

# *Expansion City*

*Nestlé and Nice-Pak Announce Huge Projects*



***Plus:***

***Remembering Mike Philpot***  
***Sales Tax Collections***  
***New Downtown Park***

# Goodbye, Mike

By now, word has reached you regarding the sudden passing of Jonesboro Unlimited's V.P. of Economic Development, Mike Philpot. Our hearts are broken over his death.

During his 18-months in Jonesboro, Mike became a dedicated advocate for our city, far outpacing his job duties. His passionate selling and lobbying on Jonesboro's behalf became the third thing we expected out of Mike every single day. The first two were his kindness and smile.

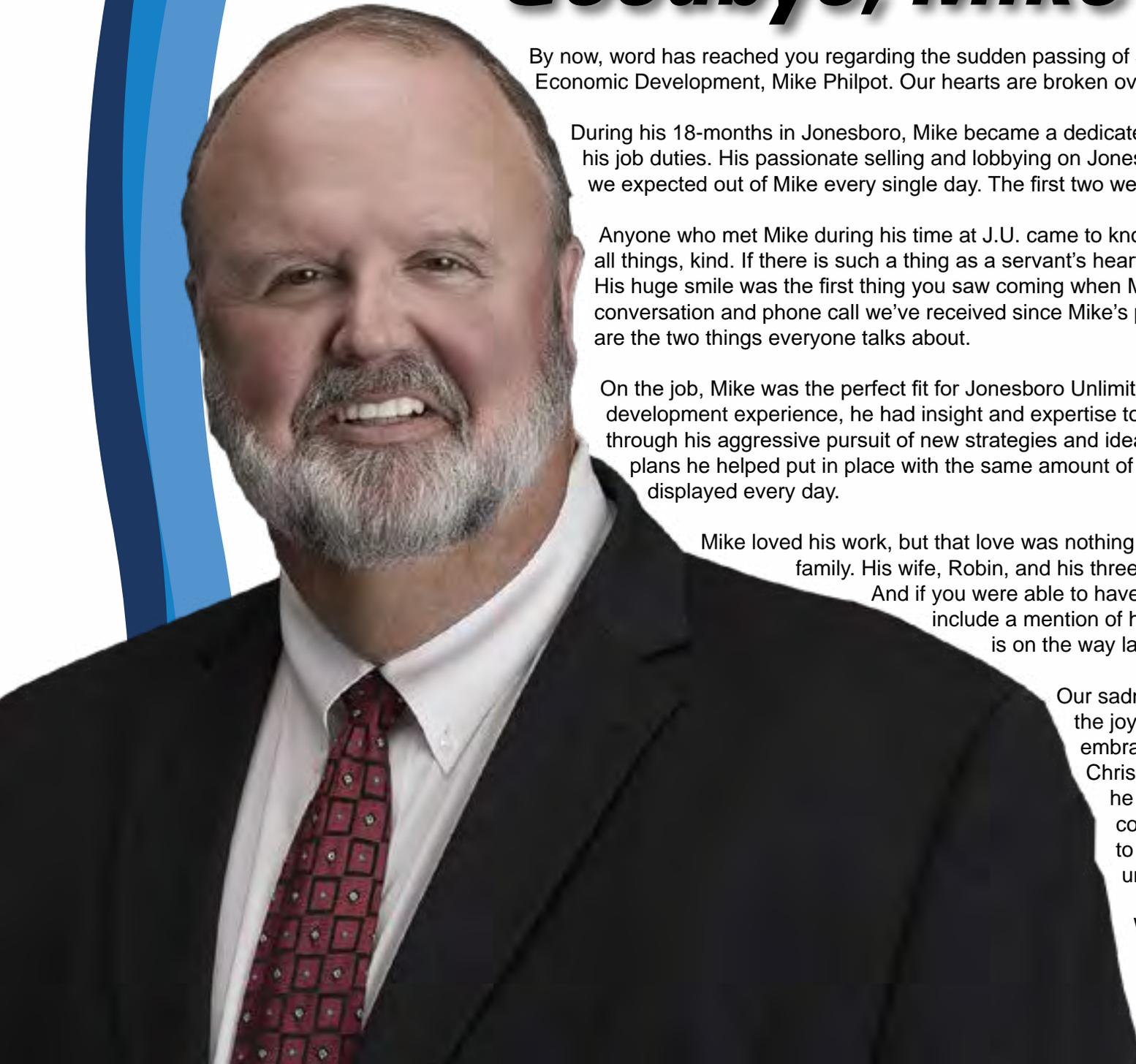
Anyone who met Mike during his time at J.U. came to know him as outgoing, warm, and above all things, kind. If there is such a thing as a servant's heart, one was firmly implanted in Mike. His huge smile was the first thing you saw coming when Mike was in the room. In every conversation and phone call we've received since Mike's passing, his big smile and warm heart are the two things everyone talks about.

