



# State of the League 2022-2023

Arkansas Municipal League Annual Report

# Message from Our Director



**W**ow! Another trip around the sun and here we are gathering again for our annual convention. I feel like I blinked and 365 days passed in a nanosecond. Nevertheless, here we are gathering to share knowledge and ideas, to ask questions and renew friendships. That's one of the best parts of municipal government—good, long-lasting relationships.

For those of you who are new to League gatherings I think you'll quickly discover you are among friends. I don't say that lightly. Over the years I've watched many seasoned city officials reach out to first-time attendees to make them feel welcomed. Moreover, I've seen those initial greetings grow throughout the meeting and by the time everyone is packing up to head home new friendships have been forged. From there, things just get better and better!

In August I will be celebrating my fifth year as your Executive Director. I must tell you, it seems like the blink of an eye from 2018 to 2023. Even seeing those years in black and white I still cannot grasp that so much time has elapsed. Five years...60 months...1,825 days...43,800 hours, yet it still feels like the journey began only yesterday. What's the old saying? Choose a job you love and you'll never have to work a day in your life. It's true! I suppose that's why time has flown by. Of course, we've also seen quite a few changes in our world since 2018. Face masks and social distancing for instance! I made a list (by the way, I LOVE lists) off the top of my head of major events starting in 2018 until present day. I'm sure I missed many but this will drive my point home I think.

- In 2018 we lost Don Zimmerman after 50 years of leadership.
- A pandemic started late in 2019 and little did we know the impact we'd see. None of us would be spared knowing friends or family that perished or continue to suffer. By March 2020, offices, businesses and schools pivoted to online environments, and quarantines, travel restrictions, social distancing and masking up became the norm.
- Vaccines were developed by late 2020, only to become political fodder and the subject of many, many conspiracies.
- The country sees its most controversial presidential election in history and discord and conflict grow exponentially, culminating in the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.
- School and mass shootings occur at alarming rates.
- The number of natural disasters spawned by Mother Nature increases. Thirteen hurricanes made landfall in the U.S. in those five years. Wildfires pop up all over the country. Arkansas averages 39 tornadoes a year. A single insurance carrier paid Arkansans \$231 million in hail claims in 2022 alone!

The list isn't nearly complete and it's still a bit overwhelming to me. Why do I share it with you? Because against that background municipal government never wavered from its mission. Arkansas' cities and towns confronted those hardships directly and successfully. I'm reminded of a Clint Eastwood film, "Heartbreak Ridge." Towards the end of the movie, he's confronted with an ugly situation where he's ordered to stay put but does the opposite and leads his platoon to "take the hill" during a raging battle. When asked why he did so he responds: "We're marines, sir. We're paid to adapt, to improvise." Substitute marines with city officials and employees and you get a synopsis of what you did during the past five years. You're city officials and employees. You're paid to adapt, to improvise. I gotta tell you there are literally thousands of examples in this regard. You put up plexiglass in city hall, provided masks and rearranged furniture to ensure the public and those folks working in city hall could remain healthy. You held city council meetings outdoors. Your public safety officials put themselves in harms way day in and day out. Like I said, I'm barely scratching the surface so I'll summarize it as follows: you made Arkansas' cities and towns greater than ever and by doing so, you made Arkansas better than it's ever been.

I'm thrilled to report that the League has followed your lead. Your League staff pushes the envelope every day to ensure you and your municipality get the best service and product that allows you to operate more effectively and more efficiently. The League is embracing technology in new and imaginative ways. We've updated computer systems in our optional programs to allow you easier access to information and solutions while giving the programs valuable data to keep products and services as reasonably priced as possible. We'll be delivering services and products through new methods, both person-to-person and virtually. Watch for our podcasts, videos and new websites, they promise to make your world better! Last but not least, your League employees remain devoted to making the cities and towns in Arkansas the very best in the country. We're succeeding because you're succeeding!

Remember, we are you and you are us. Continue your kindness and your hard work.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark".

Mark R. Hayes, Executive Director, Arkansas Municipal League

## Your Arkansas Municipal League

The Arkansas Municipal League was established in 1934 and is a service and advocacy organization for the municipalities of Arkansas, representing more than 65 percent of Arkansas' citizens. The League was created to assist cities and towns with information and representation in the public affairs of our state and nation.

League membership includes:

- 124 Cities of the First Class
- 201 Cities of the Second Class
- 174 Incorporated Towns

## AML Benefit Programs

### Municipal League Workers' Compensation Program

*(485 Members, plus 125 Municipal Entities)*

The MLWCP was established in 1985 to help cities and towns meet their statutory responsibilities for on-the-job employee injuries and loss-of-time claims. [www.arml.org/mlwcp](http://www.arml.org/mlwcp)

### Municipal Legal Defense Program

*(479\* Members, Including 5 Limited-Service Members-Housing Authorities)*

The MLDP is an optional program whereby participating municipalities can pool their resources and provide limited protection for the personal assets of officials, board or commission members, and employees. [www.arml.org/mldp](http://www.arml.org/mldp)

### Municipal Vehicle Program

*(480\* Members, Including 43 Limited-Service Members)*

- 27,000 plus Units Covered and Insured to a Value of \$1.1 Billion.

