

Move-In Time!

New Colson Facility Begins Production

Plus:

New Strategic Plan Launched

Worlow Joins JU

Time For More Lights

The Next Chapter

Our Next Five-Year Strategic Plan is Underway

Jonesboro Unlimited (JU) announced the addition of 1,036 new full-time jobs in Jonesboro in 2021 at JU's Annual Meeting on February 18th. The jobs were created by JU's five Target Industries: healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, agriculture, and professional services. The totals come from JU's Annual Survey of New and Expanded Industries and represent responses from nearly 70 local companies.

The addition of 1,036 new jobs brings the total number of jobs created during JU's first five-year plan to 5,001 direct new jobs. That total more than doubles the goal of 2,500 new jobs announced in 2017 at the plan's launch.

"It's exciting to exceed the goal we set five years ago," said Mark Young, President, and CEO of Jonesboro Unlimited, "When we passed the 2,500 mark after year three, we promised that we weren't letting our foot off the gas just because we hit our goal. We didn't."

"Our goal was ambitious. To double it is a tribute to the companies and individuals who continue to invest in and grow their business," said Chris Barber, Chairman of the JU Board of Directors, "This community has faced some tall obstacles the last two years, but we never stopped pushing forward."

During the meeting, JU announced the expansion of the [Craighead Technology Park \(CTP\)](#). The shovel-ready and rail-served 1,500-acre park currently has 533 available acres. The new site creates the opportunity for the addition of 600 contiguous acres located just one-quarter mile off Interstate 555.

"Land and logistics, Jonesboro has an ample supply of both," said Steven Lamm, JU's Vice President of Economic Development, "Adding this major industrial site to Craighead Technology Park represents a unique asset that makes our growing economy even more attractive."

The Annual Meeting served as the official start of JU's second, Five-Year Strategic Plan. The plan lays out JU's areas of focus over the next five years: Business Growth and Innovation, Talent Attraction and Workforce Development, Quality of Life and Infrastructure, and Marketing and Branding.

"Our new plan will build on the success of our previous plan. It also identifies new opportunities to increase our competitiveness to keep attracting the best companies and the best people." Said Young.

The Executive Summary of JU's [Five-Year Strategic Plan](#) is available on Jonesboro Unlimited's website.



Project Updates

Colson Gets Movin'

Colson Group USA's new Jonesboro factory is complete. The 147,000 SF factory in the Craighead Technology Park started producing casters in early March, according to Robert Somers, VP of Operations for Colson.

The production will be increasing over the next year, according to Somers. He says they began moving people and equipment from the previous site on Airport Road to the new location in January. He says the plan calls for the move-in process to continue until September. Somers says Colson plans to sell the existing facility on Airport Road.

Spirit Pushes For Spring Finish

Spirit Fitness' new building in Craighead Technology Park is nearing completion. Scott McDaniel of Ramsons Inc. says the current focus of construction is on three areas of the 150,000 SF project. McDaniel says they are working on sheeting the roof and walls while also completing the office area of the building and paving the outside areas and sidewalk.

Following that, McDaniel says, they will begin wrapping up the project. He says Ramsons goal is to complete the project in May. He adds they will add to the size of the crew working on the roof and walls to make up for time lost due to poor weather.

The \$10M project will house Spirit's Technical Support Department and Warranty Parts Department, creating approximately 40-50 new jobs.

Camfil Topping Out

Camfil APC's new facility in the Craighead Technology Park is ready to be "topped out." The company says they plan to hold the topping out ceremony in mid-April as they turn their eyes toward finishing construction in the third quarter of this year.

Nabholz crews are focused on building the production and office areas, including the structural steel, roofing, and walls. Camfil plans to start the move-in process before construction ends, saying equipment installation will begin in April.

According to the company, the process of moving from Camfil's current sites to the new, singular facility will be a 4-6 month process. They plan to be in full production by the first quarter of next year.



Hello, Casey

Worlow Joins JU As Director of Talent Attraction

Jonesboro Unlimited (JU) added to the team in January with the addition of Casey Worlow as JU's new Director of Talent Attraction. Casey comes to JU from St. Bernards Healthcare, where she served as the Strategic Partnerships Manager.

"The opportunity to join Jonesboro Unlimited is a perfect fit for my passion for seeing our community continue to grow," Worlow said, "I grew up here and take a lot of pride in our community and all it offers."

As Director of Talent Attraction, Worlow will focus on recruiting talent to support Jonesboro's growing economy, emphasizing the retention of local graduates from Arkansas State University and surrounding colleges. Worlow's role includes working with local employers to enhance their talent attraction efforts.

