

Making Tracks

\$2.5M Grant Will Boost Rail Capacity

Plus:

Sales Tax Collections

New Food On Campus

Record Real Estate

Workin' On The RR

City Lands \$2.5M Grant For Extra Rails

Rail infrastructure is critical. In Craighead Technology Park (CTP), rail service has led major manufacturers like Nestle, Frito-Lay, and Trinity Rail, to call CTP home. Soon, those and other large-scale employers in the park will have an even greater capacity to move their products.

On October 5, United States Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and the Department of Economic Development Administration awarded a \$2 million grant to Jonesboro to make rail infrastructure improvements in support of Craighead Technology Park manufacturers.

"This rail expansion will equip Jonesboro with the necessary infrastructure to accelerate business growth at the Industrial Park and surrounding commercial areas, and the project's location in an Opportunity Zone will further enhance the region's economy," Ross said.

The Delta Regional Authority added \$509,000 for the project, bringing the total to \$2.5M. Jonesboro Mayor Harold Perrin says the grant will add much-needed rail space and will also create jobs. According to the Department of Commerce, the rail storage facility will create 125 jobs and retain 405 jobs.

"It's a great day in Jonesboro because this is extremely important to existing industry and future development that will locate here," said Perrin. "These are unusually generous grants, and we have a lot of people to thank." He also said the initial \$2 million grant would not have been possible without DRA's contribution," Perrin said.

Perrin thanked United States Senator John Boozman and United States Representative Rick Crawford for writing support letters that he considered critical to the grant's approval.

The site is located west of CTP on a 9.6-acre tract that runs along the existing city-owned rail line. The construction of four additional dead-end tracks will create room to store 120 additional rail cars. The rail storage facility's addition is part of the City of Jonesboro's long-term Master Rail Plan.

"We have been developing a Master Rail Plan, and this is an important piece of it," Perrin said. "Like most everything we have done during my administration, it has required partnerships. That includes Mark Young at the Chamber of Commerce, who helped set up meetings with the plant managers to learn their needs; our City Council, which approved the plan in the first place; and Grants Director Regina Burkett, who wrote the grant."

This project was made possible by the regional planning efforts led by the East Arkansas Planning and Development District. EDA funds help bring together the public and private sectors to create an economic development roadmap to strengthen the regional economy, support private capital investment, and create jobs.



Quality of Life

Skate Park Expanding

The skate park at Allen Park is undergoing improvements, doubling its size from just over 7,000 SF to almost 15,000 SF of ramps and skating area.

Jonesboro Parks and Recreation Director Danny Kapales says the total cost for the improvements is \$38,000. Kapales adds the cost is being covered by \$22,500 from the downtown skate park restitution and \$15,500 from Walmart and Rotary donations.

Completion of the improvements is on schedule for this fall.

Tennis/Bandshell Bids

There are plans to resurface 14 tennis courts at Allen Park and Joe Mack Campbell Park. Jonesboro Parks and Recreation Director Danny Kapales says the city has applied for a 50/50 grant from the USTA to help with the project. Kapales says if the city does not receive the grant, the money is budgeted in capital improvements. The city opened the bidding process for the project in mid-October.

Bids are also being accepted for a project to improve the bandshell at Craighead Forest Park. Plans for the structure of the existing bandshell will be updated with new siding, masonry, and new lighting.

JU Awarded

Jonesboro Unlimited (JU) was honored by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) at the IEDC's 2020 Annual Conference in Dallas, TX.

JU won a Silver Rank at the IEDC Excellence Awards for a publication we produced with the talented designers at Art Advertising. Our publication, The Craighead Technology Park Development Site Guide, is designed to inform developers and site selectors about the fantastic opportunities the Craighead Technology Park (CTP) represent.

The standout feature is transparent pages that allow the reader to see every level of the Craighead Technology Park page by page—peeling back the utilities and transportation to get a better look at the infrastructure of the CTP.

While designed to be a hands-on document, the Craighead Technology Park Development Site Guide is also published online. [You can see it here.](#)



Commercial Development

The former Sears building will keep its retail roots. Haag-Brown announced Gearhead Outfitters and Gamble Home purchased the 82,000 SF building for \$4.9M. Both Gamble and Gearhead will have stores on site. There will also be greenspace and a food truck area.



Jonesboro Country club is undergoing a complete kitchen remodel. The Club's manager says an all-new kitchen with all new equipment and flooring will replace the existing facility in the same footprint. The \$950,000 project calls for completion by spring. A mobile kitchen is in place while the construction progresses.



New food options are coming to campus. Halsey-Thrasher-Harpole has announced plans for The Yard. The 5,000SF eatery is located across Aggie Road from the Armory and will house BA, Larry's Pizza, and Saigon Crafted Vietnamese. There will be indoor and outdoor seating.

