. Association of Arkansas Counties Executive Director Chris Villines, who joined in the discussion, said the results are positive from the county perspective as well. "It's just good government," he said. "It's one of those things that should have been happening over time anyway."

Two new laws that provide municipalities and counties with more information about sales and use tax rebates and more detailed tax receipts were also wins for local government, Wilkerson said.

"Reform" has been the call across the country for law enforcement, said Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police Executive Director Gary Sipes, who also joined the panel. "I think the state of Arkansas is, so far, ahead of the other states in that we—the sheriffs and

the chiefs—have model policies that are in place." He praised the cooperation among the chiefs, the Arkansas Sheriff's Association, the cities and the counties during the session. "It was something I've never seen before, and I think that's the reason we came out with some good compromise."

Sipes expressed several concerns about the so-called Arkansas Sovereignty Act, passed just before the 2021 session went into extended recess April 28, which proclaims any new federal gun laws invalid in the state if they are deemed to infringe on the right to bear arms. Governor Asa Hutchinson vetoed an earlier version of the legislation. The law includes punishment provisions for law enforcement and municipal officials who cooperate with federal agencies enforcing gun laws in the state, "and that's concerning," Sipes said. "This is something we're going to watch."

The session featured several bills that are "constitutionally suspect," Wilkerson added, noting that the governor had vetoed several of them for that reason. The state's gun laws in general are "very complex," he said, and will prove challenging moving forward, both for municipalities and for law enforcement.

Promoting and protecting local control across a range of issues remained the focus of this year's legislative advocacy Hayes said, and the session contained several attacks on local control, some direct, some veiled. While the League staff works hard during the session, the best way to protect local control is for city and town officials to build relationships and stay in constant communication with their local legislators, he said, and not just on their cell phones. "I think it's critical that you get that person to come to your city, to see what you're doing, to show them what is being affected."

Villines agreed. "Our voice gets weaker as session goes on," he said. "They get tired of hearing us. That's why your voices matter so much—they can't avoid you."



Villines

For more information about legislation affecting municipalities resulting from the 93rd General Assembly, revisit the session overview in the May 2021 issue of *City & Town*.

Drs. Sacha McBain and Joe Thompson presented the continuing education workshop “Coping Skills During a Pandemic: Personal, Professional, Public” that addressed the challenges we’ve faced over the past 15 months as we’ve lived through and continue to work our way out of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has affected nearly every aspect of our public and personal lives, said McBain, who is a clinical psychologist and assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS). “The pandemic has been a really unique experience that there hasn’t really been a playbook for,” she said. “So we’ve all been not only managing the stress, but thinking about how to move forward, how to make sense of what’s happened and what the next steps will be.”

Pandemic-related stress has exacerbated mental health concerns, and multiple studies have shown rising rates of depression, stress and sleep difficulty, McBain said. This experience will likely have generational impacts, personally and on a systemic level, affecting school and work, she said.

Thompson, president and CEO of the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement at UAMS, has been a key League partner during the pandemic, regularly keeping municipal officials updated on the latest data and guidance over the past year and a half. He was named the League’s Person of the Year in 2020 for his stellar work during the first six months of the pandemic. Thompson got the audience involved during the

interactive workshop, inviting participants to answer questions like: “What was the most challenging part of the pandemic from your professional perspective?” The resulting responses—“fear, hiring, communication, meetings, safety” and others—were combined in a “word cloud” that was displayed on the screen. “These were all your professional experiences over the course of the past year as we as a nation, as a world and your communities faced a threat that we had never experienced before,” Thompson said. Even with some planning, we weren’t adequately prepared to address the many challenges of the pandemic, he said. To combat the resulting stress, it’s important that we recognize that we all experienced these feelings and that we’re not in isolation, Thompson said.

“We’re all in the same storm, but we’re different boats,” McBain said. While we’ve all experienced challenges during the pandemic, not everyone’s experience has been the same, she said. “We can talk generally about the impact of COVID, but we must consider how different groups have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.” Those differences contribute to mental health in different ways as well, she said, and recognizing that can help all of us cope. She encouraged local leaders to be intentional in setting the tone to support mental health at work and to communicate about employees’ needs.

We don’t yet understand the long-term physical and psychological effects of the coronavirus upon those who have contracted and recovered from the disease, McBain said. “We know from the research that’s been done so far that mental health concerns are a part of COVID-19 survivorship,” she said, citing a recent study that found 55 percent of those treated for COVID-19, at home or



Dr. Sacha McBain, left, and Dr. Joe Thompson share strategies to cope with pandemic stress, both on a personal level and as leaders in the municipal workplace.

in the hospital, meet criteria for at least one mental health disorder.

“It is new science; it’s new knowledge,” Thompson said. He encouraged local leaders to help combat the internalized stigma of mental health issues and reach out to those who show signs of struggle, particularly among our senior population, who were more isolated.

He closed with another call for all to get vaccinated. The vaccines are widely available, they work at a very high level and they’re safe for almost everyone, Thompson said. They are the best way to “get people from an unprotected to a protected state.”

Just as recognizing and embracing our differences can help us cope with the fallout of the pandemic, celebrating our diversity makes for stronger cities and towns, said Dr. Malcolm Glover, a trainer with the Arkansas Public Administration Consortium at UA Little Rock. The League was honored to welcome Glover to the 87th Convention to present the workshop “Achieving Equity and Inclusion in Your Hometown,” during which he presented strategies for “DEI,” or diversity, equity and inclusion.

“The heart of diversity, equity and inclusion is understanding that your human capital matters,” Glover said. He stressed that when working toward more equitable policies in our cities and towns, all differences matter: ethnicity, gender, age, socio-economic status, education level and more. “If the objective is to move our hometowns in a positive direction, to make sure that in our agencies and in our organizations that we are hearing from diverse groups of people, we have to make sure that they recognize that they are valued and that they belong.”

To move forward together on these issues, we must be willing to engage with one another, even when it’s difficult or uncomfortable. And it won’t happen overnight, he said. “DEI is a journey. It’s not a destination.”

He asked city and town officials to lead efforts to create more inclusive communities by listening and by learning to recognize and define the differences in policy and practice that lead to inequities. Identify opportunities to change and create more inclusive policies at the local level, he said. “This work takes effort, so take a risk.”

“We have to be willing to listen, accept and welcome different people who have different ideas,” Glover said. “That’s not to say that you have to change your mind on everything, but it is to say that none of us are the sole arbiters of truth, that everyone has a lived experience that matters.”

“Communities, our hometowns, should be places of refuge and acceptance, where everyone feels respected



Glover

and valued,” Glover said. “The ultimate goal of equity and inclusion in a community is to create systems that encourage behavior that promotes the common good and helps people find common ground.”

Each of these three workshops counted as one hour of continuing education credit for members working to attain or maintain their status as Certified Municipal Officials or Certified Municipal Personnel. For those not in attendance at the convention, the three workshops are available to view on the League’s website. To obtain the three hours of continuing education credit, members have until July 31 to view and complete the sessions. To access them, visit the Voluntary Certification Program for Municipal Officials page at www.arml.org/vcp.

Economic development and economic recovery were also topics of discussion during the 87th Annual Virtual Convention, with general sessions focusing on Opportunity Arkansas, which aims to help municipalities take advantage of opportunity zones, and the American Rescue Plan Act.

The opportunity zones program, which was created through the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 with the goal of providing investors with attractive tax incentives to invest in community-building projects in underserved areas, has created a lot of buzz over the past few years but also a lot of confusion, said Michelle Perez, a program officer in the U.S. Programs arm of Winrock International. To combat confusion and help local government leaders navigate opportunity zones, Winrock partnered with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission to create Opportunity Arkansas, a resource hub at opportunityarkansas.com.

Opportunity Arkansas is funded by the Delta Regional Authority and the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and is aimed at assisting smaller cities and



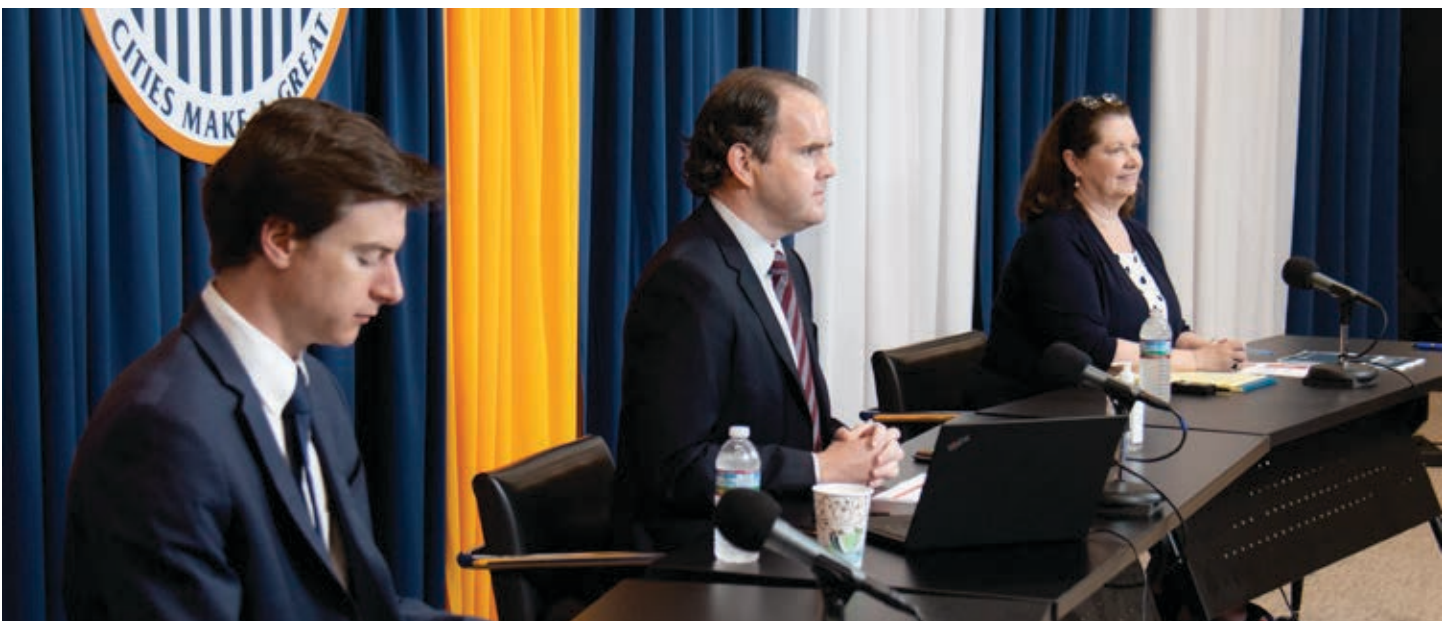
Perez

towns, Perez said. The Opportunity Arkansas team works in four primary areas: outreach and education, technical assistance, promoting the zones and projects available across the state, and due-diligence review for potential projects. “Because we know that development, particularly community development, is a hard task, we quickly realized that our rural and small communities around the state would require additional support to prepare, plan and execute opportunity zone projects that would be attractive to investors but would also provide a benefit to their towns,” Perez said.

Adam Reid, an attorney specializing in tax law with Gill Ragon Owen, P.A., encouraged city and town leaders to take advantage of the excellent free resources at opportunityarkansas.com, and he outlined some of

the local business types that may qualify for the types of tax incentives available through the opportunity zone program. About 11 percent of Arkansas has been designated by the governor as an opportunity zone, he said. Some of the best targets for investment in opportunity zones are vacant buildings, which have to “jump through about 90-percent less of the hoops, and those are ripe for improvement in the community,” Reid said. The list of qualifying businesses is broad, but there are a few “quirks” in the qualifying regulations, he said. “No ‘sin’ businesses are allowed. They won’t qualify for the tax benefit. Those include golf courses, country clubs, massage parlors, hot tub facilities and racetracks.”

As cities and towns have continued to assess their economic losses suffered during the coronavirus pandemic, the League’s legal staff has worked to keep members informed about the funding mechanisms available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which passed in March of this year. It includes \$440 million for Arkansas cities and towns. The final general session of the convention, led by League General Counsel John Wilkerson, Grants Attorney Caran Curry and Legal Counsel Blake Gary provided members with guidance on the direct aid available to local governments as part of the federal recovery package. There’s a lot of minutiae in the plan to sift through, Wilkerson said. “The first lesson I want to impart on everybody is this is still a work in progress, in fact yesterday we got reporting guidelines from the U.S. Treasury about the use of the American Rescue Plan money.” The use of the money can be broad, which is good news, but takes an “all hands on deck” approach, he said.