Talent attraction has become an emphasis in economic development. People have more options on where to live and work, making for a competitive environment for cities looking to build a workforce suited for the twenty-first-century economy. Recognizing the importance of staying ahead of this trend, JU moved to add a Director of Talent Attraction as part of its new five-year Strategic Plan.

"Casey has the energy and experience to elevate Jonesboro's talented workforce," said Mark Young, President of Jonesboro Unlimited, "She knows Jonesboro. She knows how to present our community's broad appeal and can do that one-on-one or in a large group of people."

Worlow received her Bachelor of Science in Accounting with a Minor in Marketing and a Master of Business Administration from Arkansas State University. She is pleased to keep serving and growing the community she loves.

"There are so many incredible careers available in Jonesboro. They cross the spectrum. Working with local colleges and universities and local employers to tell that story is essential for our community's growth," she said.



Quality of Life

Throwing Some Shade

More soccer and softball under the lights is the plan at Jonesboro Parks and Recreation. Director Danny Kapales says the city plans to light nine more fields, including the six "micro" fields at Joe Mack. Kapales says the budget is \$200,000 for the lights. Kapales expects to have the lights in place by late summer or early fall.

The soccer fields near the Dan Avenue entrance to the park are scheduled to get a new pavilion to create some shade. Kapales says that part of the park doesn't have anywhere to get out of the sun. A new pavilion will provide that. The pavilion will have round corner posts with material shades to help cool off families and players.

There are also plans for a new concession stand with bathrooms in that same area, says Kapales. An architect is still working on the design. Kapales says they hope to start working on the new concession stand and restrooms this fall. He says the city has budgeted \$350,000 for construction.

Old YMCA Set For Remodel

The former YMCA building on Nettleton Avenue is getting a \$1.4M makeover. Danny Kapales, Jonesboro's Parks and Recreation Director, says the project has a May start date with a plan to be finished in 300 days.

Kapales says the major improvements will be a new basketball court and a new turf field on the second floor. Kapales describes the turf field as a 5 versus 5 Futsal surface. Futsal is a soccer-like game that is played indoors. It is described as a faster game that features more scoring by multiple players.

The plan will not increase the size of the building, Kapales added.

Other improvements call for remodels of the locker rooms and showers and improvements to the multi-purpose room.

Kapales says the city has not yet finalized which company will be in charge of the project.



Commercial Development

Call it a place to chill. Cryo 2.0 Recovery and Wellness is opening its first location at The Uptown in the Elite Eyecare Center. A-State grads Cody and Jordan Powell say they are bringing the most advanced technology in cryotherapy to Northeast Arkansas. They plan to be open by summer.



A pay-by-the-pound salad restaurant is coming to Red Wolf Blvd. The Salad Station, a Louisiana-based franchise, is set to open its first Arkansas location in the Metro Center, next to Popeye's. The restaurant also sells soups and sandwich wraps.



Harps is adding a second grocery store in Craighead County. The new Harps will be in Brookland on Highway 49, right beside the new First Community Bank. The plan calls for a 32,000 SF building. No date has been set for the opening of the new store.



Two companies have leased space in the 2400 Building on Highland Drive. Haag Brown says Irby, Inc., a southern-based electrical supply distributor is now occupying 7,000 SF on the 4th floor. At the same time, Diamond State Networks, LLC, a wholesale broadband provider, that unites the fiber-optic networks of electric co-operatives throughout Arkansas, has leased the 2,500 SF fifth floor.

Elite Autos is building a new dealership and showroom on I-555. The luxury auto dealer's new site is located on Brown's Lane Access between the Arkansas Human Services office and Gateway Sight and Sound.



96 more hotel rooms are in the works for Jonesboro. Hospitality Builders of America is building a new Hilton Home2Suites hotel on a two-acre site behind Red Lobster. Sam Patel with Hospitality Builders anticipates construction will begin this spring with a goal of finishing in 14-16 months.



Valley View Schools is expanding again. Nabholz is set to begin construction on a 49,000 SF expansion and renovation of the Jr. High and the Middle School. An additional 7,000 SF of the middle school will be renovated. The \$11.9M project is scheduled for completion next year.