Eastside Rice is expanding. According to the City of Jonesboro, Eastside submitted a permit for a new storage building. The permit placed the cost of the building at \$525,000. Eastside Rice says the building will be approximately 11,000 SF.



Colson USA is building a new facility in Craighead Technology Park. In August, the Jonesboro MAPC approved Colson's plan to construct a new, 147,000 SF plant on 25 acres just south of FMH Conveyors. The new building will replace Colson USA's current operation on Airport Road. Dirt Work is already underway.



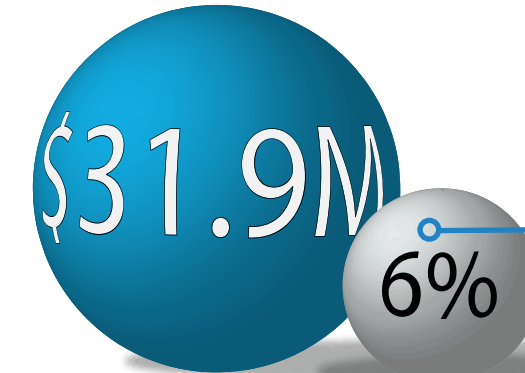
Another pizza place is coming to Hilltop. Marco's Pizza is under construction next to Bill's Cost Plus on E. Johnson. Marco's specializes in carry-out and catering. When the Jonesboro location opens, it will be the 14th location in Arkansas. The next closest franchise is in Paragould.

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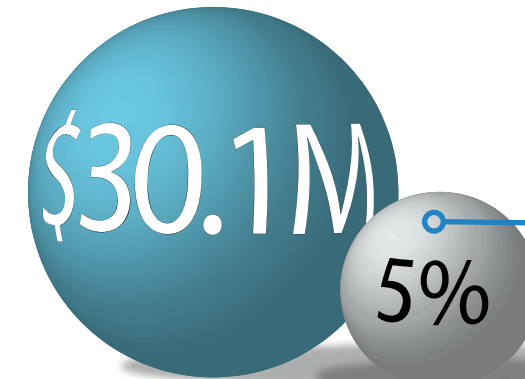
Sales Tax Revenue

Year-To-Date: City & County Combined (2.0%)