From left, League Legal Counsel Blake Gary, General Counsel John Wilkerson and Grants Attorney Caran Curry present the latest ARPA guidance during the convention’s final general session.



Reid

The legal team will continue hosting webinars for members on the ARPA at 2 p.m. each Wednesday to help cities and towns navigate the program, and resources are available on the League’s website at www.arml.org/resources/american-rescue-plan.

The League strives to make its annual conventions motivating as well as educational, and during the opening general session Thursday, June 17, we welcomed Mike Lee, founder of MindShift Labs, who presented an impelling keynote address. Lee, who is a lifelong basketball aficionado, has used his love for the game and sports psychology to assist elite NBA stars like Steph Curry use mindset and focus to improve their on-court performance. Some of those same techniques can help local government leaders in their jobs as they strive to better serve the public and “move through these great challenges that we’re all facing and come out on the other side with greater cities,” he said.

Lee offered five keys to help city and town officials be more mindful and “become that unshakable leader that I know resides within you already, it’s just about bringing this out into the world.” His keys for more effective leadership are:

- The power of purpose—“Everyday am I staying connected to my purpose?”
- Uncovering the power of mindfulness—“Am I showing up fully in the present moment?”
- Being in a beautiful state—“Am I showing up in a beautiful state, as much as I possibly can?”
- Being future-focused—“Am I staying future-focused, with vision and with optimism?”
- Leading from the heart—“Am I leading from my heart, and in relation to that, am I being the leader that I would want leading my town?”



Concurrent sessions return for 87th

The League was pleased to bring back Thursday afternoon concurrent sessions during the 87th Annual Virtual Convention. Concurrent sessions have long been a popular staple of League conventions, allowing members to take in a lot of information about numerous topics in a short amount of time. This year’s new and improved online platform allowed us to present them in the virtual space.

The 87th Convention offered three tracks of three sessions each for a total of nine concurrent sessions on the afternoon of June 17. Topics covered included:

- Response and Recovery of Emergencies and Disasters
- Securing Municipalities’ Networks and Creating Websites for Your City or Town
- Best Practices on Loss Control for Cities and Towns
- Best Practices on How to Attract Businesses and Industries
- Municipal Finance Update
- Human Resources Best Practices
- Latest Information on Grants and Other Funding Sources
- Navigating the New Legislation Surrounding the Freedom of Information Act
- How to Effectively Handle Public Relations for Your City or Town

Missed a session of interest while viewing one of the others? No problem! Each concurrent session was recorded during the convention and will be made available for viewing by League members, which means that, unlike during an in-person convention, you can be “in the room” for all nine sessions. The sessions are available to view on demand on the Voluntary Certification Program page of the League’s website, www.arml.org/vcp.

League honors individuals, cities for service

The Arkansas Municipal League honored local officials and cities and towns for outstanding service to their citizens and to the League during the 87th Annual Virtual Convention, held June 16-18.



Baxter

Eleven municipal officials received the Adrian L. White Municipal Leadership Award this year. The award is presented to city officials who have served with distinction and dedication on the League's boards, councils or committees for six years. The award is named in honor of White, who was mayor of Pocahontas from 1967-1974 and a former League president and vice president. The recipients are Human Resources Director Lisa Mabry-Williams, Conway; Chief of Staff Susan Norton, Fayetteville; Mayor Kevin Johnston, Gentry; Mayor Doug Kinslow, Greenwood; City Director Mark Ross, Hope; Mayor Steve Dixon, Marmaduke; Council Member Sherry Holliman, Marion; Mayor Allen Lipsmeyer, Morrilton; Mayor Joshua Agee, Paragould; Council Member Beverly Williams, Sherwood; and City Administrator Phillip Patterson, Siloam Springs.

Four municipal leaders who have served their cities and the League for 12 years received the Marvin L. Vinson Commitment to Excellence Award, named for the longtime Clarksville mayor who served from 1983 until 2001 and was League president in 1992-1993.

The recipients are Police Chief/Mayor Tim Mayfield, Gassville/Salesville; Mayor Dennis Behling, Lakeview; Council Member Debi Ross, North Little Rock; and Mayor Charles Gastineau, Ward.

One city official received the Jack R. Rhodes, Sr. Distinguished Service Award. The award is presented to officials who have served their cities and the League for 25 years. Rhodes served as a mayor of Lake Village from 1957 until his retirement in 1990 and was League president in 1981. This year's lone recipient is Council Member Jennifer Baker, Mountain Home.

Nine cities and towns received the Four Star City Award for demonstration of excellence in loss control and employee safety, wellness, vehicle safety and prevention of liability. They are: Dell, Foreman, Lamar, London, Magazine, Melbourne, Patterson, Smackover and Wilmar.

Each year since 2008, the League has presented the John Woodruff "City Above Self" Award to a person who has provided lasting benefits to cities and towns of Arkansas, either collectively or individually, by being an outstanding example of dedication to their improvement. The award is named in honor of the League's former communications coordinator who, until his death in 2007, worked tirelessly and unselfishly for the cities of Arkansas.

This year, rather than name an individual, the League's Executive Committee voted to honor the first responders of the COVID-19 pandemic as collective recipients of the 2021 John Woodruff Award. Our state's first responders "bravely put their own safety to the side in order to perform their jobs and care for those in need," said 2020-2021 League President and Mulberry Mayor Gary Baxter. "Their service will not be forgotten, as they made a huge difference in our lives during this challenging time."

The Arkansas City Clerks, Records, and Treasurers Association named El Dorado City Clerk Heather McVay its Clerk of the Year. The award is presented each year to a member of the association who has made significant contributions to the objectives of the municipal clerk profession, to the improvement of local government and to the clerk's community.

The ACCRTA also recognized three city clerks who this year have received their Certified Arkansas Municipal Clerk designation. They are: Senior Deputy City Clerk Patricia Lane, West Memphis; City Clerk/Treasurer Gina Skelton, Russellville; and City Clerk Renee Ellis, Siloam Springs. 🏛️

League adopts resolutions, policies and goals for 2021-2022

The League's Resolutions Committee, which is comprised of one delegate from each member city and town, met twice during the 87th Annual Virtual Convention to discuss and then vote upon a package of resolutions and our organization's policies and goals statement. The resolutions and policies and goals statement endorsed by the committee were adopted by the full membership during the annual business meeting on Friday, June 18.

As we head into a year with a fiscal session of the state legislature rather than a general session, the packet of proposed resolutions was slim. "There are only two," Executive Director Mark R. Hayes said, "but they're two substantive resolutions."

Resolution No. 1—"A resolution calling for legislation ensuring municipalities, counties and the State of Arkansas continue their efforts and combined resources to combat the ongoing opioid crisis, and to explore any system which guarantees the health and safety of the citizens of Arkansas into the future."


Hayes asked cities to pay particular attention to the resolution's closing statement, which he called "the meat" of the resolution: "That we do hereby support legislation, policies, agreements, memorandums of understanding and any other mechanism which ensures the continued combined efforts of all governmental entities in Arkansas to combat and abate the ongoing opioid crisis and nuisance in our state."

"This is directly aimed," Hayes said, "at the ongoing opioid litigation to provide us the best tools possibly, hopefully with the state—cities and counties are already holding hands on this. This is the mechanism through which we want to work."

The cooperation on this issue among cities, counties and the state is important not only to combat the epidemic at home but for the litigation at the national level as well, League General Counsel John Wilkerson added. "The opioid litigation settlements are forcing a merger between the cities, counties and states," he said. "To some degree, they have to come together, and that's what we've been working on with our United Arkansas strategy for so long."

Resolution No. 2—"A resolution supporting the continued study of all financial matters of the District Court system including but not limited to operational funding, the funding of the State of Arkansas' Administration of Justice Fund and the assessment and collection of court costs, fees and fines; and for the passage of legislation to address the financial and judicial needs of local government."

Amendment 80 of the Arkansas Constitution, effective July 2001, changed what were previously municipal courts to district courts in a new three-tiered system, but it was much more than just a name change, Hayes said. Legislation over the years has changed the district courts' role and where monies flowing from the courts go, he said. "Whether that's a good policy or a bad policy is significant and it needs to be studied so we understand what 20 to 25 years' worth of legislation has done, not just to local government, meaning both cities and counties, but to state government as well so that an equitable system can be put in place."

The membership passed both resolutions and readopted the League's policies and goals statement without amendments. The new resolutions will appear in the League's *Policies and Goals 2021-2022* publication, which will be included as a supplement to the August issue of *City & Town*. 

New officers elected, state of the League report presented at annual business meeting

Delegates participating in the 87th Annual Virtual Convention of the Arkansas Municipal League elected a new slate of officers for 2021-2022 during the annual business meeting, held the morning of Friday, June 18.



McKinney

The new officers for 2021-2022 are: Berryville Mayor Tim McKinney, president; Sherwood Mayor Virginia Young, first vice president; Lakeview Mayor Dennis Behling, District 1 vice president; Beebe City Clerk/Treasurer Carol Westergren, District 2 vice president; Bella Vista Mayor Peter Christie, District 3 vice president; and Mena Council Member James Turner, District 4 vice president.

Mayor McKinney joined us at League headquarters to preside over the virtual convention alongside outgoing president, Mulberry Mayor Gary Baxter, and he gave his acceptance speech live as the membership tuned in remotely. McKinney recognized the many past presidents who have served the League during his more than 30 years in office, reserving a special thanks for

his predecessor for his leadership during a challenging year. “Gary has served with great dignity and honor, and always as a true gentleman,” he said. He also thanked his family for supporting him in accepting the nomination. “The three most important people in my life are my lovely wife, Grace, and my daughters, Abigail and Faith, and with their blessings I hope to be able to serve as your president over the next year in an honorable way.”

McKinney urged city and town officials to use their influence within their communities to encourage everyone to get vaccinated against COVID-19. “We’re starting to return to our normal way of life, but we’re not there yet,” McKinney said, citing recent data that places Arkansas third to last nationally in vaccinations. It’s the only way forward, he said. “We need to be the leaders in our communities. We don’t want to go back.”

State of the League: Future “very, very bright”

In his state of the League report during the annual business meeting, Executive Director Mark R. Hayes thanked the membership and the League staff for their dedication during the difficult year as we’ve worked to combat the COVID-19 pandemic while continuing to serve the cities and towns of Arkansas and represent them during the 93rd General Assembly. “Your staff is dedicated to its mission. They show up each and every day with a strong work ethic and a very positive attitude—even through this legislative session, which was difficult at best. It was a unique session, but I will tell you that in many ways, it was one of the better sessions that we’ve had in a long time. Cities and towns were not hurt from a monetary standpoint, we established substantial new relationships with legislators and with state entities, and we continued our great partnership with the Association of Arkansas Counties.”

Despite the past year’s challenges, the League continues to grow, Hayes said. “The League has a very, very bright future.” Each of the League’s five major benefit programs expanded last year, and the League’s physical presence has also expanded with the purchase of a vacant lot on the east side of League HQ. The executive committee approved pursuing the property during last year’s annual planning meeting. For the past decade the



Hayes

gravel lot has been used as overflow parking for the hotel adjacent to the League and for special event parking. “We are poised to grow like we have never grown before,” Hayes said. “They’re not making any property anymore, and when you can acquire it, particularly when it’s right next door to your headquarters, you’d better do so.” Plans for the property have not yet been solidified, but the overall goal will be to expand the League’s training and meeting space to meet future needs.

It has been “a year like no other” as we strive to return to normalcy during the ongoing pandemic, and the COVID-19 numbers in the state remain sobering, Hayes said, with less than a third of the state being fully vaccinated as of June. The new coronavirus variants and low testing numbers are also a cause for concern, he said. The way to get our state back is to get vaccinated, he said and, echoing this year’s League president, encouraged city and town officials to use their influence and take the lead. “Use that stage to encourage people to get educated about the vaccine and to get the vaccine.”

League programs by the numbers

The League programs are healthy despite the turbulent times, Hayes reported, and each of the optional programs offered to members received clean audits. The current participation rates are:

The Municipal Legal Defense Program has 477 participants, up 14 from than last year. That number

includes seven limited-service members/housing authorities. The program has about 175 active cases and has responded to more than 3,600 legal inquiries from members in the past year.

