

JONESBORO ON DISPLAY

THE 50TH ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM



PLUS:

SAFETY & INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT
ALWAYS JONESBORO INITIATIVE
DRAFT DAY



JONESBORO
UNLIMITED

ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT REPORT
1ST QUARTER 2024

SHOWCASING JONESBORO

THE 50TH ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM

Jonesboro played host to the 50th annual Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Embassy Suites Red Wolf Convention Center from February 25-27. As the premier tourism event in Arkansas, the conference celebrated tourism and highlighted its impact as one of the top industries in Arkansas.

The conference brings together tourism leaders from all over the state to network, exchange ideas, and explore new opportunities for growth and development. According to Jonesboro Advertising and Promotion Commission Chairman Jerry Morgan, this was an opportunity for Jonesboro to celebrate all the successes in tourism that are happening in Northeast Arkansas.

The event kicked off with a concert by John Carter Cash, the son of Johnny and June Cash, along with his wife Ana Christine. Arkansas-native film director Jeff Nichols, known for such films as "Mud" and "Take Shelter," gave the opening keynote address. Secretary Shea Lewis updated attendees about the latest tourism news and efforts from the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism. But the main presentation was by Governor Sanders for the luncheon during the Hall of Fame ceremony where she commended Jonesboro and the development of quality of life in Northeast Arkansas.

Local Jonesboro and NEA residents, businesses and community leaders had the opportunity to show conference attendees just how unique this area of the state is and how much the Delta region has to offer. Conference attendees were treated not only to riding trail bikes at Craighead Forest Park, target practice at the Jonesboro Shooting Sports Complex, and to the Taste of Jonesboro, an event for over 500 people where they could experience downtown shopping and dining.

Jonesboro Advertising and Promotion Commission Executive Director Craig Rickert said that tourism is a massive, growing industry in the state.

"The more we can learn from each other and bounce ideas off of each other from town to town to town, helps us all," Rickert said.

This was the fourth time the Arkansas Governor's Conference on Tourism has been held in Jonesboro. Previous years were 1989, 1998 and 2006.



IMPROVING JONESBORO

GRANT AWARDED FOR SAFETY & INDUSTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Jonesboro will be awarded another seven-figure appropriation for safety and industrial infrastructure improvements. The most recent grant award is a \$1 million allotment from the 2024 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill and was championed by U.S. Rep. Rick Crawford to provide \$500,000 in utility routing for a recently purchased addition to the Craighead Technology Park and \$500,000 toward improvements to the Jonesboro Real-Time Crime Center.

“Projects like the Craighead Technology Park are investments in the community and are vital to attracting new businesses and industries to Jonesboro, which bring high-wage jobs to the area,” Crawford said. “Northeast Arkansas has a vibrant workforce and many economic benefits that businesses seek, ensuring that our infrastructure is up to date is a large piece of the equation. While the federal investment is only about 20 percent, I’m proud to be a part of these efforts to bring economic growth to the First District and job opportunities to its residents.”

In 2021, Jonesboro Economic Development Commission and City Water and Light jointly purchased more than 600 acres adjacent to the existing Craighead Technology Park. The half-million-dollar funding stream will start the process of bringing utility infrastructure to the property.

On the public safety side, \$500,000 in funding will go toward improvements in the City’s trendsetting Real-Time Crime Center, which has grown to include more than 700 cameras and critical integration software that allows JPD vital information for solving crimes. It also provides City engineers with visual data to improve traffic conditions and solve repetitive safety issues.

“The Real-Time Crime Center has proven to be a valuable asset for Jonesboro and surrounding communities,” Mayor Copenhagen said. “The regional buy-in has created a larger footprint of information sharing that has proven beneficial in catching wrong-doers — who previously would have been long gone by the time we exhausted conventional investigation tactics.”



