

Still Growing

Jonesboro Economy Adds Over 800 New Jobs

Plus:
Nestlé Expansion Update
Record Sales Tax Collections
Meet Our New V.P.

Pushing 4,000

Despite Pandemic, Over 800 Jobs Added In 2020

Jonesboro Unlimited is pleased to announce the addition of 842 direct new jobs to Jonesboro's economy in 2020. To date, almost 4,000 new jobs have been created in the first four years of Jonesboro Unlimited's five-year strategic plan.

[\(**The 2020 JU Annual Meeting can be watched on YouTube by clicking this link***\)](#)

"It is very encouraging that Jonesboro has been able to prevail through the most turbulent economic year in decades," said Mark Young, President and CEO of Jonesboro Unlimited, "When you have industries that were still hiring in 2020 despite the crisis caused by the pandemic, it shows Jonesboro's economic base continues to thrive."

With the 842 jobs added in 2020, 3,965 direct new jobs have been created in the first four years of JU's five-year strategic plan. The total far outpaces the goal of 2,500 direct new jobs over five years.

"When we met our five-year goal after just three years, we promised we would not become complacent, and we didn't," said Chris Barber, Chairman of Jonesboro Unlimited, "We have always been confident that the diversity of Jonesboro's economy is an asset during uncertain financial times. Adding over 800 jobs in 2020 shows just how strong Jonesboro's economy is."

Manufacturing and healthcare, two of JU's five target industries, account for 87% of the job gains in the last four years. Professional services, agri-business, and logistics supplied the remaining jobs.

Capital investment by Jonesboro companies stayed strong in 2020. Companies that responded to JU's Survey of New and Expanding Industry reported a total of \$87 million in capital investments. Over four years, Jonesboro companies have invested over \$550 million.

"A number like that shows more than growth, it shows a confidence in our city and our people. When local companies invest over half-a-billion dollars over four years they aren't just looking out for themselves, they are stakeholders in the community," said Mark Young.



Project Updates

Nice-Pak Expansion Underway

Sixty additional people have been hired at Nice-Pak since the company announced its major expansion in November, according to Stanley Lichucki, Site Director of Nice-Pak Jonesboro. The pre-moistened wet wipe manufacturer is adding two lines to expand their capacity.

Lichucki says 90,000 SF of warehouse space is in the process of being converted into production. He adds that changes have already been made in other parts of the plant to prepare for the additional lines.

The new lines are scheduled to start producing in September. Lichucki says that once additional people are hired and trained, production capacity at the Jonesboro facility could more than double.

Nestlé Making Progress

New foundations are poured, and the steel structure is going up at Jonesboro's Nestlé plant.

Spencer Minton, Project Manager at Nestlé, says the goal is to finish the \$100M project by late summer. He says the additional 90,000 SF of production area comes from utilizing pre-existing space and expanding it.

Once the building is nearly complete, workers will begin to install the bakery line, complete with packaging, to produce Hot Pockets.

Nestlé's expansion will create 100 new jobs. Minton says they should start making Hot Pockets in August or September.

New Colson Plant Rolling Along

A December completion date is set for Colson Group USA's new facility in the Craighead Technology Park. Peter Backus, Manufacturing Strategy Manager for Colson, says the current focus of the 147,000 SF project is site preparation for the building pad, footings, retaining walls, and support columns.

Backus says when they move into the new facility in the first quarter of 2022, they will continue to make the high-volume existing products they already produce at the Airport Road location. There are no immediate plans to introduce new products.

Once finished, Backus says they will be adding approximately 30 employees over the next 12-18 months.

Camfil APC Moving Dirt

Camfil APC is moving dirt for its new facility in Craighead Technology Park. Vince Brown with Camfil says the current focus of construction is the civil and site development at the 35-acre site.

Brown says the new facility will require additional people when the new facility opens in the summer of 2022.

Brown says Camfil's Airport Road location will return to the landlord once they move into the new plant.



Welcome, Steven

A-State Alum Joins JU As V.P.

Jonesboro Unlimited is pleased to announce Steven Lamm as our new Vice President of Economic Development. Steven comes to Jonesboro Unlimited after serving as the Vice President of Workforce Development for the Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce.

“As a life-long Arkansan and an A-State grad, I am well aware of what a dynamic and growing community Jonesboro is,” Lamm said, “My wife and I are excited to come back to a city that means so much to both of us.”

Steven brings a wealth of experience to Jonesboro Unlimited. In addition to serving as the Vice President of Workforce Development in Fort Smith, Lamm spent four years as a Project Manager at the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. During that time, he helped the State of Arkansas with Sig Sauer’s location in Jacksonville and an expansion at the Remington plant in Lonoke.