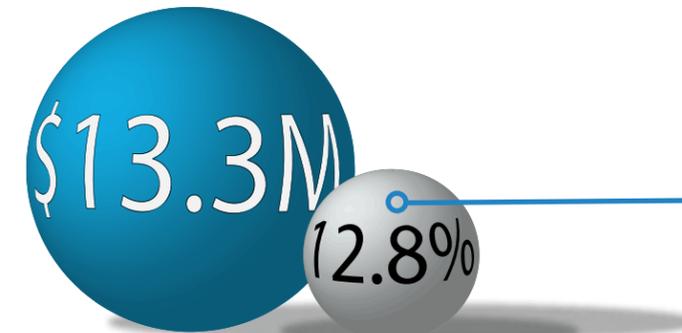


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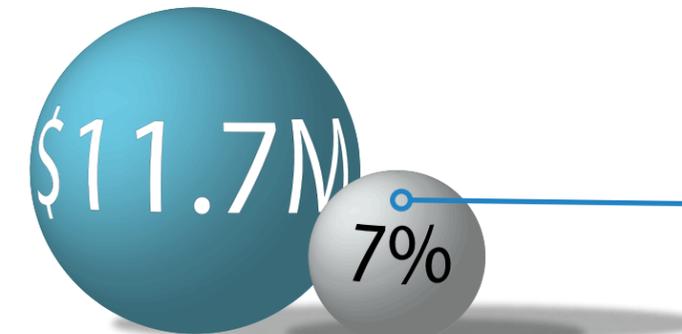
Sales Tax Revenue

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



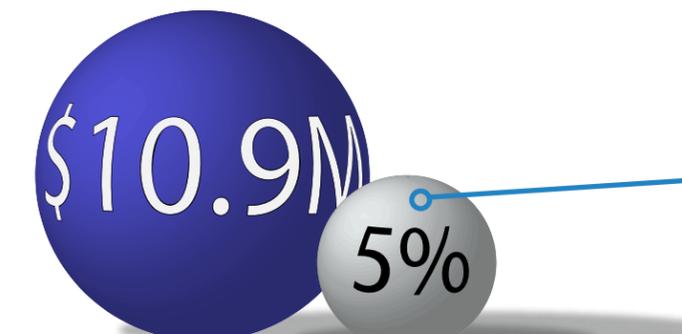
2022 / Jan thru Mar

Increase in collections over 2021. 22% since 2020.



2021 / Jan thru Mar

Increase in collections over 2020.



2020 / Jan thru Mar

Increase in collections over 2019.

Commercial Construction

Year-To-Date 2022-2020



2022 / *jan thru mar*

Most permits since 2017 (90). Includes 9 permits for new construction.