ALWAYS JONESBORO

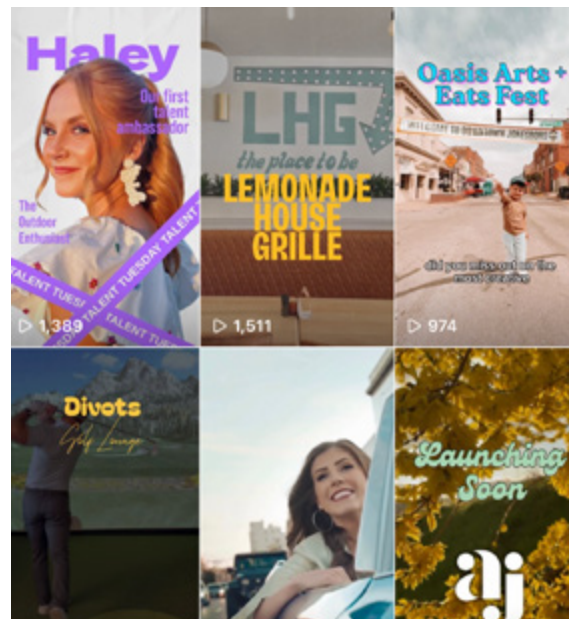
JONESBORO UNLIMITED LAUNCHES QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVE

A new initiative was unveiled by Jonesboro Unlimited to attract and retain workforce talent by showcasing our city and region's quality of life. Known as Always Jonesboro, it will serve as the complete resource for all things living, working, and playing.

"There is nothing like it available," said Bethania Baray-Harrison, Director of Talent Attraction for Jonesboro Unlimited. "This will serve people who are thinking about making the move to Jonesboro or are newly relocated to the area, as well as Human Resources professionals who are out there recruiting talent every single day. But it will also serve the existing residents of Jonesboro to foster a greater sense of community and belonging."

The Always Jonesboro website will be live soon and serve as the main hub for people to learn more about what our city has to offer. Resources such as a cost-of-living calculator, neighborhood and school information, the myjonesborojobs.com job board, and all things leisure are just some of the features. Furthermore, an Instagram account, targeting millennials and Gen Zers in a way they are accustomed to, will drive them to the website.

Quality of life and attracting new industry and talent goes hand in hand. By focusing on all the great aspects of our city and region, Always Jonesboro will serve as an excellent recruiting tool.



DRAFT DAY 2024

MATCHING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS WITH REGIONAL EMPLOYERS

Be Pro Be Proud's Draft Day presented by Hytrol was held at Nettleton High School, March 27-28. It marks the third time the event has been brought to our city to align qualified high school seniors with regional employers. Fifteen schools were in attendance from all over Northeastern Arkansas including Jonesboro.

Through the registration process and implementation of an assessment, seniors and employers are strategically matched based on corresponding interests, talents, and needs. Seniors are guaranteed at least three interviews on Draft Day. Then, if qualified, they are asked for follow-up interviews and offered jobs.

The event is a great way for employers to recruit new talent from around NEA and bring them into the Jonesboro workforce. "I came to Draft Day to learn about other companies and the people here in Jonesboro," said senior Lauren Anderson of Pocahontas. "I want to graduate high school with a steady job and opportunities."

Students also got the chance to visit with businesses, industries, and educational institutions at the Career Expo, and even try their hand at different skilled trades through video simulators.

Overall, Draft Day was a hit with students, many of whom that will soon join the Jonesboro workforce.



EXPANSION UPDATES

HYTROL HOSTS RIBBON CUTTING FOR NEW DISTRIBUTION CENTER

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the new Hytrol Distribution Center (HDC) located at 4000 Moore Road in Jonesboro's E-Commerce Park.

The event featured remarks from esteemed guests including Robert Jones, Hytrol Board Chairman; David Peacock, Hytrol President; and Jonesboro Mayor Harold Copenhaver. Additionally, Tony Sartin, Director of Logistics, provided an overview of the warehouse.

"Quick delivery has always been a top priority for Hytrol," stated Sartin. "We want our customers to be happy with our solutions and services. The added space and centralized location of this distribution center will help us be more organized and efficient in continuing to meet those goals."

The HDC spans 150,000 square feet and is designed to be Hytrol's main hub for distributing products to customers. Pallets allow for items to be racked, labeled and located with pinpoint accuracy. The main goal of the new warehouse is a centralized locale for shipping processes and a streamlined approach to completing orders swiftly. The project was a partnership between Hytrol and Haag Brown Commercial Real Estate and Development. Construction of the facility, which began in 2022, was done by Ramsons Inc.