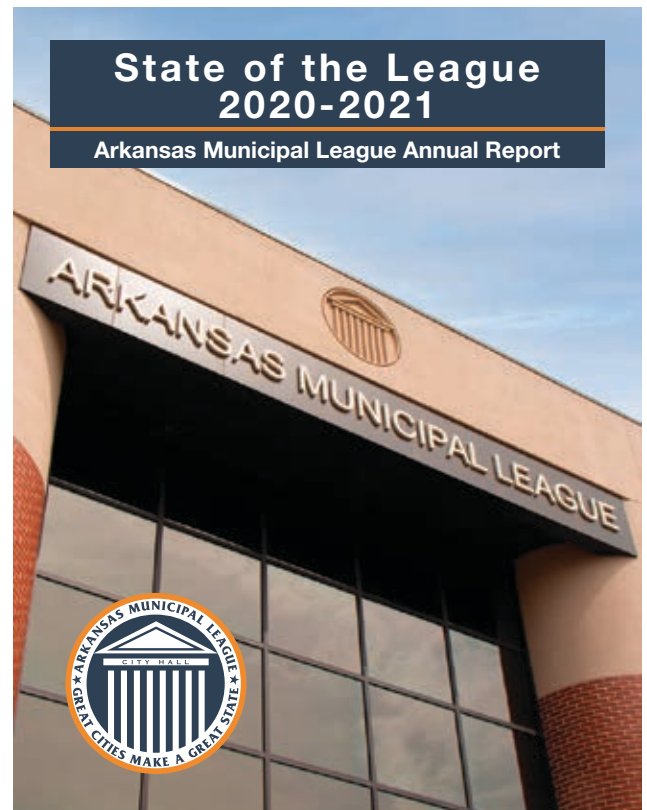
The Municipal Health Benefit Program has 395 participants, a number that includes 302 cities or towns and 93 limited-service members (up 15 from last year).

The Municipal Vehicle Program has 470 members, up 32 from last year. That includes 32 limited-service members, eight more than last year. The program covers 25,836 units with an insured-to-value of \$1 billion.

The Municipal Property Program has 390 members, up by 20 compared to last year. That includes 14 limited-service members. The program covers 10,272 properties with an insured-to-value of nearly \$4 billion.

The Municipal Workers’ Compensation Program has jumped from 465 to 490 participants in the last year.

The Arkansas Local Government Pension Management Trust and Municipal Other Post Employment Benefits Trust has remained steady at nine participants.



The League publication *State of the League 2020-2021: Arkansas Municipal League Annual Report* provides an overview of the League’s programs and activities for the year in a concise format. It is available for download from the Publications page on the League’s website at www.arml.org/pubs.

799 Municipal Officials and Municipal Personnel represented 237 cities and towns at the 87th Annual Virtual Convention.



PHOTOS BY ANDREW MORGAN AND BEN CLINE

Alexander

Mayor Paul Mitchell
Council Member Juanita Wilson
Human Resources Director Melissa Ratliff

Alma

Mayor Jerry Martin
Clerk/Treasurer Shawna Reynolds
Council Member Gary Perry
Deputy City Clerk Kim Lackey
Planning Director Cody Schindler

Alzheimer

Mayor Zola Hudson
Recorder/Treasurer Doris Hudson-Gaddy
Council Member Tina Burton
Council Member Joycette Strong

Altus

Mayor Veronica Post
Council Member Mary Darter
Council Member Catherine Henry

Anthonyville

Mayor Leroy Wright

Arkadelphia

City Manager Gary Brinkley
City Clerk Samantha Roybal
Administrative Assistant Marsha Rogers
City Treasurer Shacresha Wilson
Communications Director Julie Lacy
Finance Assistant Chama Williams

Arkansas City

Mayor Rick Hales

Ash Flat

Recorder/Treasurer Charlotte Goodwin

Ashdown

Mayor James Sutton
Clerk/Treasurer Kirk Mounts
Deputy City Clerk Michelle Harp

Augusta

Mayor Jeffery Collins
City Clerk Essie Nichols

Austin

Mayor Bernie Chamberlain
Finance Director Charity Dulin
Office Manager Randy McKenzie
Public Works Director Chris Nelson

Avoca

Council Member Jeannie Rollins

Bald Knob

Code Enforcement Officer
Wade Meacham

Barling

Mayor Wally Gattis
City Administrator Steve Core
City Clerk Florene Brown
City Treasurer Charity Gregory
Director of Public Works Matthew Pierce
Human Resources Director Megan Griffin

Batesville

Mayor Rick Elumbaugh
Clerk/Treasurer Denise Johnston
Council Member Brittany Bennett
Council Member Tommy Bryant
Council Member Fred Krug
Council Member Doug Matthews
Council Member Chris Poole
Assistant to Mayor Jennifer Corter
City Attorney Tim Meitzen
City Engineer Damon Johnson
Deputy City Clerk Donna Smith

Bay

Mayor Darrell Kirby
Council Member Jan Biggers
Council Member Curtis Hogan

Beaver

Mayor Ann Shoffit

Beebe

Clerk/Treasurer Carol Westergren
Assistant Clerk/Treasurer Stephine Swiney
Code Enforcement Officer James Squires

Bella Vista

Mayor Peter Christie
City Clerk Wayne Jertson
Council Member John Flynn
Council Member Larry Wilms

Benton

Mayor Tom Farmer
City Clerk Cindy Stracener
Council Member Steve Brown
Council Member Robin Freeman
Assistant to Mayor Toby Hirscheider
Finance Director Mandy Spicer
Payroll/Human Resource Coordinator
Suzanne Matthews

Bentonville

Mayor Stephanie Orman
Council Member Cindy Acree
Council Member Holly Hook
Council Member Aubrey Patterson
Administrative Assistant Janice Hopkins
City Engineer Dan Weese
Economic Development Director
Debbie Griffin
Transportation Director Dennis Birge

Berryville

Mayor Tim McKinney
Council Member Linda Riddlesperger
Economic Development Director
Chris Claybaker

Black Oak

Mayor Henry Dunigan



Black Rock

Recorder/Treasurer Darlene Schmidt
Water Clerk Christopher Vanbrook

Blytheville

Mayor James Sanders
City Clerk Connie Mosley-Brents
Council Member Matt Perrin
Assistant to Mayor Cody Wyatt
Administrative Assistant Dorothy Erby
Human Resources Director Melisa Logan

Bono

Mayor Danny Shaw
City Treasurer Kassy Dunivan Parrish

Booneville

Council Member Stacy Holbert

Brinkley

Council Member Ronald Burrow

Brookland

Mayor Kenneth Jones

Bryant

Mayor Allen Scott
City Clerk Sue Ashcraft
Council Member Butch Higginbotham
Council Member Lisa Meyer
Council Member Brenda Miller
Council Member Wade Permenter
Council Member Rhonda Sanders
City Attorney Ashley Clancy
Finance Coordinator I Crystal Winkler
Finance Coordinator II Nichole Manley
Finance Director Joy Black
Human Resources Assistant Osha Martin
Human Resources Director Charlotte Rue
Human Resources Manager
Alisha Runnells
Planning Commissioner Andrea Hooten
Street Superintendent Tim Fournier



Buckner

Council Member Laviano Brown

Bull Shoals

Recorder/Treasurer Tina Bailey

Cabot

Mayor Ken Kincade
Council Member Michael Jones
Council Member Eddie Long
Council Member Stephen Redd
Council Member James Reid
Council Member Maggie Waymack-Cope
Council Member Matt Webber
City Attorney Ben Hooper
Director of Street & Infrastructure
Joe Gunderman
Economic Development Director
Alicia Wilmoth
Finance Manager Bruce Brown

Calico Rock

Mayor Greg Hamby
Recorder/Treasurer Stacy Stanford
Deputy City Clerk Polly Killian

Calion

Mayor Bill Yutzy
Council Member Kristi Purifoy
City Treasurer Jamie Morgan

Camden

City Clerk Donna Stewart
Council Member Cecil McDonald
City Attorney Michael Frey

Cave City

Mayor Jonas Anderson

Cave Springs

Mayor Randall Noblett
Recorder/Treasurer Kimberly Hutcheson
Council Member Lori Bond
Council Member Elizabeth Hendricks
Director of Public Works Charles Lindley

Centerton

Mayor Bill Edwards
City Clerk Todd Wright
Council Member Wayne Low
Council Member Josie Reed
City Attorney Brian Rabal
Finance Assistant Shannon Zappettini
Finance Director Pamela Grant
Former Council Member Robin Reed
Human Resources Director Jocelyn Diaz

Charleston

Assistant to Mayor Heather Tygart

Cherokee Village

Mayor Russ Stokes

Cherry Valley

Recorder/Treasurer Stacey Bennett

Clarendon

City Clerk Angie Baker

Clarksville

Mayor David Rieder
Clerk/Treasurer Barbara Blackard
Council Member Christel Thompson
Council Member Freeman Wish
Assistant to Mayor Wynette Holland
Deputy City Clerk Jennifer Howard



Clinton

Recorder/Treasurer Dena Malone
Council Member Tim Barnes
Deputy City Clerk Elishia Duncan-Clinton

Coal Hill

Recorder/Treasurer Kathy Bartlett

Concord

Mayor Rodney Brackett

Conway

Assistant to Mayor Felicia Rogers
City Attorney Charles Finkenbinder
Airport Manager Jack Bell
Deputy City Attorney Shelby Brown
Deputy City Attorney Evan Pence
Human Resources Director
Lisa Mabry-Williams
Human Resources Manager Cody Arnold
Planning Director James Walden
Purchasing Manager Jamie Brice
Safety & Loss Control Manager
John Mattox

Cotter

Mayor Mac Caradine

Cotton Plant

Mayor Clara Harston-Brown

Crawfordsville

Mayor Joe Marotti
Assistant to Mayor Susan Marotti
Human Resources Director Karen Williams

Crossett

Mayor Crystal Marshall
Clerk/Treasurer Clark Terrell
Council Member CT Foster
Council Member Chris Gill
Council Member James Knight
Council Member Kerstin Mondragon
Council Member Sheila Phillips

Cushman

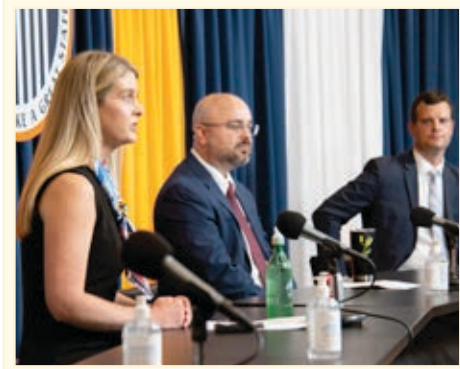
Mayor Brittany Hurley

De Queen

Clerk/Treasurer Donna Jones

Decatur

Mayor Bob Tharp
Recorder/Treasurer Kim Wilkins
Council Member Sandy Duncan



Dermott

Mayor Walter Donald
Council Member Tonya Allen
Council Member Tanya Broadnax
Council Member Robin Hawkins-Cook
Council Member Helen King

DeValls Bluff

Recorder/Treasurer Darlene Connor

DeWitt

Mayor Jimmy Black

Dover

Recorder/Treasurer Regina Kilgore
Court Clerk Vonna Marpel
Water Clerk Christina Walker

Dumas

Mayor Flora Simon
Clerk/Treasurer Norma Eldridge
Human Resources Director
Sheree Jackson