On the job, Mike was the perfect fit for Jonesboro Unlimited. With over 30 years of economic development experience, he had insight and expertise to share with all of us. It showed through his aggressive pursuit of new strategies and ideas. We will continue to pursue the plans he helped put in place with the same amount of passion and professionalism Mike displayed every day.

Mike loved his work, but that love was nothing compared to the love he had for his family. His wife, Robin, and his three boys were the center of his universe. And if you were able to have a conversation with Mike that *didn't* include a mention of his granddaughter or his grandson that is on the way later this year, you were the only one!

Our sadness of his passing is tempered with the joy that Mike is now in the loving embrace of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. His faith sustained him. Something he was never afraid to share. There is a comfort knowing he will now be able to watch over everyone he loves, unbound by our earthly constraints.

We loved having him as part of our team and will treasure the time we had with him. He will be missed, but his smile and kindness will always be with us.



# **Nestlé Expands**

## **Hot Pockets To Be Made In Jonesboro**

Jonesboro's Nestlé plant is planning a major expansion. Before Christmas, Nestlé announced it would invest more than \$100 million to expand production to include a new line to produce Hot Pockets. The expansion includes adding at least 100 new employees and 90,000 square feet to the facility.

"Consumers are embracing eating at home like never before and rediscovering the frozen category, an evolution brought on by the pandemic that is showing signs of taking hold for the long term," said Mike Mahon, Factory Manager. "As we embrace the trend and plan for the future, we're excited to be investing in our Jonesboro factory to support our Hot Pockets business."

Since opening in Jonesboro in 2002, Nestlé has expanded multiple times and now employs approximately 750 people who produce frozen foods for brands like Stouffer's, Lean Cuisine, and Tombstone.

"Nestlé's many successful years in Arkansas are a great testament to our business climate and the quality of our workforce, which has persuaded the company's leaders that Jonesboro is the perfect location for this expansion," Gov. Asa Hutchinson said. "Success breeds success, which means we are going to see more great things from the Hot Pockets project."

"Almost 20 years ago, Nestlé chose to locate in Jonesboro because their forward-thinking leaders knew that Jonesboro and Nestlé were both primed to grow," former Jonesboro Mayor Harold Perrin said. "Together, we have. Nestlé has shown they are more than a business; they are part of the Jonesboro family."

"Arkansas continues its momentum of increasing good jobs and improving quality of life for our citizens," said Secretary of Commerce Mike Preston. "Nestlé has been a valued community partner for decades, and I'm pleased that they have continued to place their trust in the Northeast Arkansas workforce."

"Once again, Nestlé has shown how it continues to invest in the communities they call home," Mark Young, president, and CEO of Jonesboro Unlimited said. This expansion is the latest example of Nestlé's commitment to Jonesboro. The combination of Nestlé's products and Jonesboro's people is heading into its second generation together. We are as excited about our future as we are proud of our history."

Construction will start in January.



# ***Cleaning Up***

## ***Wet Wipe Production To Expand***

Jonesboro's Nice-Pak facility will add 300 new employees by the end of 2021. That was the announcement made by Nice-Pak officials in mid-November as part of a new, \$50M expansion. The move will effectively double the amount of disinfecting wipes already produced at the plant.