The MVP, Part I, is an optional program whereby participating municipalities can pool their resources and provide liability protection on their vehicles. Part II allows municipalities the option of carrying physical damage coverage on their vehicles on a pooled, self-funded basis. [www.arml.org/mvp](http://www.arml.org/mvp)

### Municipal Property Program

*(394\* Members, Including 16 Limited-Service Members)*

- 11,000 plus Properties Covered and Insured to a Value of \$4.5 Billion.

The MPP is an optional program whereby participating municipalities can pool their resources and provide all risks protection for their buildings and contents. [www.arml.org/mpp](http://www.arml.org/mpp)

## Municipal Health Benefit Program

*(301\* Members, Including 91 Limited-Service Members)*

The MHBP provides medical, dental and vision benefits to employees and officials. The advantage of being a part of the large group has enabled cities and towns over the years to maintain a relatively stable cost for this important fringe benefit for municipal officials and employees in an era of soaring medical costs. [www.arml.org/mhbp](http://www.arml.org/mhbp)

## Arkansas Local Government Pension Management Trust and Municipal Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust

*(7 Members)*

The PMT is an optional program available to local municipalities' pension plans that provides an excellent opportunity for relatively small- or medium-sized locally controlled plans to join together in a League-sponsored pension management plan. The League has established the MOPEB Trust as a vehicle for cities (and city agencies) to implement a savings plan for OPEB costs.

## Additional Optional Programs Include:

### Accidental Death & Dismemberment

*(239 Members)*

### Firefighters Supplemental Income Protection & Death Benefit Program

*(202 Members)*

### Ordinance Codification

*(95 Members)*

### Non-CDL Drug Testing

*(138 Members)*

## State Aid Street Program

The State Aid Street Committee administers the State Aid Street Program to assist Arkansas' cities and towns in improving city streets. The Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) is responsible for overseeing the construction of the projects.

**Total Project Funding to Date:** \$226.5 Million

**Miles of City and Town Streets Improved to Date:** 1,327

**Projects Approved to Date:** 909

**New Projects Approved for Funding:** 86

## Legal Services

- **Active Cases:** 212
- **Legal Inquiries:** Approximately 4,000

## Professional Development

- 88th Annual Convention: 839 in-person and 135 virtual for a total of 974 attendees
- 2023 Winter Conference: 803 in-person and 190 virtual for a total of 993 attendees
- AML Voluntary Certification Program for Municipal Officials and Personnel: 1,942 participants; 10 events
- Loss Control, Safety & Other Training: 4,561 participants; 145 events
- Virtual Continuing Legal Education: 258 participants; 6 events
- Active AML Community ListServ Groups: 8
- AML Community ListServ Subscribers: 1,947
- AML Community Threads Created: 9,608
- League-Sourced ListServ Messages: 924
- League-Sourced Attachments Sent via ListServ: 459
- Information Requests Via [www.arml.org](http://www.arml.org): 242

## Publications

*City & Town*, the official monthly magazine (now quarterly) of the Arkansas Municipal League, is free to members. Total readership: more than 7,300 per issue in print and online.

## Other Educational Publications

The League offers a library of over 50 publications available in print or by download.

## AML Online

The online home of the Arkansas Municipal League is [www.arml.org](http://www.arml.org).

Site Visits (May 2022-May 2023): **245,404**

Unique Page Views (same period): **594,865**

## Top Page Visits

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Home Page                 | 6. Calendar of Events     |
| 2. MHBP Provider Search      | 7. Publications           |
| 3. Services/Benefit Programs | 8. Meetings Registration  |
| 4. Services/MHBP             | 9. Services/MVP           |
| 5. Contact/Staff Directory   | 10. Services/MLWCP        |
|                              | 11. Services/Classifieds  |
|                              | 12. Publications for Free |

## Other Ways to Connect with AML Online

Facebook: @armunileague

Twitter: @armunileague

LinkedIn: Arkansas Municipal League

Instagram: @armunileague

Flickr: [Flickr.com/arkansas\\_municipal\\_league](https://www.flickr.com/photos/arkansas_municipal_league/)

YouTube: [Youtube.com/ARMunicipalLeague](https://www.youtube.com/ARMunicipalLeague)

Microsite: [GreatCitiesGreatState.com](http://GreatCitiesGreatState.com)

Microsite: [BeLocalBeHeard.com](http://BeLocalBeHeard.com)

## 2022-2023 Officers



Mayor Jonas Anderson  
Cave City  
President



Mayor Parnell Vann  
Magnolia  
First Vice President



Mayor Kenneth Jones  
Brookland  
Vice President, District 1



Clerk/Treasurer  
Diane Whitbey  
North Little Rock  
Vice President, District 2



Mayor Doug Kinslow  
Greenwood  
Vice President, District 3



Mayor  
Crystal Marshall  
Corsett  
Vice President, District 4