Dyer

Council Member Rhonda Rowell

Earle

Council Member Demetris Johnson, Jr.
City Attorney Davis Loftin

Edmondson

Recorder/Treasurer Hayward Shaw

El Dorado

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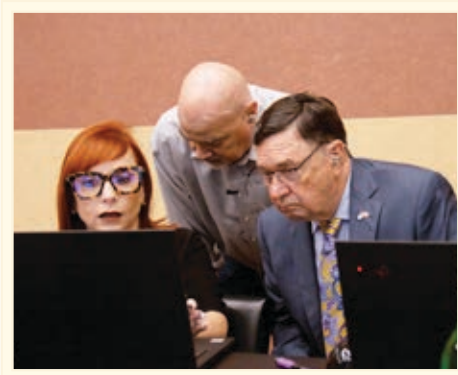
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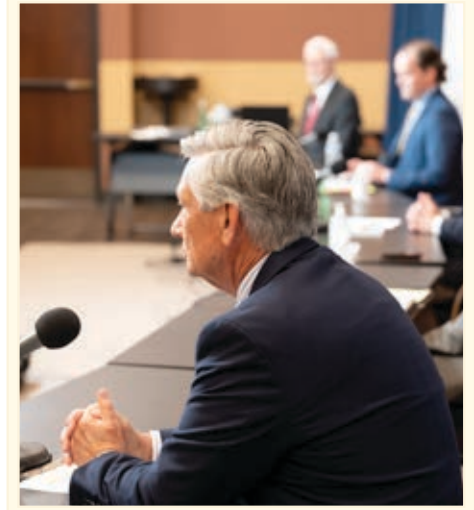
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Census 2020: Arkansas pop. up, congressional apportionment steady

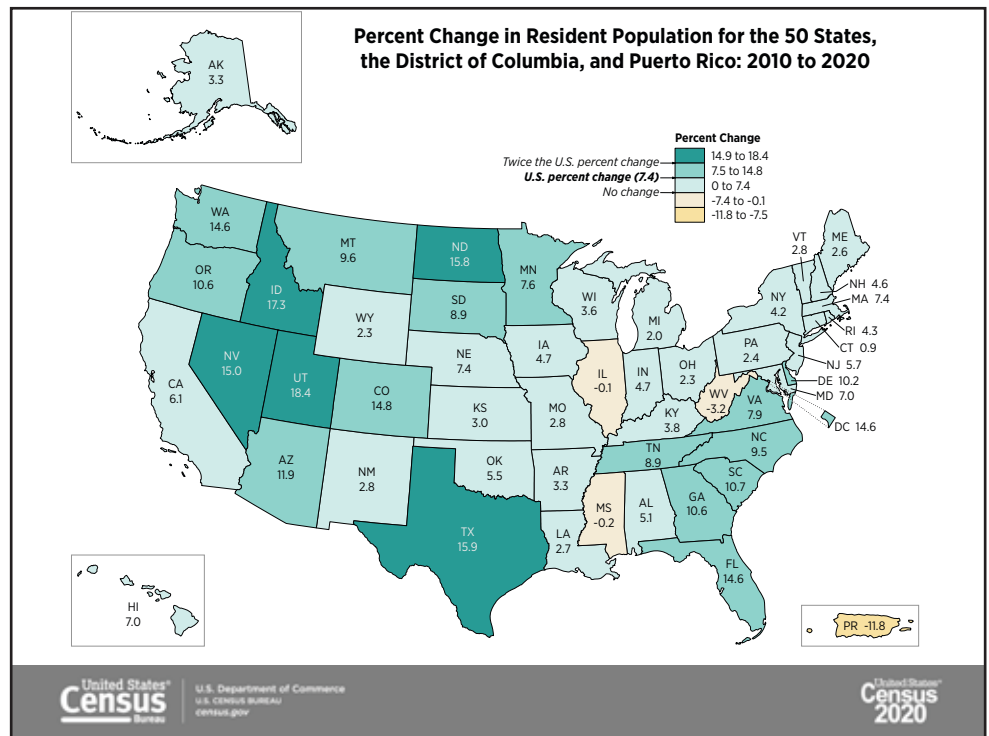
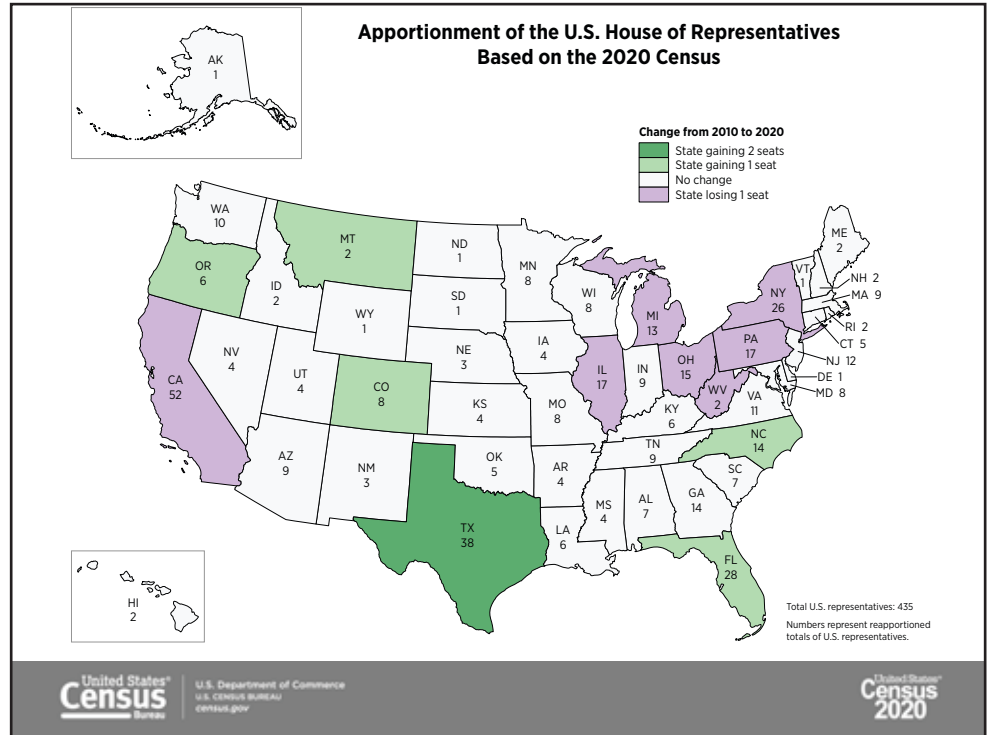
By Andrew Morgan, League staff

Arkansas' population grew by 3.3 percent from 2010 to 2020 according to preliminary estimates released by the U.S. Census Bureau on April 26. Based on the new data, Arkansas' population of 3,013,524 makes it the 33rd most populous state, just ahead of Mississippi and one behind Nevada. Based on the percentage change in population, Arkansas ranks 35th.

The data released this spring was part of the Census Bureau's annual apportionment results, which, in accordance with the U.S. Constitution, determine how many seats in the U.S. House of Representatives each state holds. While Arkansas added 95,606 residents over the past decade, its congressional apportionment remains at four.

Most states' apportionment numbers will remain unchanged, the Census Bureau reported. Texas will gain two seats. Five states—Colorado, Florida, Montana, North Carolina and Oregon—will gain one seat. Seven states—California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia—will lose a seat.

While the number of seats hasn't changed for Arkansas, the average number of residents each member of the House represents has risen from 731,557 in 2010 to 753,439 based on these 2020 census estimates. Arkansas' number of seats has held steady at four since 1960, when the state lost two spots in the House. The state had seven representatives in the House from 1910 to 1940.



The total population of the 50 states and the District of Columbia is 331,538,223. That represents an increase of 7.4 percent. The total population of the U.S. and its territories—Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands—is 334,735,155. That represents an increase of 7.1 percent.

California remains the most populous state with a population of 39,576,757. Utah was the decade’s fastest growing state, up 18.4 percent to 3,271,616.

Although its population increased 2.3 percent to 576,851, Wyoming remains the least populous state. Three states—Illinois, Mississippi and West Virginia—and Puerto Rico have lost population since 2010.

Redistricting at the state and local level delayed

While the preliminary data released by the U.S. Census Bureau is sufficient to determine the overall congressional apportionment numbers for the states, the data required for states and local governments to redraw legislative boundaries has been delayed due to “modifications to processing activities, COVID-19 data

collection delays, and the Census Bureau’s obligation to provide high-quality data,” the Census Bureau said in an April 26 media release. At that time the Census Bureau expected to have the data available to the states by August 16 with full redistricting data toolkits available by the end of September.

Arkansas’ three-member Board of Apportionment, which is chaired by Governor Asa Hutchinson and includes Attorney General Leslie Rutledge and Secretary of State John Thurston, is responsible for drawing the state’s congressional districts. Former Arkansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Betty Dickey has been hired to serve as the state’s redistricting coordinator. The board announced in May that it was confident that it could complete the redistricting process by the end of the year, as required by the Arkansas Constitution, if the data is available by September 30.

The Arkansas legislature is responsible for redrawing the state’s U.S. congressional lines. They plan to reconvene in the fall when the data is available to address redistricting. 🏛️



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Refresh your memory on redistricting basics

By Kristin Higgins

One of the more high-profile uses of U.S. census population data involves dividing up our cities, counties and states into political districts containing roughly the same number of people. The redistricting process is a fundamental characteristic of our democracy and ensures that every person has representation in our many forms of government.

To accommodate population growth or decline highlighted by the census, political boundaries may shift. These revisions can change who represents you on your city council, quorum court, and at the state capitol. All levels of government may experience redistricting of some kind.

State lawmakers will be drawing new maps for our U.S. House of Representatives, and our governor, secretary of state and attorney general as the Board of Apportionment will redraw boundaries for state representatives and senators.

Delays in releasing official population numbers have pushed back redistricting processes to the end of September. Arkansas legislators have said they will likely have to come back into session this fall to review the data and vote on congressional maps.

Use this time to refresh your redistricting knowledge and how to be involved in your community's efforts. Find more information about the state's process and links to drawing your own maps at uaex.uada.edu/redistricting.

History of congressional redistricting in Arkansas

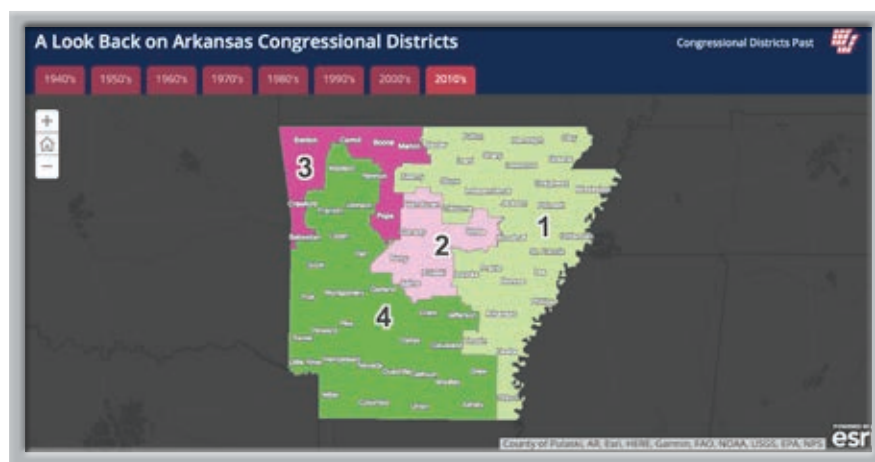
Want to see how Arkansas' state districts have changed over time? The Arkansas Geographic Information Office recently published a series of interactive maps that allow you to see how districts have changed over time since the 1940s. Clicking on the map will allow you to see the county and district population for each decade. Access the maps online at historic-redistricting-agio.hub.arcgis.com.

Arkansas started in 1840 with one congressional representative. That number grew to a high of seven by 1900. 1940 was the last year Arkansas had seven districts, with roughly 278,484 people per district. After the 1950 Census, Arkansas lost a seat. The 1960 Census brought another loss as other states grew in population, leaving us with the same four seats we have today.

In 2010, according to the website, the decade marked the first time that congressional districts split counties. The counties that fall into two congressional districts include: Crawford, Jefferson, Newton, Searcy and Sebastian counties. The target population for congressional districts at that time was 728,980 people, though some fell just above and below that target. 🏛️

This article appeared originally on the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service's Community, Professional and Economic Development blog on April 19 and is reprinted with permission.

Kristin Higgins is a program associate in the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service's Public Policy Center. You can reach her at 501-671-2160 or email khiggins@uada.edu.





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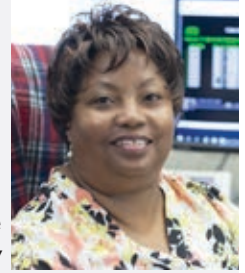
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Designed to Serve

Meet Darlene Cooper, claims assistant with the Municipal League Workers' Compensation Program

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



Darlene: As a claims assistant, I open the mail daily and distribute the medical information and bills to the adjusters, scan forms and bills into the system, coordinate with our bill review company, print compensation checks and injury reports, answer phones, assist our member cities and claimants with questions, order department supplies, and any other jobs assigned to me.

