

# Economic Advancement QUARTERLY REPORT

Jonesboro, Arkansas

**Q3  
2025**



**Airport Terminal Groundbreaking**  
**Jonesboro Unlimited Receives IEDC Award**  
**CREST Center Construction Moves Forward**  
**Economic Data & More!**

  
**JONESBORO**  
UNLIMITED  
[www.jonesborounlimited.com](http://www.jonesborounlimited.com)





## Jonesboro Takes Flight: Airport Terminal Groundbreaking

A groundbreaking was held August 12 for the upcoming Jonesboro Municipal Airport Commercial Terminal Building. The new state-of-the-art facility marks a major milestone in the city's recovery and growth, signaling a new era for the region.

Back in 2020, much of the city's airport infrastructure was destroyed by a tornado — including the 10,000-square-foot commercial terminal. The loss was a significant setback for a vital regional connection point that links Northeast Arkansas residents, businesses, and opportunities to destinations around the country.

"Jonesboro has proven to be a resilient community, rebuilding even stronger," said Jonesboro Mayor Harold Copenhaver. And the new airport terminal is no exception."

The new \$6 million, 13,300-square-foot terminal will feature expanded passenger amenities, food service, and upgraded TSA accommodations, making travel more convenient and welcoming for all. Two Jonesboro firms are providing the design and construction: Cooper Mixon Architects and Olympus Construction, Inc.

"This would not be possible without the tremendous support of political leaders and the Economic Development Administration, who made this project a reality through a grant partnership," Copenhaver added. "We are truly grateful for their commitment to our community's growth."

Officials at the groundbreaking emphasized that the terminal will serve as more than a building — it will be a gateway, a hub of opportunity, and a symbol of momentum for Northeast Arkansas.



*"The future of air travel in Jonesboro starts right here, right now."*

**-Mayor Copenhaver**



## Jonesboro Unlimited Receives 2025 Excellence in Economic Development Bronze Award from the International Economic Development Council

Jonesboro Unlimited received a 2025 Excellence in Economic Development Bronze Award from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) recognizing their Always Jonesboro initiative in the Talent Development and Retention category.

Each year, IEDC honors economic development organizations, government entities, initiatives, and programs that consistently demonstrate excellence in the field. The honorees lead transformational projects that revitalize communities and advance the practice of economic development.

"This award shines a spotlight on Jonesboro Unlimited's commitment to their community and showcases the significant impact of economic development," said Nathan Ohle, IEDC President and CEO. "IEDC is honored to present this award to celebrate both their leadership and innovation in the field."

Launched in spring 2024, the mission of Always Jonesboro is to promote the city as a vibrant place to live, work, and play,

helping attract and retain top talent. The initiative highlights Jonesboro's amenities, opportunities, and lifestyle through a dedicated website, active Facebook and Instagram pages, and involvement from community ambassadors.

"This award is a powerful recognition of the work we're doing to make Jonesboro a place where people want to build their lives and careers," said Bethania Baray-Harrison, JU Director of Talent Attraction. "Always Jonesboro is about creating belonging, and I'm proud to see our community celebrated on the international stage."

The award was formally recognized at the IEDC 2025 Annual Conference in Detroit, Michigan in September.



***"This award is a powerful recognition of the work we're doing to make Jonesboro a place where people want to build their lives and careers."***

**-Bethania Baray-Harrison,  
JU Director of Talent Attraction**

**Learn More About Always Jonesboro:**  
[AlwaysJonesboro.com](https://AlwaysJonesboro.com)





## A-State and NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine Launches New Freshman to Physician Pathway

Arkansas State University and the NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM) at A-State launched the Freshman to Physician Pathway, a new opportunity for Arkansas students to secure early admission to medical school and begin preparing for careers in healthcare from the first day of college.

The initiative is designed to grow the number of physicians serving rural and underserved areas of Arkansas. Since establishing its Jonesboro campus in 2015, NYITCOM has graduated 650 new doctors in six classes — and nearly 70% of those from Arkansas have chosen to stay and practice in the state.