JONESBORO RECEIVES \$5M FOR NEW AIRPORT TERMINAL

Jonesboro received \$5 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce at the end of February to support construction of a new airport terminal after destruction by the 2020 tornado. The Airport Commission will add to the grant with \$1.3 million in funding, according to Airport Manager George Jackson.

"This Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant will help ensure that the Jonesboro Municipal Airport has the infrastructure needed to increase shipping services, expand regional travel, and create more good paying jobs that will transform the local economy," said U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, who made the funding announcement.

Mayor Harold Copenhaver said this fills a need he has talked about for the past few years with Senators John Boozman and Tom Cotton, and Rep. Rick Crawford. He also thanked the East Arkansas Planning and Development District for its work with the EDA.



HEALTHCARE NEWS

NEA BAPTIST OPENS URGENT CARE PLUS

A ribbon cutting was held March 1 for the grand opening of NEA Baptist Urgent Care PLUS at 3003 Apache Drive. The facility will help alleviate some of the work from the emergency room by giving treatment for more critical non-life-threatening injuries and illnesses. It also gives instant access to the on-site imaging center.



A NEW WING FOR ENCOMPASS HEALTH

Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital cut the ribbon for their new 9,000 SF wing on March 7. The expansion added 16 private rooms, giving them more space to serve patients after previously having been at full capacity.

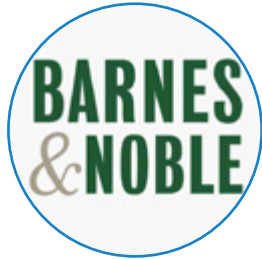


NYITCOM AT A-STATE CELEBRATES HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL 'MATCH'

New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine at Arkansas State University (NYITCOM at A-State) enjoyed a 99% placement rate of students through the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) for residency. More than half of the soon-to-be graduates were placed into programs that will keep them in Arkansas, a targeted-Delta state, or a state contiguous to Arkansas. 65% matched into primary care positions, including 30% in Internal Medicine, 15% in Family Medicine, and 20% who will specialize in Psychiatry, Pediatrics, General Surgery or Obstetrics/Gynecology. This year's Match also saw students land at several nationally recognized programs, including Vanderbilt University, Barnes Jewish Hospital, Cleveland Clinic, and Mt. Sinai Health System.



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT



After nearly 4 years, Barnes & Noble opened a new store in Jonesboro at the Crossroads Shopping Center on Highland Avenue. The popular bookstore is great to have back in our city!



RightFiber by Ritter Communications opened a storefront at 3106 Southwest Drive. The retail location offers customers a dedicated space to discover the RightFiber advantages and find the broadband service and speeds that best fit their needs.



La Torcia Brick Oven Pizza is expected to open this fall at East Highland and Rains.