How long have you been working at the League? How did you get started? I have worked at the League for 16 years. I was looking for a job near downtown with great benefits. I was called for an interview and here I am!

How has the League changed since you started? What has stayed the same? The League has grown over the years. There are new policies, departments, an exercise room and more technology. What has stayed the same is the work culture and upholding our commitment to the cities and towns to better their communities.

What advice would you have for someone just getting into public service? Have an interest in the way state government is run. Ask questions. Learn about workers' comp laws and the legal challenges communities face.

Where did you grow up? How has it changed? Stayed the same? I grew up in the south end of Little Rock. When the 1999 tornado came through it changed a lot of the landscape and scenery. Roosevelt is wider near the state fairgrounds and small businesses have developed in the area. Barton Coliseum and the parks have stayed the same.

What is your favorite spot in your hometown? Why? My favorite spots are church and my mom's house. I enjoy the fellowship at church, although we have not been there because of the pandemic. We are re-opening soon. I enjoy visiting with my mom and siblings when they come by while I am there.

What is your favorite part about working for the League and the cities and towns of Arkansas? The people. I love meeting the new employees as they come on board. I also like knowing that I have been of good service and have helped make a difference in the cities and towns we serve. 🏛️



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Meet Doreen Mattes, HR director for the city of Maumelle.

City & Town: What are your duties in Maumelle?

As the director of an HR department of 1.5 (I have a wonderful part-time HR generalist, Leslie Yager), we are responsible for everything HR. I think of it as cradle-to-grave: from a candidate's first visit to our career page, through onboarding and the employee's tenure, to their exit, we touch everything HR. You name it, we do it: employee relations, compensation and benefits, talent development, recruitment and selection, performance management.



Why did you choose your profession? Did it choose you?

It chose me. I worked for a publicly traded company and reported to the CFO. The director of HR also reported to the CFO, so our paths crossed frequently. I was fascinated by the discipline of HR and jumped at the opportunity to get into the field.

What's your favorite aspect of your job? My favorite part is the ability to develop our workforce and watch them grow and flourish.

What's your favorite spot in Maumelle? That is a tough question! We have amazing parks and terrific restaurants. If I have to choose one spot, it would be Lake Willastein for its paved trails and amenities. (Starbucks is my second favorite!)

What is the public perception of your job versus the reality of your job? We don't just fire people! Yes, unfortunately we do have to end employment for some, but that's not all we do. We get to nurture our workforce, support our supervisors and managers, and really get to know our people.

In what season does Maumelle shine the most? Spring and early summer. The blooming flowers, the beautiful trees, our annual Easter egg hunt, Arbor Day Festival, 4th Fest and our remarkable Memorial Day service.

What's the biggest lesson you've learned working for a city government? Nothing happens quickly! If you don't have patience, city government isn't for you.

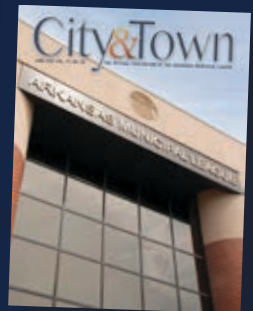
What advice do you have for someone who would like to follow your footsteps into this job? Be a sponge. Soak up everything you can about HR, but more importantly about people. Make sure you learn something new every day and keep a positive attitude, even if you don't feel like being positive that day.

What are three "can't miss" things that someone can do if they visit Maumelle? Take a walk at Lake Willastein, go fishing at Lake Valencia, and stop for breakfast or lunch at Mason Café. ☕

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Analyzing the 7 critical components of an effective safety program: Data analysis, recordkeeping and program review

By Allen Green, League staff

We began this series in February by introducing the seven critical components of an effective safety program. Since then, we have reviewed the management component, incident investigation, training and education, and audits and inspections. Because they are so interconnected and dependent upon one another, we'll wrap up the series with the three remaining components: data analysis, recordkeeping and program review.

An effective safety program must be driven by good data and include a strong recordkeeping component. To maintain accuracy, consistency and efficiency, we must periodically review the program and make necessary adjustments.

Data analysis

Analyzing incident, injury and claims data on a periodic basis is important for identifying trends and determining where to direct resources. Data should drive your safety efforts and focus attention where you need it most to improve performance. Your safety program should outline which data will be analyzed, by whom and how often.

The objective is to break down incident data so that trends can be easily identified. Where did incidents occur? In what department? Which equipment was involved? Look at seasonal patterns, day of the week and time of day. Sources for this data include internal injury reports, loss runs, injury and incident investigation reports, vehicle, equipment and property damage reports, and audit and inspection reports. Your loss control specialist can assist with claims analysis.

Recordkeeping

No doubt you've heard the expression, "if it's not documented it never happened," or something similar. It is important for many reasons to document what you do. In addition to compliance, we must have data on injuries and claims to analyze for trends. We also need records and data to be able to measure performance. Keeping good records will make your data analysis

and program reviews much easier and more effective. Having good documentation will also allow you to better measure progress and assess the effectiveness of your safety program.

At a minimum, documentation should be maintained for injury and damage reports, near hits and safety observations, safety training/meetings conducted, investigations completed, corrective actions implemented, and audits/inspections conducted. The requirements for which records to keep, how long to retain them and who is responsible for maintaining records should be set forth in your written safety program.

Program review

The last, but certainly not the least, of our seven critical components is the safety program review. Like any other business program or policy, your safety plan should be periodically reviewed, updated and revised as necessary. Your policy statement should lay out when and by whom the safety plan will be reviewed. Typically, this is an annual event conducted by a team consisting of both management and hourly employees. If documentation has been properly maintained throughout the year, the review process will be much easier. The questions that should be addressed during the program review are: Is the program functioning as intended, and are performance objectives being met?

Review the strengths and weaknesses of your safety program during the review. Readily available program assessment/evaluation tools are very helpful. They assist in breaking down core program components into sub-categories for assessment and scoring. Use this information to shore up weak areas with applicable policy revisions, program updates or focus initiatives. Update any outdated practices, procedures, timelines or personnel changes.

Measuring safety performance involves tracking your actual performance versus the goals and objectives put in place. It is important to establish a variety of metrics that include both leading and lagging indicators when measuring safety performance.

Lagging indicators are the more traditional statistics and typically include recordable injury count, incident rate, severity/lost time rate, experience modifier and loss ratio. While important, the lagging metrics only measure past performance and have no bearing on ongoing safety activities that can impact future outcomes. You should not rely solely on lagging indicators to define your safety program performance. Doing so would be like driving your car while only looking in the rear-view mirror.

Leading indicators are safety activities that can positively affect safety performance, such as the number of hazards identified and corrected, the number of employees trained, training sessions completed versus scheduled, the number of audits and inspections completed versus scheduled, or the number of near hits or behavior-based safety observations completed versus scheduled. Incorporate leading indicators into your performance measurements and engage employees in meaningful safety activities. This will add a forward-looking view to your safety program metrics and

should have a positive impact on reducing incidents and injuries.

Data analysis, recordkeeping and program review are not only necessary components of your safety program, but also tied closely together. Good recordkeeping provides the data you need to drive your program and to measure progress and performance during the program review.

I hope this series has been helpful in your quest to develop, evaluate and improve your safety program. The seven components we have discussed are the foundation on which to build your program and will help to ensure the long-term success and effectiveness of your loss control efforts. ☸



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

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Aaron joined HW in 2010, opening its first regional office in Little Rock. He is a licensed professional engineer in Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Mississippi specializing in wet infrastructure design. Aaron has been actively involved as a member and in the leadership of numerous professional organizations throughout Arkansas, and he considers the friendships made through this service and in collaborating with clients the most rewarding aspects of his career.

Aaron earned his bachelors in civil engineering at Arkansas State University and completed a masters degree in environmental engineering at the University of Memphis. He and his wife Harriett, a high school science teacher, grew up in Jonesboro, AR and became friends in their high school marching band and church youth group. They married just before graduating college, and later lived in Cabot where Aaron served as a Commissioner of Cabot Waterworks. They now live with their three children in Faulkner County, where the majority of Aaron's time is spent chasing his very active kids from one event to the next. He also enjoys fishing, BBQing, teaching at church, woodworking, tinkering, and beekeeping.

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PHOTO BY JIM VON TUNGELN

This nonconforming home/neighborhood grocery accommodated four consecutive families during a span of over a half-century.

New thoughts on grandfathered concepts

By Jim von Tungeln

Sometimes it pays to take stuffy beliefs regarding urban planning out for a breath of fresh air. Nonconformities provide a good example. Some quiet thinking suggests that maybe it is time to retire the term “grandfathered” and replace it with, say, “differently functional.” Detailed analysis might increase the productivity of some properties, benefiting both the owners and the city.

When a new zoning code is adopted, an old one revised, or properties enter a city through annexation, nonconformities may occur. These are properties that were previously unregulated or met the regulatory requirements of the old code. Through no fault of the property owners, their land suddenly fails to meet new regulations designed to carry out or protect the provisions of a new plan. In modern times, such properties maintain their status with certain limitations.

Usually, nonconformities retain their usefulness. They continue to exist. Owners can use and maintain them but not expand them. As planning functions go

with the land and not the owner of the land, nonconformities may pass to heirs or new owners. We want the properties to continue to provide for their owners unless modern growth patterns have produced hazardous or dangerous situations. We have, over the years, adopted the kindly term “grandfathered” to describe their present situation.

It hasn’t always been that way. Urban planners traditionally cast a baleful eye on nonconformities. A planning publication on the topic, published in 1949, opened with a quote by Edward M. Bassett, a figure of great respect. He earned the title of “father of American zoning” and was a founding father of modern-day urban planning. He wrote the zoning ordinance adopted by New York City in 1916, the first in the United States.

Bassett stated, “There is little doubt that under zoning ordinances municipalities, if they wish, can succeed in ousting nonconforming uses and buildings. If the police power can be invoked to prevent a new nonconforming building because of its relation to the

community health, safety, morals, convenience, and general welfare, it follows that the police power can be invoked to oust existing nonconforming uses.”

City planners followed his thinking. Some gave nonconformities a period to “get out of town.” The time constraint supposedly allowed property owners a reasonable period in which to “amortize” their investment in such noxious uses. The term still appears in some states today.

As noted, cities became more tolerant over the years. The attitude still prevails, however, that the goal for a nonconformity is that it “will go away.”

Maybe that attitude bears some rethinking.

Nonconformities occur in different ways. The most common, and most serious, is a nonconforming use. Some are benign. For example, neighborhood groceries existed in many if not most cities when zoning first appeared. Early codes reflected what is now termed “Euclidean zoning,” characterized by strict separation of use types. Thus, neighborhood groceries became nonconforming uses even though most constituted a blessing to the neighborhood rather than a threat.

At the other extreme, some uses do not deserve the term “benign.” Salvage yards, hazardous waste sites and uses producing noxious fumes did not fit in developing residential areas. With such broad differences, the issue of nonconforming uses requires consideration and rational analysis.

Another type of zoning nonconformity consists of a nonconforming structure. Structures may be nonconforming in original design or signage, for example. For residential structures, however, recent legislation restricts regulating such things as size, materials and appearance. Height and coverage nonconformities may exist, but the most common structural nonconformity results from violation of setbacks.

The introduction of a new or revised zoning code itself may produce setback nonconformities. Property line adjustments due to eminent domain proceedings also cause them. Undetected violations during construction add to the list.

Assume that a property shows a setback nonconformity along one property line. Further assume that this violation bears no threat to the public’s health, safety or general welfare. Additionally, there is ample land in other directions that would allow expansion of the structure without producing any further nonconformity. The planning commission might ask if a request for such an expansion of the structure in conformance with all other current regulations should be denied. Or it might ask if expansion in accordance with urban plan objectives and supporting regulations produce a benefit to the city and to the property owner.

New or revised zoning regulations can also produce nonconforming lots. These occur because of violations in size, width, depth or configuration. A common instance results from the fact that many of our cities were initially platted by railroad surveyors. Employing a common practice in their densely populated cities of origin, they platted residential lots with 25-foot widths.

As zoning became more prevalent in a state with demand for larger lots and with ample land for them, many ordinances set a minimum lot width of 50 feet. This allowed conformity by simply combining two of the originally platted lots. The problem? There is scarcely a modern zoning ordinance or code around that will permit a 50-foot-wide residential lot.