“This is a game-changer for the health of Arkansas,” said Todd Shields, Chancellor of Arkansas State University. “By eliminating traditional barriers and offering early admission assurance, we’re making medical education more accessible for high-achieving students who want to stay and serve right here at home. This is about investing in the next generation of healthcare leaders — and in the well-being of every corner of our state.”

The Freshman to Physician Pathway offers a direct route from undergraduate enrollment at A-State to NYITCOM, provided students meet clearly defined academic and professional standards. Participants pursue a Bachelor of Science in Pre-Professional Studies and may apply for admission to NYITCOM during their third year.

To qualify, students must maintain a 3.5 GPA in science and overall coursework (with a one-time waiver option for a single semester), complete all required pre-med classes, receive a favorable recommendation from A-State’s premedical committee and pass an admissions interview with NYITCOM faculty. Students who meet these criteria will not be required to take the MCAT, significantly reducing the cost and complexity of applying to medical school.

“Our goal is to remove unnecessary hurdles and replace them with strong mentorship, rigorous academics and a clear path forward,” said Dr. Shane Speights, Dean of NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine at Arkansas State. “This pathway isn’t about lowering standards. It’s about removing barriers that shouldn’t be there in the first place.”

Applications for the Freshman to Physician Pathway opened this fall semester for students entering A-State in 2025. A similar program is in development for A-State’s College of Veterinary Medicine, expected to launch in Fall 2026.



**ARKANSAS STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

***We’re proud of the students who have already graduated from NYITCOM and chosen to stay and serve Arkansas,” said Chancellor Shields. “This program ensures even more students from here can build their futures here — and help strengthen the healthcare system in the process.”***

**-Chancellor Todd Shields**

**NEW YORK INSTITUTE  
OF TECHNOLOGY**

College of Osteopathic  
Medicine  
at Arkansas State University

**Learn More About the Pathway:**

[AState.edu/FreshmanToPhysician](https://AState.edu/FreshmanToPhysician)

## ASU System Trustees Advance First Phase of CREST Center to Boost Workforce Training

Arkansas State University is moving forward with the first phase of its Career Readiness Education & Skills Training (CREST) Center, a major workforce-development initiative designed to strengthen the talent pipeline for key industries across Northeast Arkansas. The ASU System Board of Trustees approved the \$10.5 million, 20,000-square-foot initial phase in September.

Designed as a 70,000-square-foot facility built over three phases, the CREST Center aims to meet the fast-growing demand for skilled workers in advanced automated manufacturing, steel production, and food processing; three sectors that anchor the region's economy. The project received a major boost through a \$7.5 million grant from the Arkansas Department of Commerce's Higher Industry Readiness

through Educational Development (HIRED) program.

A collaborative effort, the center is being developed in partnership with ASU-Newport and Arkansas Northeastern College. Together, the institutions will deliver job-ready training, industry-recognized credentials, and hands-on learning environments.

A-State Chancellor Todd Shields and Dr. Robin Myers, the project lead and former interim ASU System president, noted that programming is already under way with facility construction being the next step. They presented the latest updates during the ASU System Board of Trustees regular meeting on September 12, joined by Craighead County Judge Marvin Day and Jonesboro Unlimited President and CEO Mark Young.

"This investment marks the greatest opportunity we've had in workforce development in my entire career," said Young. "It makes a positive impact on future workers and changes lives for the better."

Judge Day emphasized the collaborative nature of the project: "...a real team effort. A lot of people were willing to break down silos and bring people to the table. At the core, they want this community to be a better place to live. Education is key to that."

With construction on the way and programming in progress, the CREST Center is poised to expand career pathways, support regional employers, and help shape the future workforce of Northeast Arkansas.



