

Cut That Ribbon!

Risever Celebrates Grand Opening



Plus:
Meet Mike Philpot
Med Students Hit the Road
Sales Tax Numbers

Always Rising

Risever Celebrates Grand Opening

Almost exactly two years after announcing that Risever was going to build a new steel fabrication facility in Jonesboro, the company celebrated its [Grand Opening in style October 23.](#)

“This is a day of celebration and a remarkable occasion for Risever,” said Risever General Manager Yonggang Lai, “It also marks our start of trial production.”

Risever is a family-owned company based in Hefei, China, and has three additional plants in China that employ over 1,000 people.

Jonesboro is now home to Risever’s first facility in the United States. The company spent more than a year investigating possible sites, starting with 70 cities in five states before choosing Jonesboro.

“Recruiting companies like Risever is an essential part of our five-year strategic plan to create 2,500 direct, new, high-paying jobs in Jonesboro. We are glad to see Risever take this exciting step,” said Jonesboro Unlimited President and CEO Mark Young.

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson was the keynote speaker at the event. Hutchinson, an advocate of foreign investment in Arkansas, was excited to see Risever take this step. “We’re thrilled that the Risever plant is in production. It is one of several Chinese companies choosing to locate in Arkansas thanks in large part to our skilled workforce and low business costs. Because foreign investment is vital to our state’s economic health, we hope that other companies across the world will see the advantages Arkansas has to offer,” Hutchinson said.

Jonesboro Mayor Harold Perrin echoed the Governor’s feelings.

“This is great for Jonesboro, as it represents good-paying jobs and opportunities for our residents. We are honored that Jonesboro is now Risever’s new home,” Perrin said.

[Construction on the 125,000 square foot building began in September 2018](#) and features a 112,000 square foot factory floor and 13,000 square feet of office space. Risever expects to begin trial production immediately with plans for the first orders to start shipping in early 2020.



Breaking Ground

Delta Peanut Site Going Up Fast

Delta Peanut held a ceremonial groundbreaking at its 71-acre site in Jonesboro's Craighead Technology Park in Jonesboro on August 27. Delta Peanut leadership and investors celebrated the event with local business leaders and elected officials, including Jonesboro Mayor Harold Perrin and U.S. Senator John Boozman.

Delta Peanut is the first peanut shelling operation in the State of Arkansas and represents a \$70M project that will ultimately create 125 new jobs.

"This project couldn't have happened without the support of the roughly 60 farmers/investors that put \$26.5M into Delta Peanut," said Delta Peanut CEO Tommy Jumper, "this facility will not only benefit farmers who grow peanuts, dozens of high-paying, high-quality jobs will be created because of this project. [We are excited to see construction underway.](#)"

Approximately 30,000 acres of peanuts will be planted regionally this year. Until now, those peanuts required transport to shelling plants in West Texas or South Georgia. With the addition of Delta Peanut in Jonesboro and a separate buying point in Marianna, regional peanut growers will have the option to cut miles and costs and bring those peanuts to market closer to home. And with peanut butter makers Jif in Memphis, Skippy in Little Rock and Kraft-owned Planters Peanut in Fort Smith, having Delta Peanut in Jonesboro is a logical location.

"I am excited that Tommy Jumper and his developers are putting this facility in Jonesboro. It will not only create jobs for our people, but it is tied directly to agriculture, which is a big part of our economy," said Jonesboro Mayor Harold Perrin.

"Encouraging investment by companies like Delta Peanut fit perfectly in the Jonesboro Unlimited Strategic Plan. Agriculture is essential to the strength and continued growth of Jonesboro and our economy. The addition of Delta Peanut and the 125 direct, high-paying jobs it will bring to Jonesboro makes this a great day for Jonesboro," said Jonesboro Unlimited President and CEO Mark Young.

Construction has already begun at the 71-acre site. When the shelling operation is fully up and running, it will shell over 180,000 tons of peanuts annually. Over 60,000 tons of those peanuts will be on-site in Jonesboro and stored in three warehouses and one "surge" warehouse. Additional buying points will store the balance in neighboring towns in Arkansas and surrounding states. The Jonesboro site will also have six drying buildings.



Welcome, Mike!

Philpot Joins Jonesboro Unlimited

Excited to be joining the Jonesboro Unlimited Team is an understatement. What a great team of true professionals that are so passionate about making Jonesboro and Craighead County a great community. I say this with a thirty-plus year perspective of being a part of other economic development organizations and regions of the country. I'm honored to be a part of such a dynamic team.