The philosopher Plato argued that our reality is formed too often not by rational analysis but by perceptions forced upon us by hierarchy, tradition or education. Could this hold for some common “truths” accepted in the administration of urban plans? Could it be profitable to take a new look at nonconformities in zoning? A few simple questions can guide us:

Do regulatory nonconformities go with the property owner, i.e., “zoning by personality,” or, more defensibly, with the land? We still find restrictive regulations initiated by a change in ownership.

Did the nonconformity result in public action and no action by the property owner?

Would the broad purposes of urban planning be served by careful relaxation of some restrictive nonconforming regulations?

Does strict regulation of nonconformities fit with modern planning concepts of mixed use?

Do modern nonconforming time constraints accurately reflect the complexities of today’s financial world? Does six months or even a year allow a property owner enough time to resurrect a nonconforming use or structure destroyed by natural disaster, for example?

We have traveled far in our thinking since the days when city governments gave owners of nonconforming property five years to amortize the investment in such a property and then close it. Perhaps the time is ripe for further relief. Could grandfathering as a concept give way to its rebirth as a planning goal if we rethink the issues? Plato might say yes. ☺



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

ARPA: a once-in-a-generation opportunity for community development

By Dylan Edgell

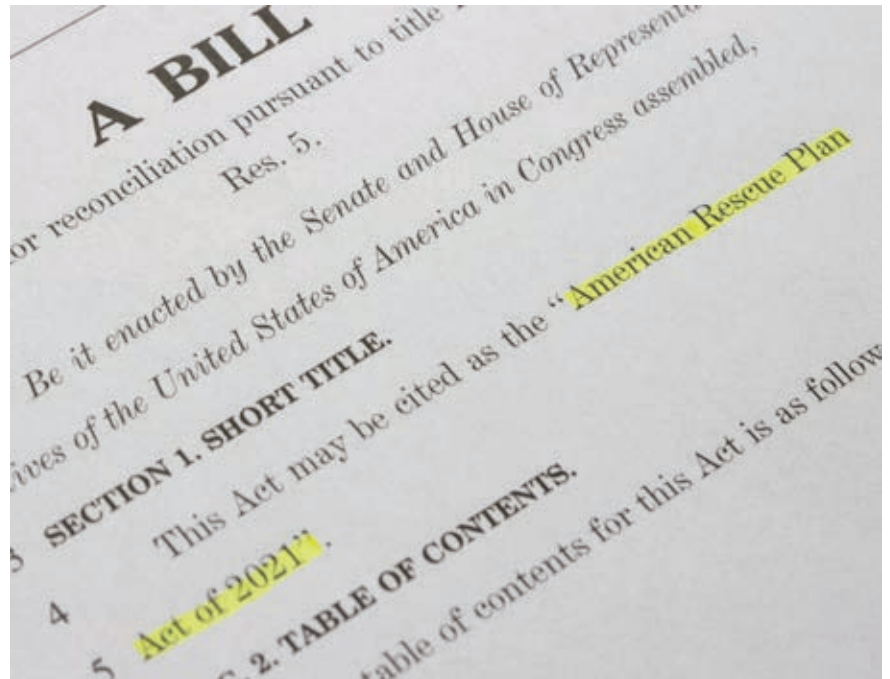
After a year of social distancing, wearing masks and constant Zoom calls, it feels like we are finally rounding the curve on the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses are opening, vaccinated individuals can remove their masks and life is starting to feel “normal” again. Unfortunately, all this good news doesn’t address the damage that COVID-19 caused to local governments through decreased tax revenue and resources diverted to pandemic-related costs.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), signed into law by President Biden on March 11, guarantees direct relief to cities and towns in the United States to address needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The monetary effects of this bill will be arriving soon, so it is time for elected officials to start planning for those dollars to assist in recovery efforts.

In the coming months, Arkansas will receive \$2.81 billion to be split between the state, counties and municipalities. Cities and towns in Arkansas will receive an estimated \$440 million in total, with the first half of payments arriving by the end of this summer and the second half going out at least a year after the first payment. This funding is a once-in-a-generation chance to place investments in your community that will pay dividends for years to come. While firm guidelines are still being established, there are a few clear options on what community leaders can dedicate their ARPA funding to as well as best practices to ensure that this money is not simply spent but invested in your community.

Vital infrastructure investments

As we’ve seen over the past year, water, sewer and broadband infrastructure are essential to our daily lives. This is true with or without a pandemic, but the stresses on these systems were highlighted as more people began working or attending school from home and the need for sanitary water and sewer became increasingly important to avoid the spread of disease. One provision in the ARPA is specifically directed to these vital infrastructure investments and funds can be spent on projects



that address and invest in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure needs. With these ARPA funds and the state’s focus on broadband access, this is an incredible opportunity for cities and towns to make the necessary investments in their broadband infrastructure so that their community can compete in the 21st century.

Community growth

While some provisions from the bill are well defined, communities will have freedom in how they invest the funding and what issues they will prioritize. ARPA funds can be used to aid households, small businesses and nonprofits, or to assist impacted industries such as tourism, travel and hospitality.

One way to ensure that these funds are spent equitably and effectively is to create a committee of community leaders to guide the decision-making process. It’s important that these committees are as diverse as the cities and towns they represent and involve individuals from all major sectors including small business owners, educators, nonprofit executives, healthcare professionals and other citizens. Making these decisions through well-constructed committees will help ensure that the ARPA

funds address the unique needs of your community and are invested well for future growth.

Craig Wilson, director of health policy at the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI), says that cities and towns should also start thinking strategically and creatively on how best to utilize these funds for public health and community development. “Communities can use these funds not only to address immediate needs related to the pandemic but also to make long-term investments in public health and economic prosperity,” he said.

Wilson went on to suggest possible projects including increasing law enforcement training on mental health crises, increasing public spaces to encourage outdoor activity and reduce congregating indoors, and employing community health workers to administer vaccines while training them to provide a path to post-pandemic careers.

As with the CARES Act funding municipal leaders received last year, it is important to remember

to document your city’s ARPA spending and to be intentional about where these funds are going, how it will impact your community and who will benefit from it the most. These funds do not have to be spent until December of 2024, so there is plenty of time for communities to strategically plan on how best to allocate these funds to set their community up for long-term success.

ARPA funding is also being distributed at the state and county level, so it’s important to coordinate with those leaders as well as the Arkansas Municipal League. Whatever your community’s needs, the ARPA offers an opportunity for recovery, refocus and growth in a positive direction. 🏛️



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



Staying safe in the summer sun

By Sara Shalin, M.D., Ph.D.

After a long winter, it's finally time to get back out into the great outdoors. There are plenty of health benefits to be had outside, including increased physical activity, reduced stress and increased vitamin D. But enjoying the summer sun doesn't come without certain health risks. Thankfully, those risks can be managed.

The good and bad news

Sunlight is a wonderful thing and, indeed, necessary for life. Not only does it fuel the plants we eat, our own bodies use sunlight to create vitamin D and then use it to build strong, healthy bones.

But sunlight also contains ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which is by far the leading cause of the most common forms of skin cancer. A history of blistering sunburns, particularly while young, has been linked to basal cell carcinomas and melanoma, and long-term chronic sun exposure increases your risk for squamous cell carcinoma.

When caught early enough, most skin cancers can be treated with just a small surgery in the office. However, certain types of skin cancer (such as melanoma) or large untreated skin cancers, can require complex and extensive treatment, and can even be fatal.

UV radiation is also responsible for aging our skin, and you know what that means: wrinkles! So, let's give a quick rundown about how we can protect our skin.

Essentials of sunscreen

Perhaps the most obvious option for outdoor skin protection is sunscreen, which should be considered a necessity for spending time outside. In fact, most dermatologists will recommend that you wear sunscreen (at least on your face) every day. Coconut oil and homemade concoctions are not recommended.

Sunscreen is measured by sun protection factor, or SPF. The minimum SPF recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is SPF 15. Most dermatologists will recommend SPF 30 or higher.

To ensure that protection works, the CDC recommends applying sunscreen all over your body 30 minutes before you go outside and reapplying it every two hours. If you're swimming or sweating a lot, you need to reapply more frequently. Also, make sure your sunscreen hasn't expired.

A good rule of thumb is to use an ounce of sunscreen for your body—visually, that's about a shot glass full—and then another quarter- to half-teaspoon on your face. Don't forget your ears or the tops of your feet if you'll be barefoot.

Additional sun safety steps

While sunscreen is a necessary step, it's not an all-protective force field. It's intended to be used together with other sun-safety strategies.

- **Seeking shade**—When outdoors, you can also help yourself by seeking shade under a tree, an umbrella or other shaded spot. Remember that reflected sunlight off certain surfaces, such as the surface of water during a day at the lake, can still bounce up and cause sunburn, so don't skip sunscreen even if you're staying in the shade.
- **Clothing**—Believe it or not, the clothes you wear can help block harmful ultraviolet radiation in sunlight. Look for labels that indicate your apparel meets international standards for UV protection.
- **Hats**—It's best to wear a wide-brimmed hat wide enough to cover the ears and the back of the neck. A tightly woven fabric will work better than something loose, like a straw hat.
- **Eyewear**—Sunglasses help protect both the delicate skin around your eyes, as well as reduce the risk of developing cataracts. You'll want to shop for sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays, but that includes most sunglasses sold in the United States at virtually any price range. Wraparound shades that block sunlight from side angles offer the most protection.

Lastly, while people with fair skin are at highest risk for sunburn and UV-related skin cancer, darker pigmented skin types also have some risk. So all skin types benefit from sun-smart practices. And if you notice a new mole or other changes to your skin, call your doctor. ☹️



Sara Shalin, M.D., Ph.D., is an associate professor of pathology and dermatology and chair of the Department of Dermatology in the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

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PHOTO CREDIT: THE CONSERVATION FUND

Volunteers prepare an area within Atlanta's Brown's Mill food forest, which provides underserved communities with food while encouraging positive interaction with neighbors and community partners.

Food forests put fresh spin on community gardening

By Krissy Kimbro

From Detroit's vacant-lot gardens that fed unemployed workers during the recession of the 1890s, to the "Liberty Gardens" of World War I, "Thrift Gardens" of the Great Depression and "Victory Gardens" of World War II, community gardens have long been a part of American life, particularly in urban areas. With the suburban home-ownership explosion of the 1950s, community-based gardening declined. In recent years, there has been renewed interest in community gardening, and a new trend has emerged to combine environmental stewardship and equitable access to green spaces and fresh, locally sourced food—food forests.

Food forests provide food for people, habitat for wildlife, carbon sequestering, biodiversity, natural soil building, tranquility and other benefits. A food forest is

not a taller version of a community garden, nor is it just a trendy name for an orchard. Factors distinguishing a food forest from a community garden include a focus on year-round management and on growing perennials. While both orchards and food forests contain fruit- or nut-bearing trees, orchards contain many trees of a single species, usually planted in rows. Food forests are multi-layered and contain a diverse mix of species.

Asheville, North Carolina, is recognized for implementing the first contemporary food forest in 1997. It took nearly 15 years before the popularity of food forests began to rapidly increase, primarily due to media promotion of Seattle's Beacon Hill Food Forest. There are now more than 70 community food forests across the United States. The largest is in the Browns

Mill neighborhood of Atlanta, where, 30 minutes from the nearest grocery store, 2,500 edible and medicinal plants are being grown on 7.1 acres without the use of pesticides and are made available to residents in neighborhoods plagued with food insecurity. Other food forests, such as Beacon Hill, are considered open harvest and available to anyone.

How to create a community food forest

Goal-setting is the first step for a community interested in creating a food forest. Is the purpose to create a fun and educational way for community members to socialize while tending to the forest? Is the food forest part of a plan to provide equitable access to fresh, locally grown food? Will the forest be open harvest, or will it be volunteer-run with the purpose of providing the harvest to specific neighborhoods where people lack access to healthy and affordable food?

Determine if the food forest will be maintained by volunteer labor or by municipal crews. Educate workers and community members who will be harvesting from the food forest on proper techniques. Consider setting policies to govern practices or hours in the food forest. Some food forests have set times when only volunteers are allowed access. In others, volunteers freely schedule the work. Tree boards or advisory committees, master gardener groups, Future Farmers of America students and local nonprofits are excellent sources of volunteer leadership.