The phased approach will begin in January with a goal of being finished by August. The expansion includes the extension of existing lines and the addition of a new manufacturing line.

"Our products are essential for consumers to help stay healthy and well amid the COVID-19 pandemic," said Robert Julius, Chairman and CEO of Nice-Pak. "We have been working non-stop to produce more wipes than ever before, and we commend the tremendous performance of our Jonesboro associates, who have been terrific in rising to the challenge."

"For more than ten years, Nice-Pak's Jonesboro facility has served its customers and its community by manufacturing essential products for our day-to-day lives," Governor Asa Hutchinson said. "Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nice-Pak has worked harder than ever to provide essential resources to help people through this difficult time. I appreciate the value that this company places on the health and wellbeing of its customers and its employees, and I'm pleased that Nice-Pak will continue growing its operations in Jonesboro."

"Nice-Pak's expansion shows not only growth but strategic planning and foresight. The way Nice-Pak adapted to current economic pressures caused by the pandemic, increased production, and hired more people is the definition of an essential business," noted Mark Young, President, Jonesboro Unlimited. "We take a lot of pride in Nice-Pak being part of Jonesboro."

"When Nice-Pak announced they were coming to Jonesboro in 2009, we knew it was a company that was going to continue to grow right along with us. From day one, Nice-Pak has continually fulfilled its commitment to Jonesboro by bringing good-paying jobs to our city," said former Jonesboro Mayor Harold Perrin. "This new expansion is the latest chapter in Nice-Pak's growing presence in Jonesboro. We are confident that Nice-Pak and Jonesboro will continue to grow together."



# Quality of Life

## ***More Trails, More Green Space***

The City of Jonesboro has received a pair of grants designed to create a new downtown park and the other to further the city's Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan.

The city received a \$415,000 grant from ArDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program to add 2,600 linear feet to the A-State Link portion of the trail.

The grant requires a 20-percent match from the city.

Titled the Washington Connection, this stretch runs from the curve at Hope Avenue north on Houghton Road and east on Washington Street to Marion Berry Parkway. The total construction cost of the 10-foot-wide trail is \$520,000.

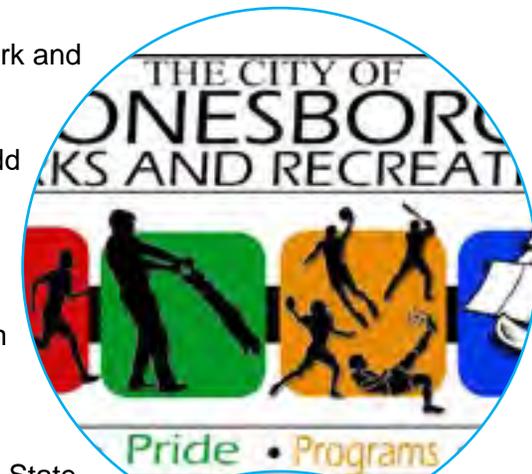
The completion of this section of the trail will further the goal of connecting the campus of A-State and Downtown Jonesboro. The city has not given an anticipated date to begin construction.



More green space is coming to Downtown Jonesboro thanks to a new grant awarded to the city by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.

The \$200,000 grant, which requires a 50-percent match from the city, will be used to create the new park at the Southwestern corner of Monroe Avenue and Union Street. Jonesboro's match has already been budgeted and approved for 2021.

The plan is to create a grassy space with trees and space for people to gather, relax and enjoy the outdoors. Parks and Recreation Director Danny Kapales has been working on plans for the park, and said West Monroe Avenue will be closed permanently between Union and Madison streets once the park is opened. Kapales says he hopes to begin work on the park in June.



# Commercial Development

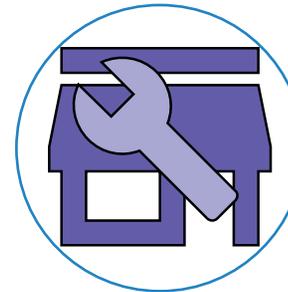
Chick-Fil-A will be closed for several weeks for a major renovation. Chick-Fil-A filed a \$1.3M permit with the City of Jonesboro for the remodel. According to the restaurant's manager, they will expand the kitchen and drive-through to accommodate more customers. Construction will begin in mid-January with plans to reopen in March.