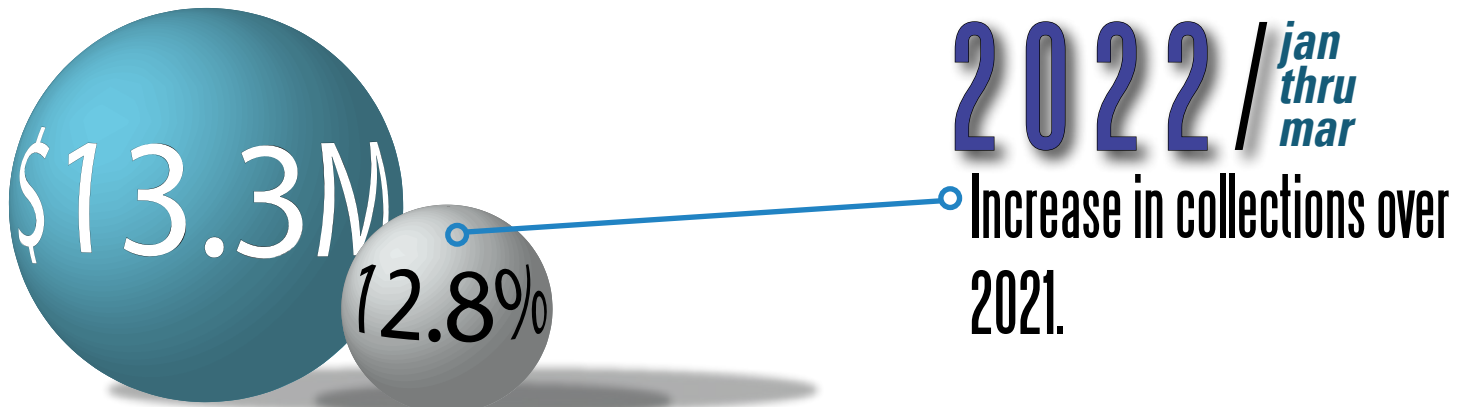
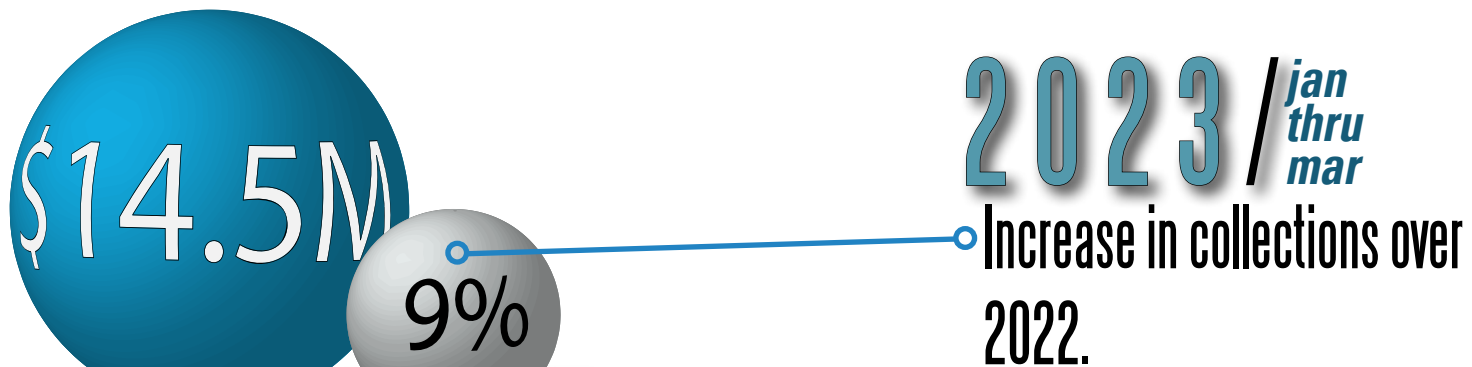
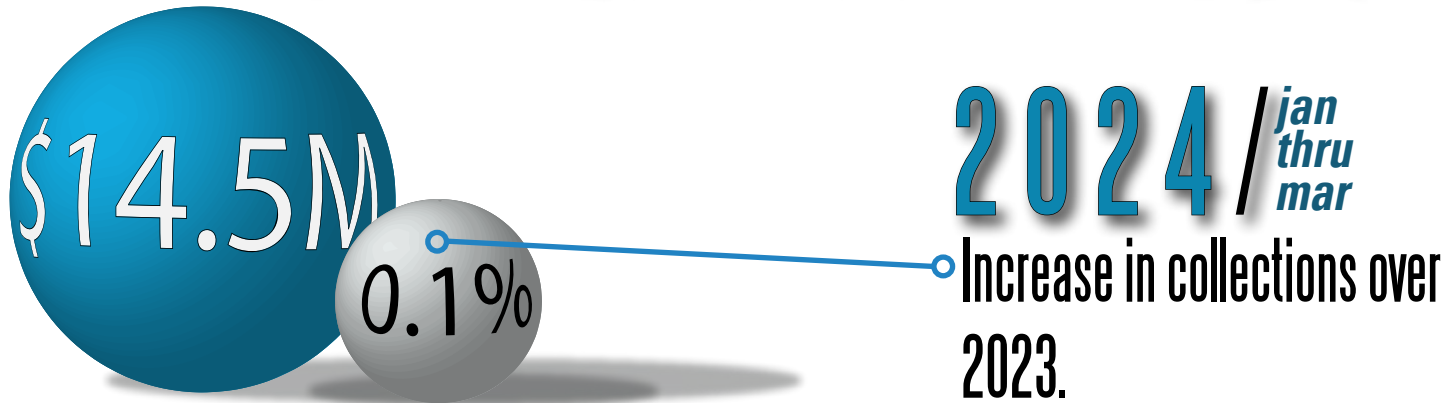
Jersey Mike's, the sub sandwich chain with nearly 3,000 locations nationwide, will be coming to Jonesboro soon. Construction is already underway at the Wolf Creek Shopping Center at Hilltop.