2020 / *jan thru sept*

Increase in collections from first three quarters of 2019



2019 / *jan thru sept*

Increase in collections from first three quarters of 2018

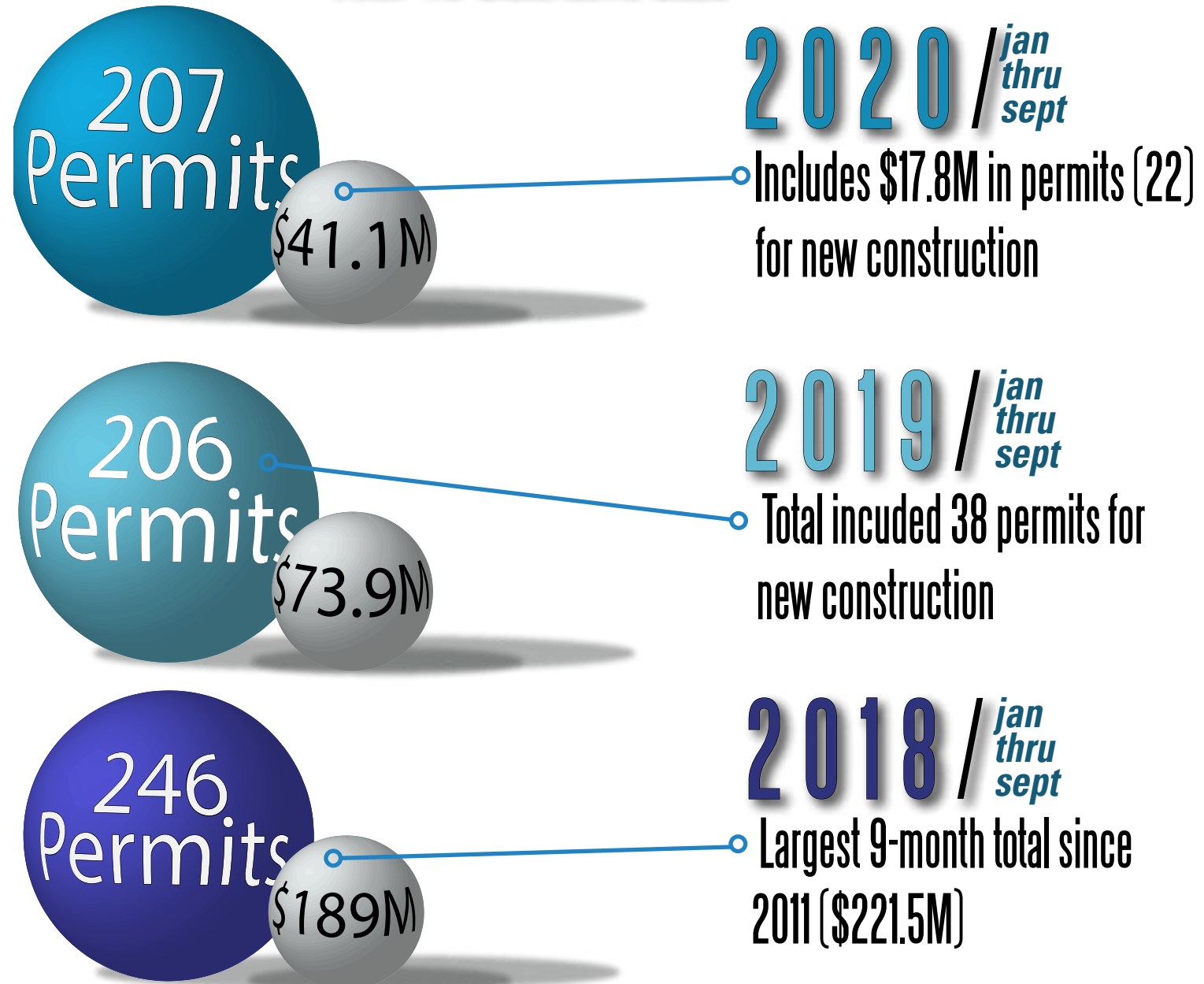


2018 / *jan thru sept*

Increase in collections from first three quarters of 2017

Commercial Construction

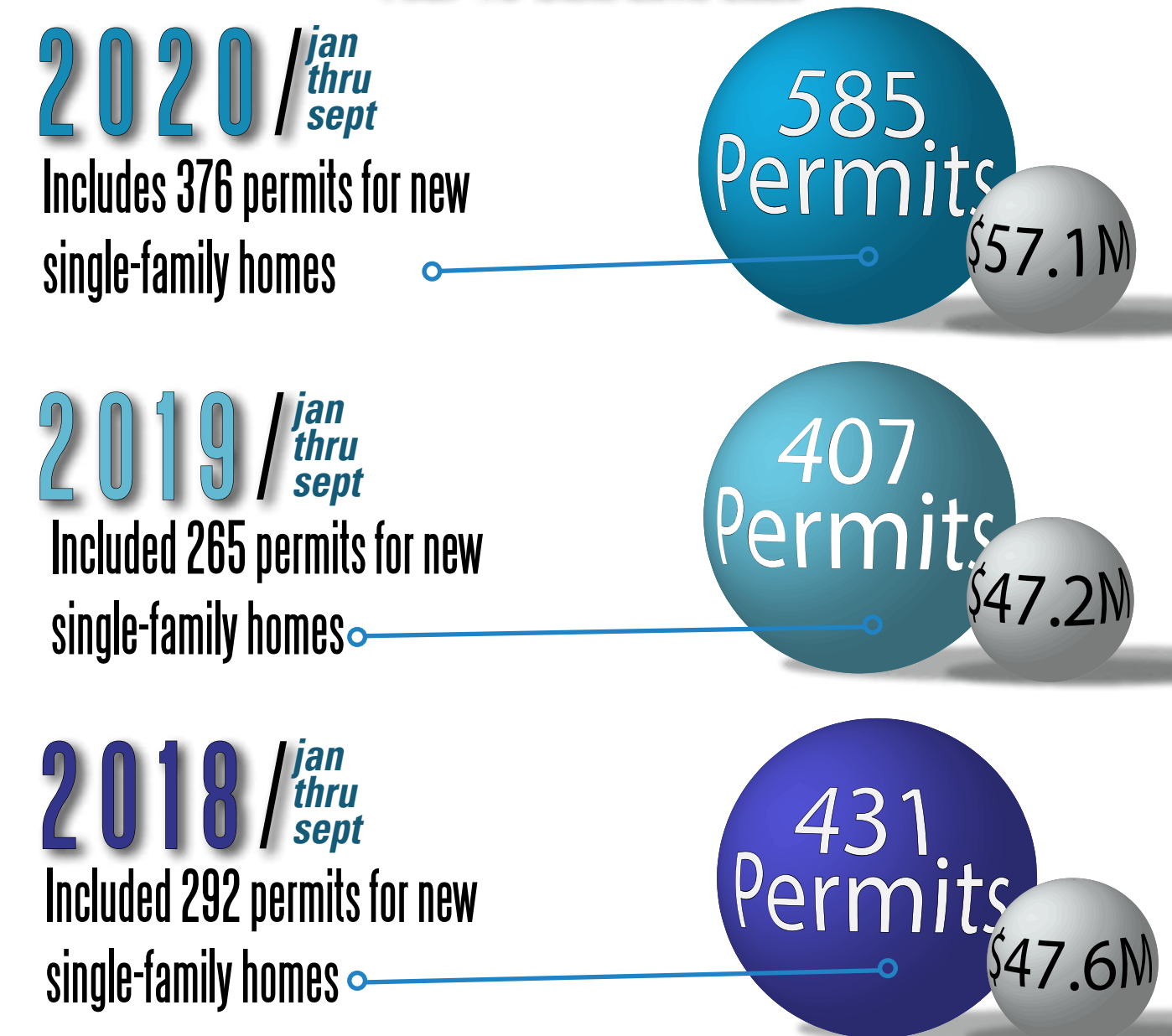
Year-To-Date 2018-2020



Permit totals include: new construction, apartments, additions, alterations, & signs

Residential Construction

Year-To-Date 2018-2020



Permit totals include: new homes, additions, alterations, duplex, storage, & swimming pools

New Home Sales