Construction is underway on the new dermatology and pediatric clinic at The Reserve at NEA. Stonebridge Construction is heading up the \$2.1M project. Andrew Hester of Stonebridge says the goal is to have the 15,000 SF building completed by April.



A new retail/office complex is under construction on Brown's Lane. Vance Construction is building The Shoppes at Brown's Village. Gene Vance says the 10,000 SF building will feature a brick façade that resembles downtown Jonesboro. Vance says the goal is to have the project completed by June.



Developer David Onstead is in the process of building four flex-space buildings around Jonesboro. The buildings average over 14,500 SF and can be used as office, retail or storage.

Shadrachs is adding a location to downtown Jonesboro, but it will not be a drive-through. Owner Larry Billing's fifth Jonesboro location and first sit-down establishment will be in the basement of the old Bank of Jonesboro building at 501 Union. Billing says they plan to be open by March.



A prominent space in the Highlands Shopping Center has a new resident. Huddle House is moving into the former U.S. Pizza location. Haag-Brown says plans are already underway for the 6,000 SF space. When this new Huddle House opens, it will be the 7th Huddle House in the state.

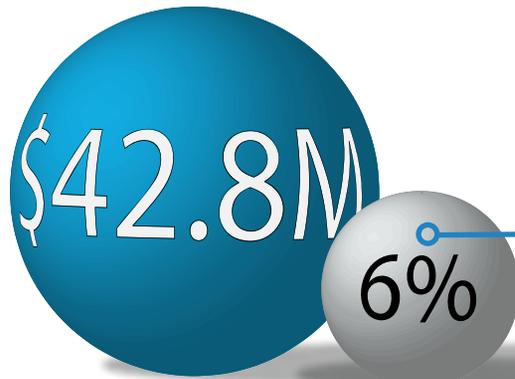


A Jonesboro marketing firm is moving to a new location. The owners of Polish have filed a commercial alteration permit for their building at 202 E. Washington. The permit shows a construction cost of \$700,000. The owners plan to put their offices on the second story while creating office rental space on the ground floor.

**Save The Date!**  
*JU (Virtual) Annual Meeting*  
*Thursday, February 11, 12:00*

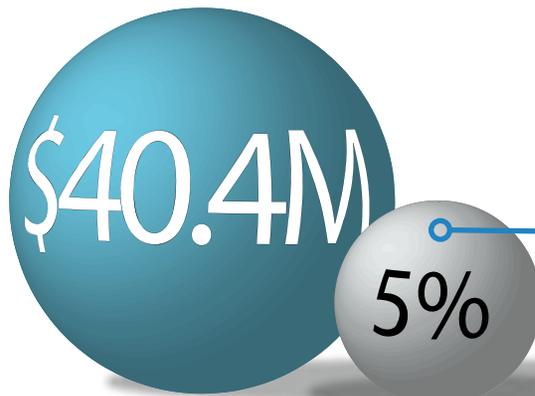
# Sales Tax Revenue

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



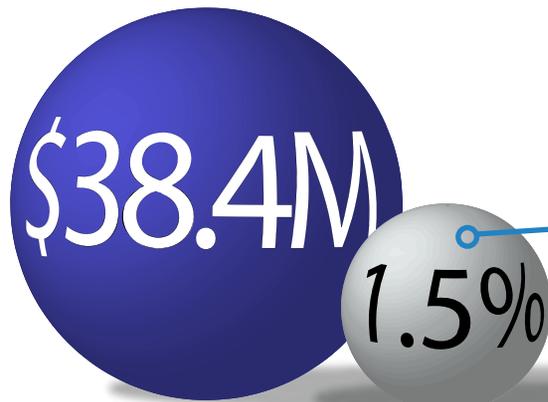
**2020** / *jan  
thru  
dec*

○ Increase in collections over 2019. 11.5% since 2018.