2021 / *jan thru mar*

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



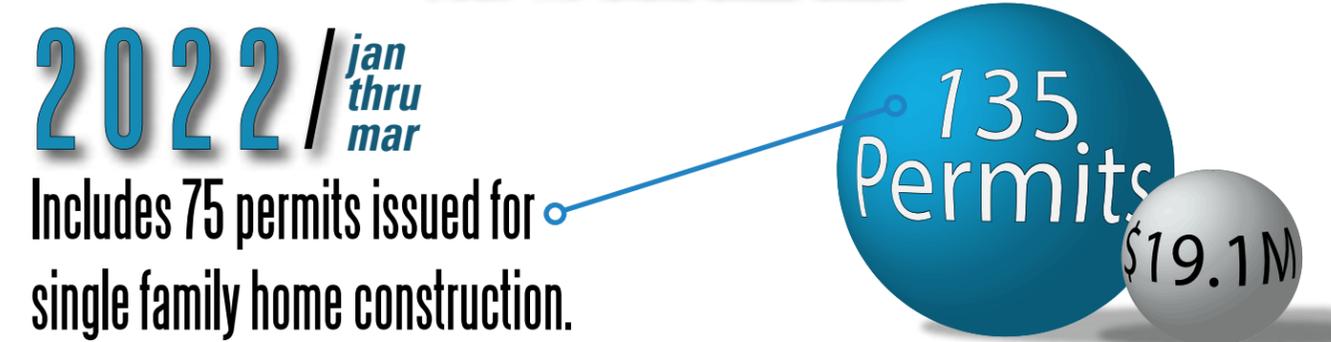
2020 / *jan thru mar*

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

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

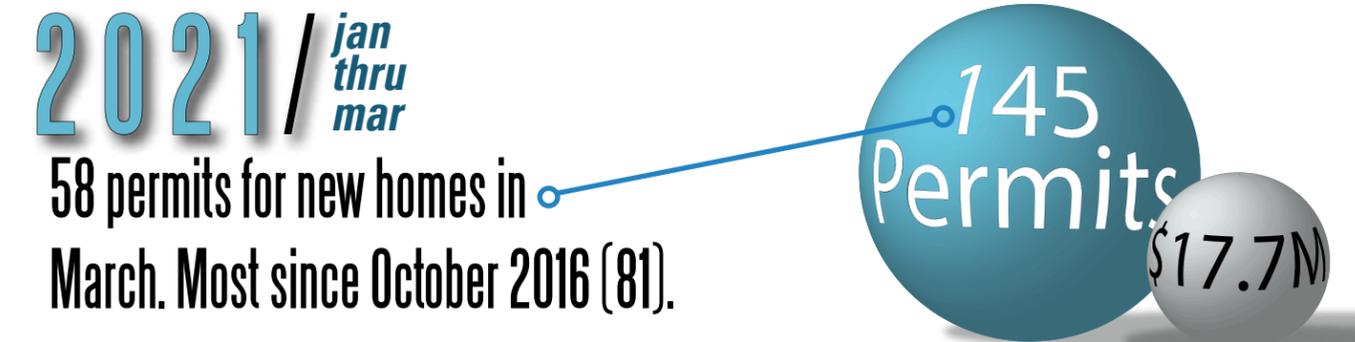
Residential Construction

Year-To-Date 2022-2020



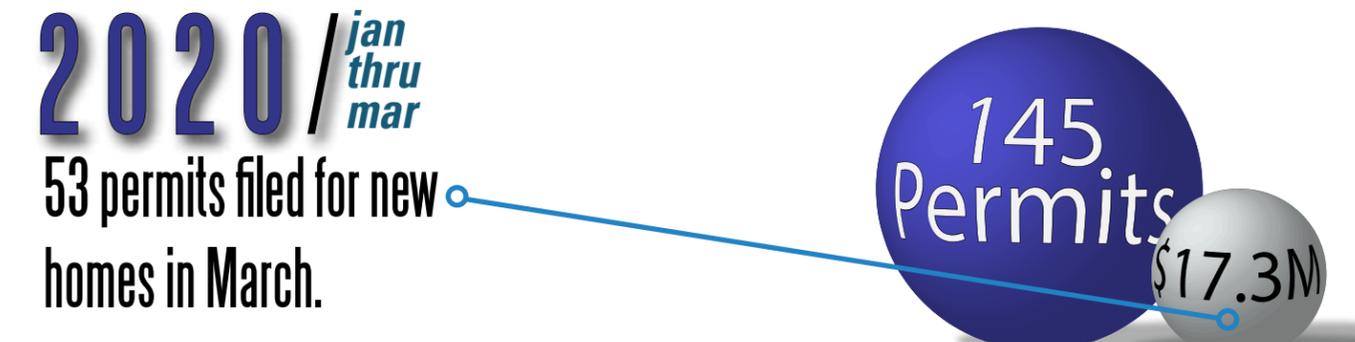
2022 / *jan thru mar*

Includes 75 permits issued for single family home construction.



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.

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

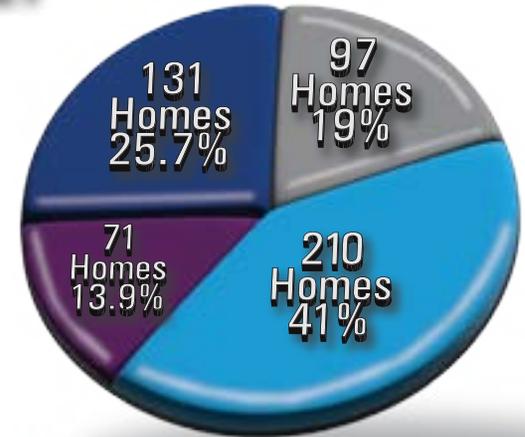
Home Sales*

January & February 2022-2021

509
Homes
Sold

2022 / *jan
thru
feb*

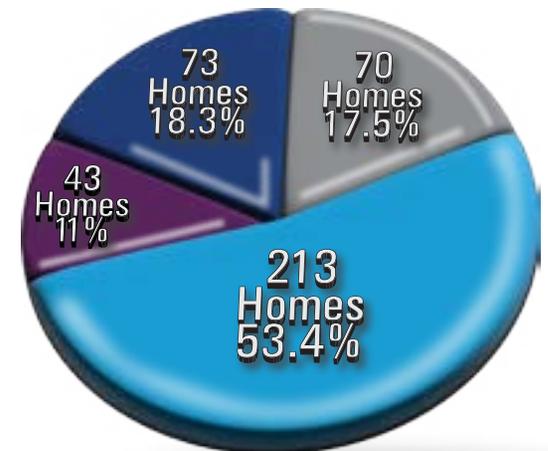
28% increase in total sales
over first two months of 2021.



399
Homes
Sold

2021 / *jan
thru
feb*

19% increase in total sales
over first two months of 2020.



*Home sales for March 2022 weren't available as of posting this report