Once the goals of the food forest are established, a site must be selected. Vacant lots or existing greenspaces may be potential sites. Consider the availability of water for irrigation needs, the site's proximity to the volunteer base and recipients of the harvest, and the amount of work necessary to prepare the site for planting. Assess how much sunlight is present. Will workers and harvesters primarily be walking or driving to the site? Is there a need or desire for a parking area, sidewalks or permeable trails?

As with any forestry endeavor, selecting the right species for the location is vital. Select native species appropriate for site drainage, aspect and size. Ensure there will be ample room for root growth below ground and for anticipated crown spread above. Trees planted in locations too small for their growth needs require more

frequent maintenance, face a higher risk of mortality and have decreased production.

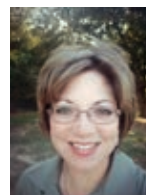
Select a mix of species from each of the layers typically seen in a food forest—root crops, groundcovers, herbs, shrubbery, and both understory (shorter) and overstory (taller) trees. When selecting overstory trees, remember that the amount of light filtering through the upper canopy of the food forest will directly influence the lower-lying plants, so stick with nut and fruit trees with more open crowns.

Map out the dimensions of the food forest perimeter, and then map each layer within the food forest. Larger trees should be spaced further apart to maximize the sunlight reaching shrubs and groundcovers below. Vegetable gardens or other annuals should be on the sunward side. Place shade-tolerant species under or near the mature canopy of the more sun-loving taller varieties.

Prepare the site in advance of the anticipated planting date. Depending on whether the food forest will be converted from an existing greenspace or created in a soil-compacted vacant lot, site preparation will involve different tasks and timing. This may mean preparing some areas to be ready for fall tree planting, while other areas are left alone and then prepared for springtime herb plantings, or it may mean the entire site is prepared at once.

Locate and purchase native plants from local vendors as much as possible. This minimizes transplant stress and maximizes the overall resiliency of the food forest. Native plants are more likely to survive insect and disease attacks than non-native varieties.

Plant each species at the recommended planting time of year. Water the plants, mulch around trees as appropriate, and perform tree maintenance tasks such as pruning and removal of any storm damage or limb dieback promptly and according to recommending timing. Finally, as the food forest begins to produce its bounty, enjoy the harvest! 🌿



Krissy Kimbro is the urban and community forestry coordinator for Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Forestry Division. Contact Krissy at 479-228-7929 or email kristine.kimbrow@agriculture.arkansas.gov.



PHOTO BY BRENNAN EDWARDS

Pocket parks, like the Kenneth Adair Memorial Park on Central Avenue in Hot Springs, can transform a vacant lot into a place for the public to play, take in a performance or community event, or simply sit and enjoy the shade.

Pocket parks bring life to unused spaces

by Nathan Streett, PLA

A pocket park, sometimes called a parkette or a mini park, is a small outdoor space accessible to the public that is frequently created on small, irregular pieces of property about the size of a residential lot. These safe and inviting outdoor spaces are typically strategically sited in an area where they can serve locals and are often sited near a vibrant, high-traffic area of the city. They can be a refuge from everyday life by offering opportunities for rest and relaxation.

Pocket parks can be in downtown, suburban or rural areas. They can be developed on public or private land. These smaller-in-scale parks function as neighborhood parks, but still frequently meet a variety of user needs. Amenities can include hard and durable surfaces, moveable seating to allow flexibility, a small event space or stage, spaces for socializing, water features to drown out traffic noise, fitness equipment, and, of course, landscaping. Pocket parks can provide greenery and a place to sit or meet in small groups. The parks can be used for play areas, lunch breaks, educational settings and even host small social events such as birthday parties or family gatherings. They may be constructed around a

monument, historical marker or art project to further attract users.

One of the unique and exciting characteristics of pocket parks is that they can be created out of vacant lots, forgotten spaces or irregularly shaped property that would otherwise appear to be unusable. While often created by a municipality, some pocket parks are created by community groups or private entities reclaiming these spaces for the benefit of the local population. Communities can get creative when looking for places to create a pocket park: an abandoned alleyway, a rooftop or a public right-of-way where roads intersect. Virtually any unused space can be considered. These leftover spaces and eyesores are good candidates for transformation to create an amenity for the community.

Benefits of pocket parks

Perhaps the biggest benefit of a pocket park is how once unusable spaces can be transformed to bring the local community together. By providing a space for people to meet and interact, a stronger community bond can be created. Residents who might not otherwise interact

with each other are able to visit their local pocket park and build lasting relations.

By turning something that is unkept and forgotten into something that is vibrant and cherished by the public, value is added to the community. Creating a quiet and relaxing space that promotes nature and tranquility is a benefit for the physical and mental health of residents. The presence of landscaping can help cleanse polluted air and reduce the heat island effect, while making people feel good about where they live.

Small parks can also increase the value of nearby homes. One study found that well-designed and maintained pocket parks have a positive influence on neighboring property values.

Design

When creating a pocket park in your community, getting the design right is vital to how well the space will serve the community. The existing conditions of a potential park site will inevitably present opportunities and constraints. The site's size, shape, topography and presence of existing vegetation or utilities will all influence the design of the site. Identifying the limitations and possibilities of the existing conditions is step one of an appropriate design. How can the opportunities be maximized, and the constraints minimized? Are there any existing site features, like healthy trees, that can be preserved to cast shade on park goers? Are there naturally occurring low points that benefit stormwater management and create other park amenities such as bioswales or infiltration areas? Making use of these site-specific features not only supports the unique nature of a community park, but also reduces the cost to develop the park.

Community engagement is another way to ensure the pocket park provides the amenities that best suit residents. The design of the site, the location of amenities (benches, chairs, trash receptacles), their orientation, color choices, texture and materials should encourage use by a wide range of age groups and physical abilities. Additionally, given a pocket park's limited size and the constraints of each site, serving the largest number of users often requires developing every available inch of the space.

Planting design

The planting design of a pocket park should create a sustainable and beautiful landscape that attracts the attention of park goers throughout the year while also providing environmental benefits such as urban cooling and habitats for butterflies and birds. The design should utilize plant material that can withstand heavy foot traffic, requires minimal maintenance and is appropriate for the specific climate conditions of the site.

Plants should be selected based on site appropriateness. Properties such as sunlight and water exposure, and variable changes from season to season, will all factor into the plants' ability to flourish. Native plant species already adapted to local climate conditions are typically a good choice because they require less maintenance, water and fertilizer than ornamental species. In addition to native species, there is also the opportunity to bring regionally adaptive plants into a design. Fruit trees, for example, provide shade and may offer a healthy snack to park goers.

Durability is another factor of a plant's site appropriateness. Shrubs and ground covers that can withstand foot traffic should be used in high-traffic areas. Creating a landscape that can withstand high use and minimal maintenance requires careful plant selection by the design team.

Site utilities

Utilities are often necessary for a pocket park to function. Where other aspects of park design guide how a space is used by the residents, utilities are used to ensure the park is safe and comfortable to use. Common utilities to consider in pocket park design are electricity, water and sanitation. Electricity is needed to provide security lighting, which allows access to the park after dark and can prevent unwanted activities from occurring. Electrical outlets for public use, such as phone charging, is highly desirable. Available electricity may also allow the space to host movie nights, live music or food vendors. Access to water is beneficial for maintenance staff and the park users. Irrigation for plantings and trees, and hose bibs for cleaning and maintenance purposes, are critical for keeping a park looking its best, while drinking fountains, dog bowls and water features can all be important to the success of the park. Planning for waste disposal is also an important design factor and integral to the success of the park. Appropriately located waste receptacles are important to park visitors and provide an easy way to dispose of their trash while keeping the park free of litter. Providing an adequate number of receptacles at the park can greatly reduce the number of maintenance hours needed to keep the space clean.

Pocket parks bring life to unused spaces. Through a variety of design options, they can improve forgotten properties to benefit the social and mental health of residents, while promoting a higher quality of life within the community. 🌳



Nathan Streett is a professional landscape architect, the department head for MCE's Land Development Department and a senior associate. He works out of the Fayetteville office. Contact Nathan at 479-443-2377 or nstreett@mce.us.com.

2020/2021 State Turnback Funds

Actual Totals Per Capita						
MONTH	STREET		SEVERANCE TAX		GENERAL	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
January	\$6.789	\$6.659	\$0.083	\$0.071	\$2.145	\$1.951
February	\$6.340	\$6.607	\$0.118	\$0.163	\$1.087	\$0.893
March	\$5.758	\$5.693	\$0.101	\$0.110	\$1.087	\$0.892
April	\$6.088	\$6.135	\$0.064	\$0.162	\$0.924	\$0.889
May	\$5.943	\$7.568	\$0.034	\$0.258	\$0.924	\$0.890
June	\$5.605	\$6.753	\$0.030	\$0.206	\$0.924	\$1.665
July	\$6.094		\$0.022		\$2.795	
August	\$6.478		\$0		\$1.542	
September	\$6.399		\$0.014		\$0.728	
October	\$6.378		\$0.021		\$0.893	
November	\$6.340		\$0.060		\$0.893	
December	\$5.984		\$0.105		\$0.893	
Total Year	\$74.197	\$39.413	\$0.652	\$0.970	\$14.838	\$7.180

Actual Totals Per Month						
MONTH	STREET		SEVERANCE TAX		GENERAL	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
January	\$12,833,880.33	\$12,587,621.61	\$156,199.64	\$134,647.89	* \$4,054,970.57	* \$3,688,464.32
February	\$11,984,924.80	\$12,488,753.05	\$223,221.26	\$308,183.56	\$2,055,049.55	\$1,688,281.84
March	\$10,883,990.67	\$10,760,836.82	\$191,150.53	\$207,709.60	\$2,055,396.67	\$1,685,424.74
April	\$11,509,342.85	\$11,627,333.33	\$120,647.65	\$307,147.46	\$1,747,446.98	\$1,684,913.88
May	\$11,233,895.61	\$14,343,742.05	\$63,817.15	\$489,324.42	\$1,747,094.76	\$1,687,137.50
June	\$10,595,347.60	\$12,799,319.93	\$57,224.47	\$390,405.22	\$1,747,446.98	\$3,154,867.86
July	\$11,520,392.64		\$41,735.92		** \$5,284,317.00	
August	\$12,263,537.56		\$0		\$2,919,346.12	
September	\$12,097,147.76		\$26,456.51		\$1,376,535.41	
October	\$12,057,206.89		\$39,675.17		\$1,688,464.32	
November	\$11,984,780.59		\$113,060.67		\$1,688,281.98	
December	\$11,312,336.38		\$199,121.43		\$1,688,464.32	
Total Year	\$140,276,783.68	\$74,607,606.79	\$1,232,310.40	\$1,447,012.93	\$28,052,814.66	\$13,589,090.14

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

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

Local Option Sales and Use Tax in Arkansas



KEY: Counties not collecting sales tax

Source: Rachel Garrett, Office of State Treasurer

See also: www.dfa.arkansas.gov

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

Month	Municipal Tax		County Tax	Total Tax		Interest		
January	\$68,199,990	\$62,951,910	\$59,726,912	\$54,023,046	\$127,926,902	\$116,974,957	\$14,602	\$137,620
February	\$79,611,239	\$73,128,305	\$68,300,663	\$61,276,755	\$147,911,902	\$134,405,060	\$20,412	\$151,340
March	\$66,877,931	\$57,761,974	\$57,918,592	\$49,863,364	\$124,796,523	\$107,625,338	\$13,492	\$140,860
April	\$60,600,707	\$58,720,966	\$53,282,134	\$50,676,002	\$113,882,841	\$109,396,969	\$16,537	\$173,069
May	\$83,488,059	\$64,061,809	\$73,792,913	\$55,167,274	\$151,348,960	\$118,762,027	\$10,492	\$51,758
June	\$78,858,097	\$61,816,632	\$67,860,902	\$54,700,218	\$78,858,097	\$120,220,830	\$9,681	\$37,445
July		\$66,569,122		\$58,404,198		\$127,921,569		\$27,240
August		\$69,810,263		\$61,352,447		\$132,096,586		\$22,963
September		\$69,731,104		\$62,286,322		\$132,017,426		\$14,982
October		\$67,795,513		\$60,898,642		\$128,694,156		\$13,552
November		\$70,085,468		\$62,498,473		\$132,583,941		\$12,579
December		\$67,813,178		\$60,080,515		\$127,893,693		\$14,370
Total	\$437,636,022	\$790,246,247	\$380,882,116	\$691,227,256	\$744,725,225	\$1,488,592,551	\$85,217	\$797,777
Averages	\$72,939,337	\$65,853,854	\$63,480,353	\$57,602,271	\$124,120,871	\$124,049,379	\$14,203	\$66,481

MUNICIPAL MART

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

ASSISTANT CITY ENGINEER—The city of Hot Springs is seeking applicants for the position of assistant city engineer. Qualifications: Must possess a high school diploma or equivalent; supplemented by a civil engineering degree and an Arkansas registered engineer's license; a minimum of five years' experience or equivalent in public works, highways, water and wastewater engineering, or in project management of projects in those field; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. Must possess a valid Arkansas driver's license and a clean driving record. Starting salary \$33.97 per hour plus full benefits. All applicants are subject to pre-employment testing; individual in this position will be subject to random drug and alcohol testing. To apply, contact Human Resources Office at City Hall, 133 Convention Boulevard, Hot Springs, AR 71901; call 501-321-6841; or visit www.cityhs.net/jobs. All employees who wish to apply for a transfer or promotion to another classification and/or position must complete a "New Application for Transfer/Promotion Form" and return the original signed form to Human Resources by the closing date for the position. Forms are available in all departments as well as Human Resources. Open until filled. EOE.