“Steven’s experience at every level of economic development will be a tremendous asset to Jonesboro Unlimited,” said Mark Young, President, and CEO of Jonesboro Unlimited, “he knows this business, and he knows this state. Add in the fact he is a Red Wolf and already has extensive knowledge of Jonesboro, he was a natural fit to join our team.”

Lamm received his Bachelor of Science in International Business from A-State and his Master’s Degree in Emergency Administration Management and Homeland Security from Arkansas Tech. Lamm says he is proud that his career allows him to keep serving the communities he loves.

“Arkansas is home. It always will be. To have a hand in helping business grow and finding people good, high-paying careers is the most satisfying part of my job. I am thrilled with the opportunity to bring what I’ve learned back home to Jonesboro and continue to build on the momentum that is happening here,” Lamm said.



Going Virtual

JU Partners With Nabholz For New Program

As part of the continuing efforts of Jonesboro Unlimited (JU) to attract new business and investment in Jonesboro, JU has launched a new Virtual Building Program. The program is a collaborative effort between JU and the Nabholz Corporation. In the simulation, a [virtual building is constructed](#) and placed on one of the available sites in Jonesboro’s Craighead Technology Park. The computer animation demonstrates what a 100,000 SF industrial facility would look like and expanding it up to 400,000 SF.

“It’s a great tool for companies looking to invest in Jonesboro,” said Mark Young, President and CEO of Jonesboro Unlimited,. “We have great, shovel-ready sites with all the needed utilities. Combining those assets with a powerful visual element like this is another asset we have to market Jonesboro.”

“Having the technology to put a 3D concept of a project on one of Jonesboro Unlimited’s available sites is an invaluable tool. It helps the client visualize the finished project and helps to create a dialogue with potential clients to better understand their goals and specifications. We want businesses to call Jonesboro home for many years, and that starts with a well-thought-out and tailored facility,” said Greg Williams, President of Nabholz Corporation.

Quality of Life

Parks & Rec Making Strides On Big Projects

Jonesboro’s Parks and Recreation Department has several projects taking shape. Director Danny Kapales says plans are being finalized for the new park on Union Avenue in Downtown Jonesboro. The goal is to have that park finished by November.

Kapales says a new walking trail around CWL Park at the corner of Cherry Avenue and Culberhouse Street has been completed. In addition to the new walking trail, plans are in the works for a pair of workout sites at CWL Park.

Craighead Forest Park (CFP) has two projects that have recently been completed. The overlook near the entrance of the park is finished except for some landscaping, dirt work, and a sidewalk that will connect it to the parking lot. Kapales adds that the remodeling of the bandshell at CFP is also finished.



Commercial Development

Another Starbucks is coming to Jonesboro. Haag-Brown announced in late March that the third stand-alone franchise would be placed at the corner of Johnson Avenue and Airport Road, next to Fat City. The new Starbucks will have a walk-up window and outdoor seating.



Jonesboro Public Schools has started construction on its \$12M expansion at Jonesboro High School. Bailey Contractors plans to complete the project for the opening of the 2022-2023 school year. JPS is adding 20 classrooms, offices and also expanding the school's cafeteria.



Chipotle Mexican Grill has announced it will place a new restaurant in Jonesboro. The new eatery will sit on Caraway Road in front of Kroger Marketplace. This will be the fourth Chipotle in the state of Arkansas.

Natural Hearing Centers is moving from Nettleton Avenue to the Metro Center on Red Wolf Boulevard between Andy's and Car-Mart. Natural Hearing Centers has been in Jonesboro for four years. It's one of 12 locations in the state of Arkansas.



Jonesboro City, Water & Light continues to make progress on the new Main Wastewater Lift Station on the city's west side. The \$8M project should be finished by the end of the summer, according to CWL's Special Projects Director, Kevan Imboden. He says the new facility will replace the current wastewater facility while increasing capacity. The existing west side plant is roughly 40 years old.



Central Baptist Church (CBC) is undergoing a complete remodel of its worship center. Work on the \$730,000 project is underway. Bob Snell with CBC says the project includes new, theatre-style seating and new audio and lighting equipment. Snell says the project has an August completion date.

Crye-Lieke Realtors is getting a new office building. Bailey Contractors LLC of Jonesboro is building the new office on Caraway at the same location as the previous office. Bailey Contractors tore down that building in early April, intending to finish the project this fall. The permit with the city of Jonesboro lists the cost of the construction at \$1.3M.



JMS Metal Services is in the process of expanding. Ramson's is replacing an existing storage building with a new building with ceilings that are 12-feet taller to accommodate extra storage. The schedule calls for the completion of the \$740,000 project by the end of May.