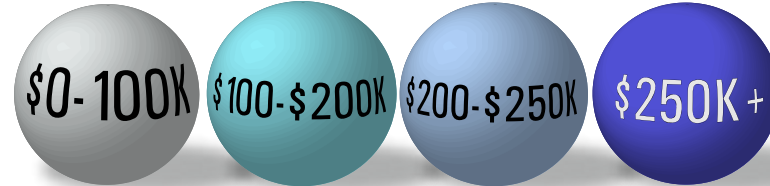
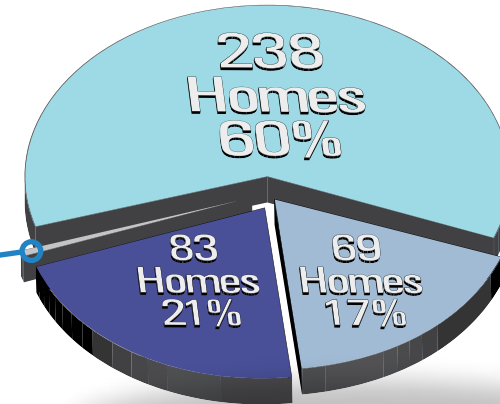
Year-To-Date 2019-2020

393
Homes
Sold

2020 / *jan thru sept*

More new homes sold than in all of 2019 (379)

3 Homes
1%

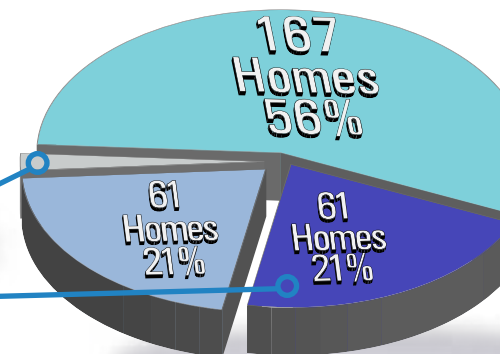


295
Homes
Sold

2019 / *jan thru sept*

110% increase in sales over previous five years

6 Homes
2%



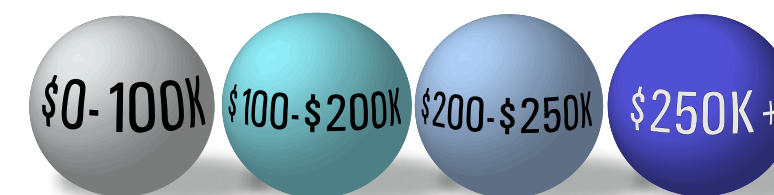
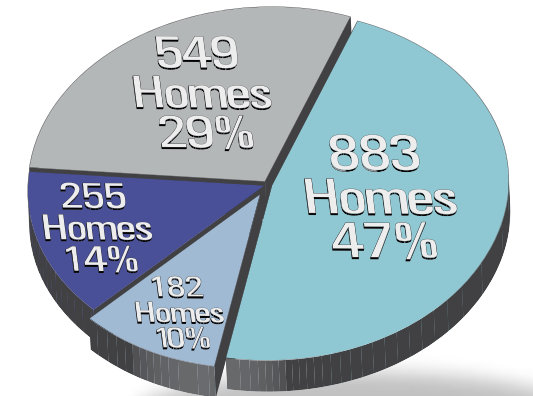
Existing Home Sales

Year-To-Date 2019-2020

1,869
Homes
Sold

2020 / *jan thru sept*

12% increase in sales over YTD 2019



1,699
Homes
Sold

2019 / *jan thru sept*

14% increase in sales over YTD 2018

229 Homes
14%

169 Homes
10%