ASSOCIATE STAFF ATTORNEY—The city of Bentonville is seeking applicants for the position of associate staff attorney. Hiring salary range is \$82,243 - \$111,145 annually DOE. Performs a wide scope of municipal legal work, including rendering of legal advice to city staff, boards and commissions as assigned, preparing and reviewing complex legal documents, including contracts, ordinances and resolutions as assigned, representing the city and city officers and employees in administrative hearings and civil litigation. Interprets civil laws, rulings, and regulations for city administrative officials and employees as assigned. Represents city in civil litigation and other civil legal proceedings as assigned. Prepares and reviews business contracts and administers other civil legal matters as assigned. Reviews grant applications, agreements, assurances and advises regarding compliance. Advises city administrative staff on business contracts and agreements as assigned. Represents the city before various boards and commissions as assigned. Also assists senior staff attorney in handling criminal matters as required. Juris Doctorate from an accredited law school required and seven years related experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of advanced education and experience, with an emphasis on contract law, corporate law and/or administrative law. Hands-on experience in city, county or state government, with an emphasis in contract law, community planning, and Federal Aviation Administration regulations is highly desired. Admission to the Arkansas Bar, admission to U.S. District Court and Attorney's License required. Interested applicants can send resume to HR Manager Ed Wheeler, ewheeler@bentonvillear.com.

CERTIFIED POLICE OFFICER—The city of Charleston is accepting applications for a full-time certified police officer. Candidates must be able to meet all requirements of law enforcement standards and training. Benefits include paid health insurance, vacation, sick leave and retirement. Interested and qualified applicants, please email resumes to batchcheck@charlestonar.org, or fax to 479-965-9980. EOE.

DEPUTY CITY MANAGER—Austin, Texas (Pop. 1,003,615). Exciting opportunity to join a high performing, collaborative executive team dedicated to the provision of innovative, high quality, cost effective services in a world class city. The deputy city manager will serve as a true second-in-command to the city manager and partner at the highest levels. Candidates must possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in public administration, business administration or a related field and at least five years' experience in managing and leading a complex organization, including two years' experience in an executive capacity. Experience in government or an organization closely related to government is highly valued. Salary range: \$275,000 - \$285,000 DOQ with excellent benefits. For a complete job description and to apply, interested candidates should visit www.govhrusa.com/job/austin-tx-deputy-city-manager. Position is open until filled with first review of resumes on July 1. To ensure consideration, please apply by July 15.

DIRECTOR OF SOLID WASTE—The city of Fort Smith seeks candidates for the position of director of the solid waste department. The incumbent is responsible for all aspects of the solid waste department including direction of the following divisions: residential collection, commercial/industrial collection, landfill and fleet/grounds maintenance. Also responsible for overseeing the recycling program, automated refuse collection program and for maximizing the environmental management of resources, including the production of natural gas from methane generated by the landfill. Duties are performed in accordance with applicable laws. Education and/or experience: Bachelor's degree is required, with specialization in business, environmental management or public administration preferred. Knowledge of the operations of a solid waste department and/or sanitary landfill is preferred. Ability to develop and maintain sound management policies and procedures and to participate in their administration. For complete job description, salary information and application, visit www.fortsmithar.gov/jobs. Deadline to apply is July 18.

DISTRICT MANAGER—The Holiday Island Suburban Improvement District is seeking a district manager. Holiday Island is a planned community in the scenic Ozark Mountains on Table Rock Lake, located within the city of Holiday Island's boundaries. The city and suburban improvement district share responsibilities in providing essential public services throughout the district. The suburban improvement district is the owner and operator of the community's public infrastructure and facilities. The district manager is responsible for the overall management of district provided facilities and services, including roads, water, sewer, fire/EMS, law enforcement, marina, campground and recreation. The district manager is the chief executive and operational officer and is responsible to an elected board of commissioners for the overall affairs of the district. The district manager must establish rapport and maintain an effective and contractual relationship with the city, Holiday Island Planning Commission and Carroll County Sheriff's Department. The district manager routinely speaks in public to large groups of people and provides the utmost in personal attention with individual responses to help and assist Holiday Island property owners. A bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration or related field is required. MBA and/or planned community experience a plus. Applicants should have substantial management and administrative knowledge and experience in municipal government or a public agency. Strong skills in team building, personnel management and budget preparation are essential. General information about Holiday Island can be found online at www.holidayisland.us. Applicants should send resume, cover letter and detailed salary history to: Holiday Island Suburban Improvement District, ATTN: District Manager Search, 110 Woodsdale Drive, Holiday Island, AR 72631, or email districtmgr@holidayisland.us.

E-911 DIRECTOR—The city of Jonesboro seeks applicants for the position of E-911 director. The E-911 director is responsible for planning, organizing and directing the overall operations of the E-911 management system for the city of Jonesboro and Craighead County, including but not limited to administrative and technical tasks in establishing and maintaining continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive dispatch

planning processes that results in plans and programs that consider all dispatch modes and supports community development and social well-being goals. The ideal candidate must have experience in emergency services and be able to navigate and add content to the various social media platforms, make presentations at council meetings, to the public and media. Please apply online at www.jonesboro.org or contact HR@jonesboro.org.

FINANCE DIRECTOR—The city of Eureka Springs is looking for a finance director to lead and manage all aspects of the city's financial operations. Responsibilities will include but not be limited to: Develops and maintains timely and accurate financial statements and reports in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). Financial planning and forecasting. Management of all accounting, finance and treasury functions for the city. Manages department administration for the city including issuance of new debt and compliance with existing programs and procedures. Monitors and evaluates municipal operations, financial transactions and procedures for compliance with statutory requirements and policies. Directs and manages the preparation and administration of municipal budget and Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). Develops and interprets cash and investment policies and procedures. Manages certain aspects of payroll processes related to funding of benefits, payroll, tax filings and auditing of bi-weekly payroll. Directs and manages the annual audit process. Applicants should have a bachelor's in accounting, finance or business. CPA or CMA required. Minimum of seven years of experience in accounting role. Minimum three years in government accounting and management. Familiar with BS&S Municipal Software. Interested applicants should send their resume, cover letter, salary requirements and contact information to HumanResources@eurekaspringsar.gov.

POLICE CHIEF—The city of Osceola is seeking applications for a new police chief. Osceola is a town of approximately 6,700 located 50 miles north of Memphis on I-55 and along the Mississippi River. The city is seeking a proven, dynamic, progressive leader, preferably with the rank of captain or higher in law enforcement, and preferably with a bachelor's degree or above in criminal justice or a related field. The chief of police is responsible for planning, organizing, managing and leading a force of about 30 officers, along with nine civilian employees, a 54-bed city jail and a video management system that includes officer-worn cameras and 35 Skycops. In addition, the chief of police manages the \$2.6 million budget, including spending priorities and detailed inventory. The goal of the position is to ensure fair enforcement of laws and ordinances, protection of lives and property, and initiation of crime prevention endeavors, including in community policing and crime data analysis. The chief of police works under the direction of the mayor. Salary commensurate with experience and education, but the ideal candidate can expect competitive pay and good benefits. Please provide a cover letter, including your reason for applying, with your resume and send to janes@osceolalightandpower.com no later than Saturday, July 31. No phone calls please. EOE.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR—Diamond City is seeking a public works director with 3-5 years' experience; they will be responsible for various administrative and managerial duties and will be under the supervision of the mayor. One of the essential duties of a public works director is the ability to supervise the activities of various departments and employees within the public work sector. These departments include streets, water, sanitation, parks and grounds, utilities and equipment maintenance. A Level 1 Water and Sewage License is needed or the ability to obtain soon. Individual should have basic word processing, spreadsheet and math skills. Insurance and benefits included with a competitive salary. Job applications may be picked up at Diamond City, City Hall, 232 Grand Ave., Diamond City. Application is also available on the Diamond City website, www.diamondcityar.com. Please call 870-422-7212 if you have any questions.

PUBLIC WORKS MAINTENANCE WORKER—The city of Highfill seeks a public works maintenance worker in the street department. The position reports to the community development/public works director. Minimum qualifications: HS diploma or GED and 18 months of related experience and training. Must possess valid DL. Must possess or have the ability to obtain a Class B CDL with 120 days of hire date. For full job description and list of qualifications, please email builder@highfillar.com.

TREASURER—The city of El Dorado is accepting applications for the position of treasurer. The city treasurer is appointed by and reports directly to the city council. An accounting or finance degree and municipal accounting experience a plus, as well as a proven history of working with monthly financial reporting, working with accounts payable and accounts receivable, audit compliance and yearly budgets. Will be trained to operate the city's accounting software. Salary is negotiable depending on experience. Full benefits, paid time off and retirement plan. To apply, please email resumes to City Clerk Heather McVay at cityclerk@eldoradoar.org. For more information, contact City Clerk McVay at 1-870-881-4877.

WATER/WASTEWATER MANAGER—The city of Highfill is hiring a qualified Water Operator DI/Wastewater Operator Class II to perform a variety of skilled and semi-skilled tasks in the maintenance and operation of the city's water system and wastewater treatment plant. Experience: Two years of experience performing duties at a level comparable to the city of Highfill's system. Position manages water and wastewater departmental finances and budget and staff. Works cooperatively with Centerton Utilities. This position reports to the mayor or the mayor's designee. Analyzes population and industrial growth of service areas to determine adequacy of current facilities and to project community demands for future facilities. Working conditions: The manager works in a variety of conditions and situations, indoors and outdoors in various types of weather. On duty at any time, day or night, as required in any emergency conditions. Job type: full-time. Pay: negotiable. Schedule: 8-hour shift on call. Education: HS or equivalent Required. Experience: Water treatment, one year required. License/certification: Water License I, Wastewater License II, clean driver's license. Benefits include health, vision, dental and paid time off. Interested applicants should send a resume to Mayor Michelle Rieff, City of Highfill, 2560 W. Hwy. 12, Gentry, AR 72734, or email resume to building@highfillar.com

WATER UTILITIES MANAGER—Mena Water Utilities (MWU) is seeking applications for a general manager to direct the operations and oversee the finances of the utility. Applicants should have either a bachelor's degree in management or equivalent experience. Applicants with water utility experience and background preferred. Relevant attributes include knowledge of water treatment and distribution, wastewater treatment and collection, accounting and financial controls, and state and federal regulations. Must possess a Class IV Water Treatment, Class III Water Distribution and Grade III Wastewater licenses, or the ability to obtain them within a reasonable, agreed-upon period. Must be able to maintain positive team environment and balance current utility demands with future goals and performance requirements. Salary commensurate with experience and licenses held. Applications with resumes and copies of certifications will be accepted at the Arkansas Employment Security Department, 479-394-3060, Mena, Arkansas, until the position is filled. The city of Mena is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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Standing from left: Lindsey Ollar, Leigh Ann Biernat, Kevin Faught, Dennis Hunt (Executive Vice President and Head of Public Finance), Michael McBryde, Jason Holsclaw
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