Ice cream lovers rejoice! Cold Stone Creamery is soon bringing their special method of mixing in toppings to the Highlands Shopping Center. It marks the first time in nearly a decade that a national ice cream shop has come to Jonesboro.

SALES & USE TAX REVENUE

YEAR-TO-DATE, CITY AND COUNTY COMBINED (2.0%)



COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

YEAR-TO-DATE 2024-2022



2024 / *jan
thru
mar*

Includes \$5.7M in permits (3) for new construction.



2023 / *jan
thru
mar*

Includes \$18.8M in permits (8) for new construction.



2022 / *jan
thru
mar*

Includes \$41.1M in permits (9) for new construction.

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

RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

YEAR-TO-DATE 2024-2022

2024 / *jan
thru
mar*

Includes 65 permits for new home construction (\$12.4M).

119
Permits

\$16.4M

2023 / *jan
thru
mar*

Includes 62 permits for new home construction (\$11.5M).

113
Permits

\$13.8M

2022 / *jan
thru
mar*

Includes 85 permits for new home construction (\$16.8M).

135
Permits

\$19.1M

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

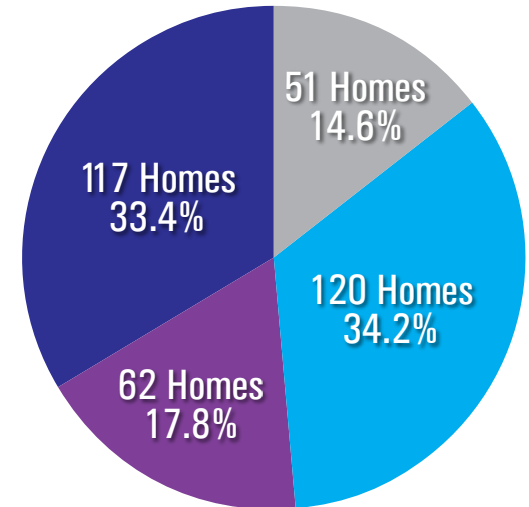
HOME SALES

YEAR-TO-DATE 2024-2023

350
Homes
Sold

2024 / *jan thru mar*

2% increase in total sales over 2023.



\$0-\$100K

\$100-\$200K

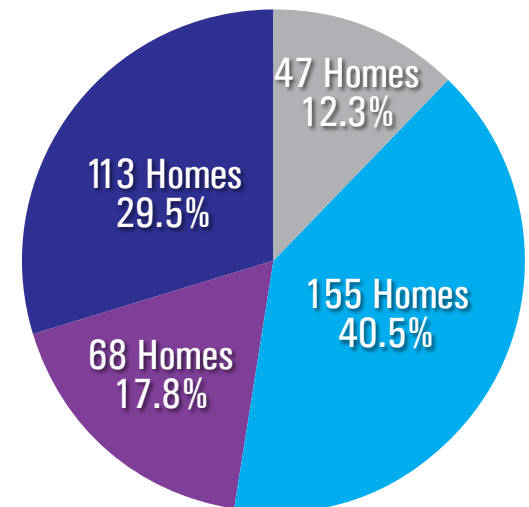
\$200-\$250K

\$250K+

343
Homes
Sold

2023 / *jan thru mar*

30.5% decrease in sales compared to 2022.



Total home sales reflect new construction and existing homes sold in Jonesboro MSA (Craighead and Poinsett Counties)