Healthcare

NYIT Sends Over 100 Into Residency Programs

One hundred thirteen new doctors from the NYITCOM have been matched with residency programs this spring. Ten of those doctors will perform their residencies in Jonesboro at either St. Bernards, NEA Baptist, or UAMS-Northeast. Of the 110 resident matches, 55 of them will join programs in Arkansas, Delta states or those contiguous to Arkansas.

"We are extremely proud of our student doctors," said Shane Speights, D.O., Dean of NYITCOM at A-State. "This has been a unique and challenging year in all walks of life, and these students have worked incredibly hard to secure these positions. We're excited to watch them continue their medical education and we're confident they will represent our institution well."



New NEA Baptist Campus Taking Shape

Construction continues at NEA Baptist's new lifestyle medical park, The Reserve at NEA. The first building is being framed and is scheduled for completion by this summer. That building will be the new home of the NEA Baptist Pediatric Clinic and NEA Baptist Dermatology.

Following that phase of the construction, the NEA Baptist Pain Management Center will be erected. NEA Baptist says that department has experienced so much growth that space outside the confines of the Medical Office Building were needed.



St. Bernards Teams With ASUN To Create Jobs

St. Bernards Healthcare and Arkansas State University-Newport (ASUN) have partnered to help those struggling with poverty to find new career pathways.

The partnership is part of the Arkansas Delta Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities program. Those who qualify will take part in a free, five-week training course that will help prepare them for a job in manufacturing, hospitality and allied health industries. Participants also receive a \$100 per week incentive for attendance.

Graduates of the program will begin working at St. Bernards in the Nutritional Services or Environmental Services departments.

"St. Bernards believes in breaking poverty cycles that have plagued our region for far too long," said Lori Smith, St. Bernards Vice President of Human Resources, "As the largest employer in our region, we're always looking to provide gainful opportunities where they may not have existed. It's exciting to see what will come from this partnership with ASU-Newport."



Commercial Construction

Year-To-Date 2019-2021



2021 / *jan thru mar*

Includes 9 permits for new commercial buildings. \$22.6M in value



2020 / *jan thru mar*

Includes 21 permits for alterations
Includes \$3.2M in new construction



2019 / *jan thru mar*

23 Permits for commercial alterations. Value \$6.9M

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

Residential Construction

Year-To-Date 2019-2021

2021 / *jan thru mar*

58 permits for new homes in March. Most since October 2016 (81)



2020 / *jan thru mar*

53 permits filed for new homes in March.



2019 / *jan thru mar*

Includes 105 permits for new single-family homes



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

New Home Sales

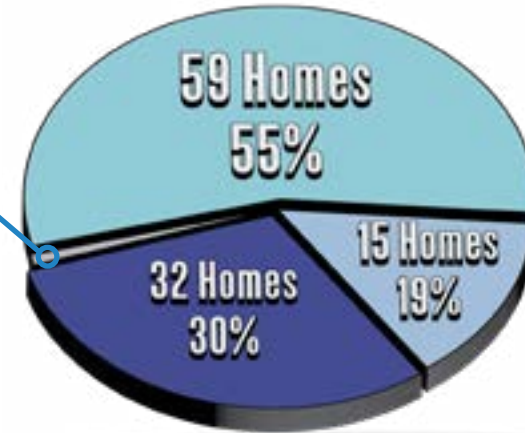
Year-To-Date 2020-2021

108
Homes
Sold

2021/
jan
thru
dec

Record sales for 1st quarter.
19% increase of 2020 sales.

2 Homes
1%



\$0-100K

\$100-\$200K

\$200-\$250K

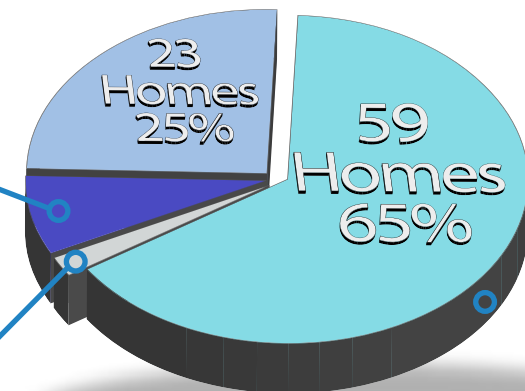
\$250K+

91
Homes
Sold

2020/
jan
thru
mar

2nd highest 1st quarter sales
on record.