**2019** / *jan  
thru  
dec*

○ Increase in collections over 2018.



**2018** / *jan  
thru  
dec*

○ Increase in collections over 2017.

# Commercial Construction

Year-To-Date 2018-2020



2020 / *jan thru dec*

Includes 36 permits for new commercial construction



2019 / *jan thru dec*

48 permits for new construction. Most since 2014 (50)



2018 / *jan thru dec*

Largest annual total in permit value since 2011 (\$239M)

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

# Residential Construction

Year-To-Date 2018-2020

**2020** / *jan  
thru  
dec*

Includes a record 476 permits  
for new single family homes

741  
Permits

\$75.5M

**2019** / *jan  
thru  
dec*

Value of permits for new home  
construction (345 permits)

528  
Permits

\$55.2M

**2018** / *jan  
thru  
dec*

Value of permits for new home  
construction (360 permits)

531  
Permits

\$57.3M

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

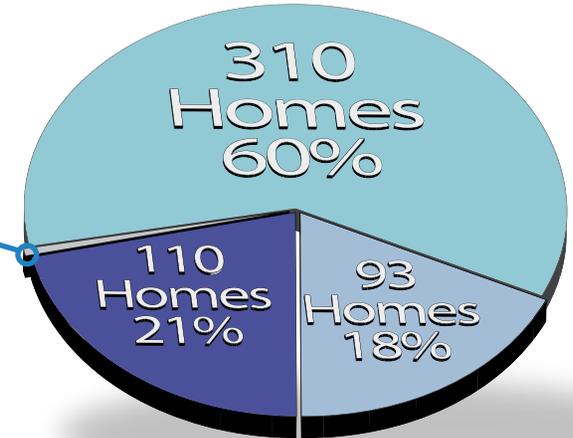
# New Home Sales

Year-To-Date 2019-2020

517  
Homes  
Sold

2020 / *jan thru dec*  
285% Increase since 2015  
(181 new homes sold)

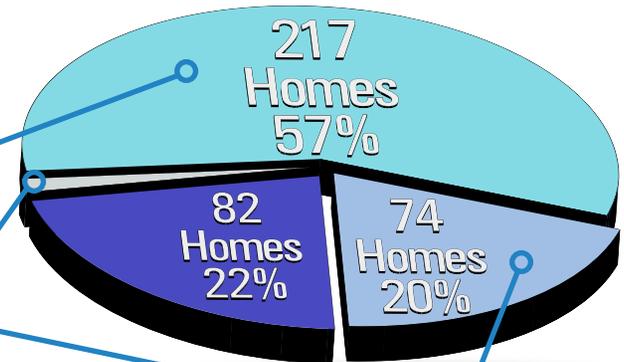
4 Homes  
1%



379  
Homes  
Sold

2019 / *jan thru dec*  
7% Drop since 2018  
67% Increase over 5 years

6 Homes  
2%



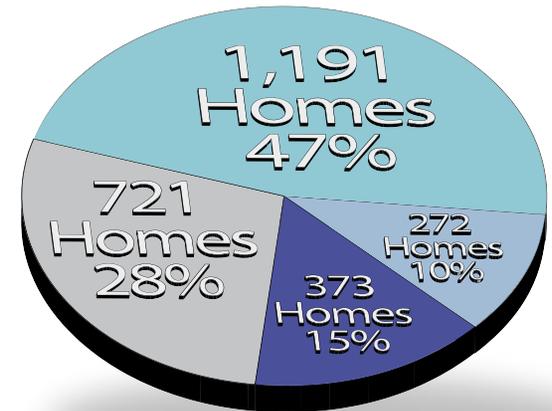
# Existing Home Sales

Year-To-Date 2019-2020

2,557  
Homes  
Sold

2020 / *jan thru dec*

16% increase over 2019,  
setting new record



2,202  
Homes  
Sold

2019 / *jan thru dec*

Most homes sold in a year  
in Jonesboro on record

84% Increase over  
last five years