Several things set Jonesboro apart from many communities. Leadership, Strategic Planning, Focus, and Persistence. Instead of local leaders being complacent with the status quo, they are continually striving to look to the proverbial horizon to see what opportunities might exist. This means taking risks (calculated ones) and positioning our city for even better economic days. There is vibrancy and economic success here, but they see even more ways to build and grow.

The fact that the leadership of Jonesboro Unlimited not only invested funds for this effort is obvious, but they went the extra step to focus and develop a strategic plan to help navigate the economic and social landscape here. They have taken a very pragmatic approach to craft our future. By seeking out experienced counsel, assembling a team of true professionals and leveraging local resources, Jonesboro is having great success.

Economic development is a mix of strategy, planning, and execution. Jonesboro Unlimited is implementing the well-crafted strategy, making any needed adjustments, and executing the plan. As we reach the halfway mark of this effort, we can see the immediate results of new investments and growth and become encouraged to strive to do even more to accomplish our goals. Business climates rise and fall, and global markets influence national, state, and local economic development efforts more than ever. By thinking globally and acting locally, we will continue to promote the assets and opportunities of Jonesboro, which are many, and help companies to be aware of our competitive and unique advantages.

Thank you for your ongoing support to make Jonesboro a wonderful place to grow our families and economy.



Knowing Jonesboro

JU Hosts Industrial Newcomers

Jonesboro Unlimited hosted our largest Get To Know Jonesboro tour yet!

On October 17, we took twenty-one Jonesboro newcomers and gave them a day they won't soon forget.

The class of Fall '19 was made up of industry professionals from Nestle, Nice-Pak, Unilever, Apex Tool Group, FMH Conveyors, Hytrol, and Frito-Lay.

The Get To Know Jonesboro tour started in the Spring of 2018. Jonesboro Unlimited's Shelle Randall had an idea: invite manufacturing professionals who were newly relocated to Jonesboro and give them a day to immerse themselves in things that are unique and special to Jonesboro. No powerpoints, no lectures, just great information, and a load of fun!

"Thank you so much."

"It was a wonderful experience."

"It was a great networking opportunity."

That was just some of the terrific feedback we received following the day, which included several stops that not only informed our newest neighbors but gave them a chance to make some new friends and explore.

The day started with a quick tour around town, highlighting some important roads and places to know, like where to get your new driver's license and assess your car. We also paid a visit to the Crowley's Ridge Nature Center to learn about the heritage of Jonesboro, the importance of conservation, and our love for the outdoors.

Other highlights included a walk to Craighead Forest Park, Lasertron at Hijinx, and lunch at Eleanor's. We even stressed the importance of volunteering with a stop at the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas. We boxed up 8,350 meals in about 15 minutes! That took some serious teamwork!

The goal of the Get To Know Jonesboro tour comes from a belief that if we can help Jonesboro newcomers make great connections right away, it will increase the likelihood they will want to stay in Jonesboro and raise their families.



Commercial Development

E.C. Barton has gone through a major re-branding. The 134 year-old company has launched "Barton's Home Improvement" stores, replacing the previous brands of Surplus Warehouse and Bargain Outlet. They plan to transition 8 stores to the new brand this year.



Old Dominion Freight Line is building a new facility in Jonesboro. The \$4.6M project is under construction on a 14-acre site on Nestle Road directly across from Timmons Trucking Company. Old Dominion currently employs 30 people at its facility on Gulley Road in Jonesboro. This new facility is expected to be open sometime next year.



Krystal is coming back to Jonesboro. The burger chain has announced it will open a Jonesboro location in 2020. Developer Haag Brown says the chain is still looking for a location for the new restaurant. This will be the second time Jonesboro has had a Krystal. The previous franchise left in

Construction is underway on a new strip center project on Parkwood road next to Chicken Salad Chick and Tacos 4 Life. Developer Haag-Brown has not indicated what type of businesses will be housed in the new development.



Another hotel is about to begin construction in Jonesboro. A permit valued at \$10M has been filed with the City of Jonesboro to build a new Residence Inn on Sumo Loop between Sumo Japanese Steakhouse and FFO Home Furnishings. Developer Haag Brown says they had been working on the deal for almost two years.



Gearhead Outfitters of Jonesboro is growing. In August, Gearhead announced the acquisition of Rock Creek Outfitters of Tennessee and Illinois-based Uncle Dan's Outdoor Store. The purchase of the chains will give owners Ted and Amanda Herget a total of 23 brick and mortar stores in four states.



Northeast Arkansas Federal Credit Union is now Success Credit Union. The 60-year-old company announced the name and branding change in September. Success Credit Union serves over 25,000 members in Northeast Arkansas & surrounding cities.