7 Homes
8%



2 Homes
2%

Existing Home Sales

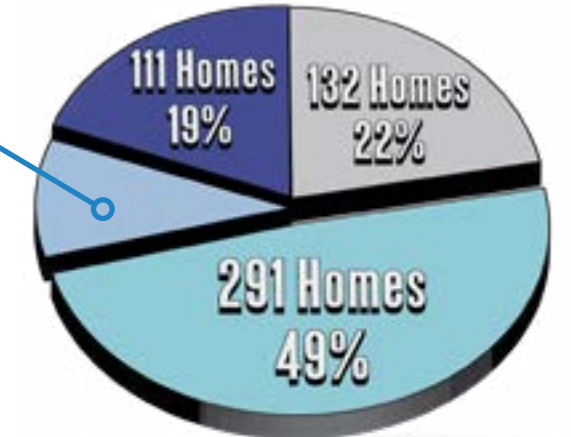
Year-To-Date 2020-2021

596
Homes
Sold

2021/
jan
thru
mar

131 more homes sold than
previous record for 1st quarter.

62 Homes
10%



\$0-100K

\$100-\$200K

\$200-\$250K

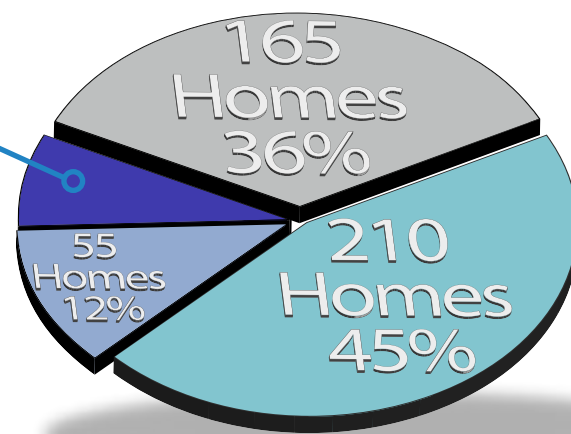
\$250K+

465
Homes
Sold

2020/
jan
thru
mar

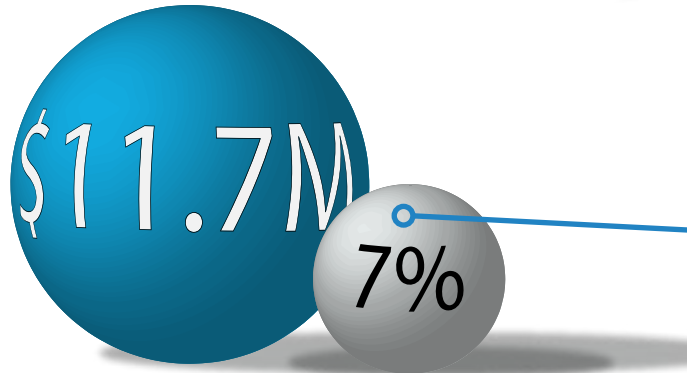
2nd most homes sold in the
1st quarter on record.

35 Homes
7%



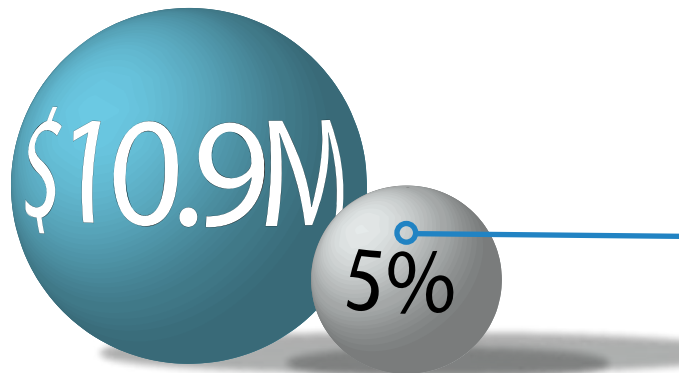
Sales Tax Revenue

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



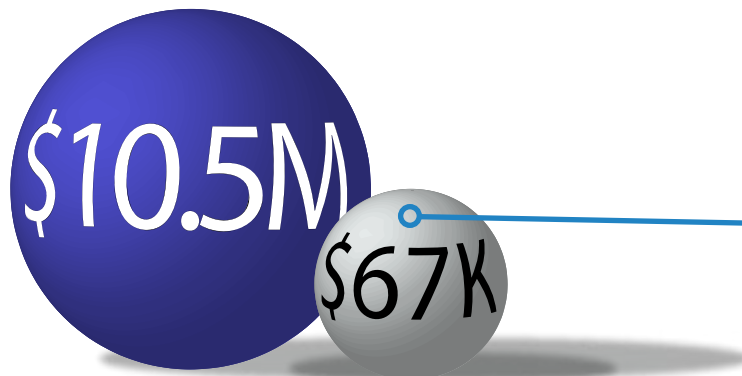
2021 / *jan thru mar*

○ Increase in collections over 1st quarter of 2020



2020 / *jan thru mar*

○ Increase in collections over 1st quarter of 2019



2019 / *jan thru mar*

○ Increase in collections over 1st quarter of 2018