Stay tuned:
JU Annual Meeting
coming in February

Project Updates

Ritter Data Center

Construction remains on track at Ritter Communications' new Data Technology Center. Ritter officials say the \$8M project cleared a major milestone in October with the installation of 52 truckloads of precast concrete panels. They also completed the exterior walls and roof structure. The building is being built to withstand the power of an EF-3 tornado or even a major earthquake. The panels are steel-reinforced and interlocked, and rest atop concrete footings 10 feet wide and 12 feet deep. [The building is designed](#) with such protections as it ensures customers' critical data will remain secure and available in a disaster.



Bike/Pedestrian Trail Update



Progress continues on two phases of Jonesboro's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Jonesboro's Director of Parks and Recreation, Danny Kapales, says Phase 3 of the trail that runs from Craighead Forest Park to Bekah Drive is nearing completion. Kapales says this phase of the project should be complete soon. This part of the plan also includes a parking lot where Forest Park Loop meets Craighead Forest Loop. Kapales added that the ASU Link segment of the trail is currently in the design phase and is 30% complete. For a full look at the city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, [click here](#).

Our Social Standing:



1,059 likes
Up 258% in 2019



446 followers
12,707 3Q views



363 followers
Up 269% in 2019

Healthcare

Taking Healthcare On The Road

This isn't your typical RV. The NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine-Arkansas' Delta Care-A-Van hit the road in September with the mission to bring improved healthcare to the rural residents of the Mississippi Delta by providing free health screenings. The 40-foot long vehicle was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Medical students from NYITCOM and other future healthcare professionals will get hands-on training through offering the free screenings that include hypertension, glucose, anxiety, and depression.



New Lifestyle Medical Park Planned

The campus of NEA Baptist Hospital is expanding. NEA Baptist has partnered with Haag-Brown Commercial Real Estate on a new site called the Reserve at NEA. The 11-acre lifestyle-focused medical development will be located directly east of NEA's main campus. According to NEA Baptist, they anticipate all the occupants to be in the health and wellness or medical industry. Once the project is complete, NEA expects their pediatric clinic to move to the new location.

The project will emphasize health and wellness by incorporating trails and three separate greenspaces. It will also have a lakeside pavilion and multiple water features.



St. Bernards Expansion Nearing Completion

The largest commercial construction project in Jonesboro in recent years is in its final weeks. The St. Bernards Surgical and Intensive Care Services Tower, a \$130M project that has been under construction for almost two years is scheduled for its Grand Opening in December. Currently, equipment is arriving and being installed. The general construction is ongoing with finishing touches like outdoor gardens and other amenities going in now. The Grand Opening and Community Celebration for the St. Bernards Tower will be Tuesday, Dec. 10 at 10 a.m.



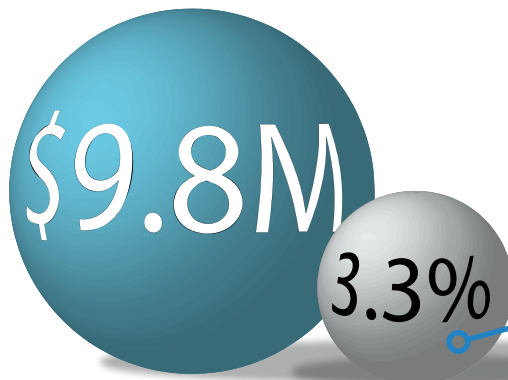
Sales Tax Revenue

City & County Combined (2.0%)



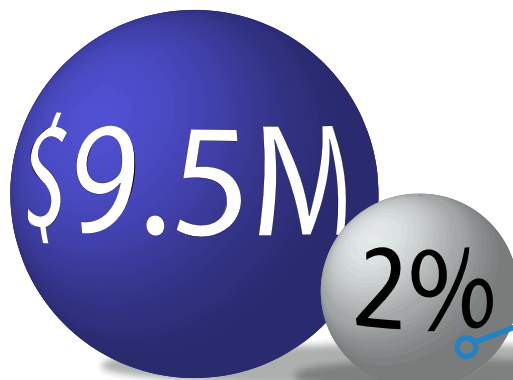
Q3-2019 / *july
aug
sept*

Increase in collections from
YTD of 2018



Q3-2018 / *july
aug
sept*

Increase in collections Q3
2017



Q3-2017 / *july
aug
sept*

Increase in collections from
Q3 2016 (\$9.32M)

Commercial Construction

Year-To-Date 2017-2019



YTD-2019 / *jan thru sept*

38 permits for new construction.
Ahead of 5-year average (32)



YTD-2018 / *jan thru sept*

Biggest 9-month total since
2011 (\$221.5M)



YTD-2017 / *jan thru sept*

Total value of permits down
\$43M from YTD 2016 (\$118.5M)

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

Residential Construction

Year-To-Date 2017-2019

YTD-2019 / *jan thru sept*

Includes 265 permits for
single family homes



YTD-2018 / *jan thru sept*

Value of permits for new home
construction (292 permits)



YTD-2017 / *jan thru sept*

92 more permits for single
family homes over YTD 2016



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

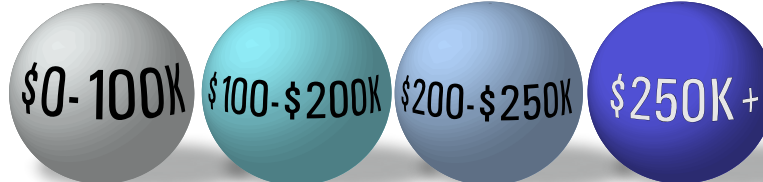
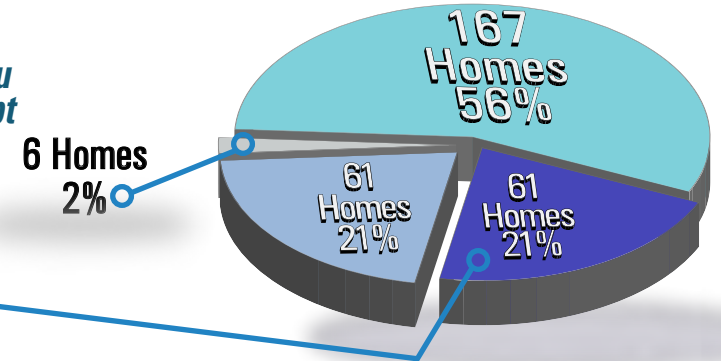
New Home Sales

Year-To-Date 2018-2019

**295
Homes
Sold**

YTD-2019/ *jan thru sept*

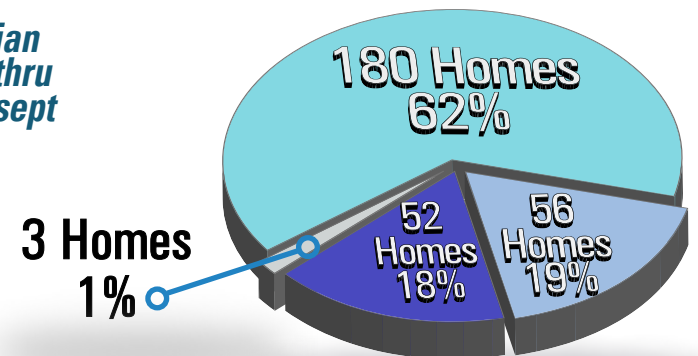
110% Increase over last five years



**291
Homes
Sold**

YTD-2018/ *jan thru sept*

35% more new homes sold than through 3Q 2017



Existing Home Sales

Year-To-Date 2018-2019

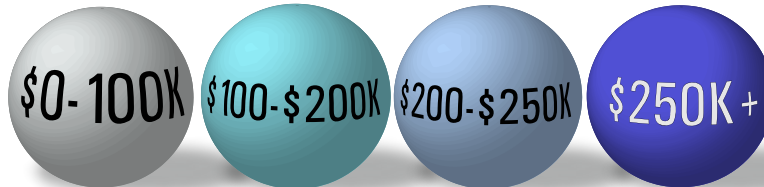
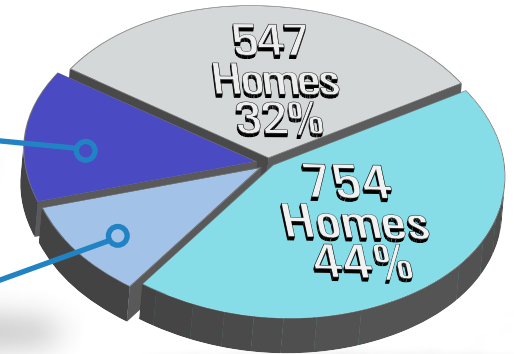
1,699
Homes
Sold

YTD-2019/ *jan thru sept*

14% increase in sales over
2018 YTD Sales

229 Homes
14%

169 Homes
10%



1,527
Homes
Sold

YTD-2018/ *jan thru sept*

256 more homes sold than
1st 3Qs of 2017

146 Homes
9%

178 Homes
12%