Career  
Readiness  
Education &  
Skills Training



**Learn More About CREST:**

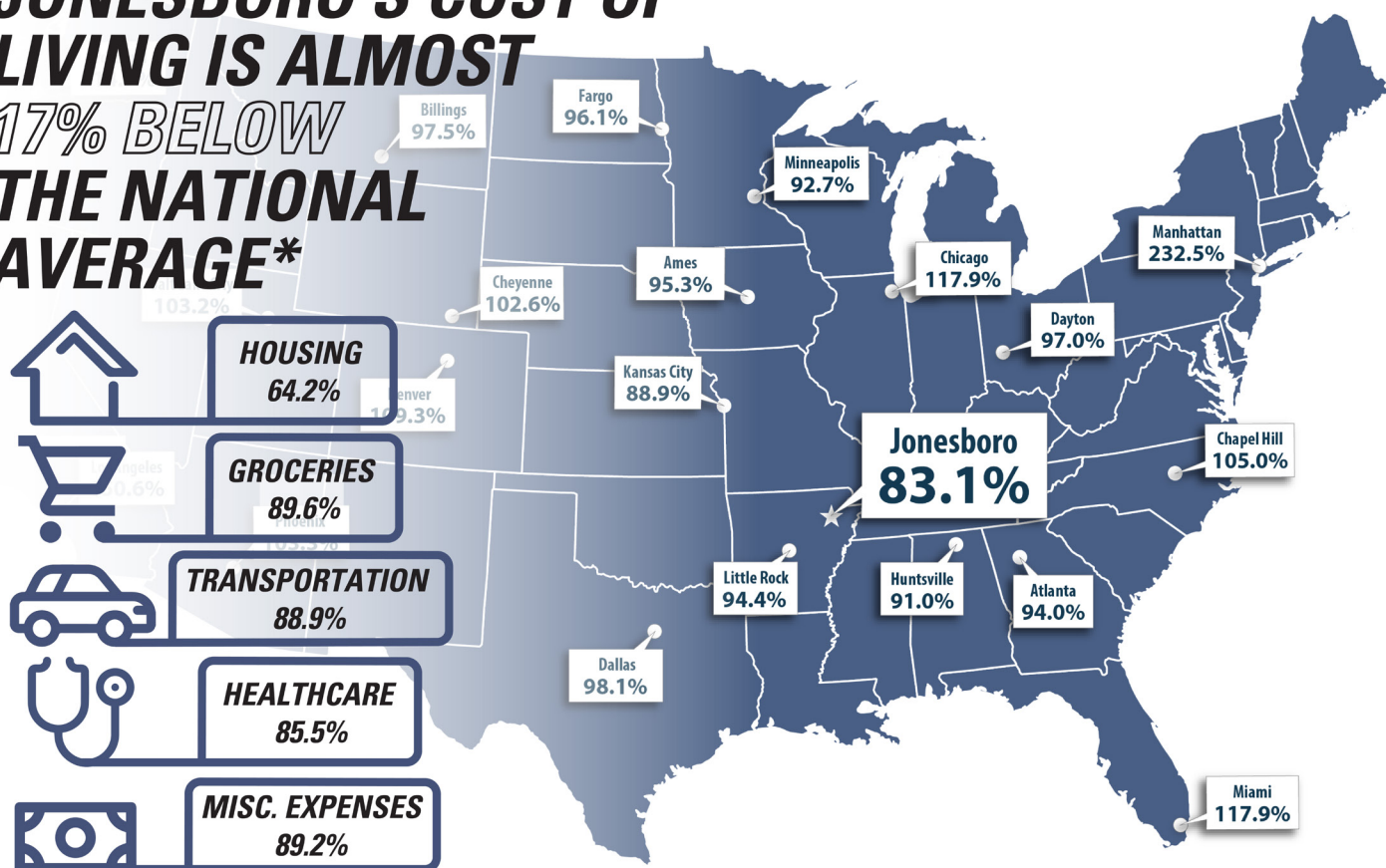
[CrestNEA.com](https://CrestNEA.com)

# COST OF LIVING

QUARTER 3 2025

Source: Cost of Living Index, Council for Community and Economic Research, Quarter 3 Report 2025

**JONESBORO'S COST OF LIVING IS ALMOST 17% BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE\***



Utilize the Cost of Living Calculator:

[JonesboroUnlimited.com/Cost-of-Living](https://JonesboroUnlimited.com/Cost-of-Living)

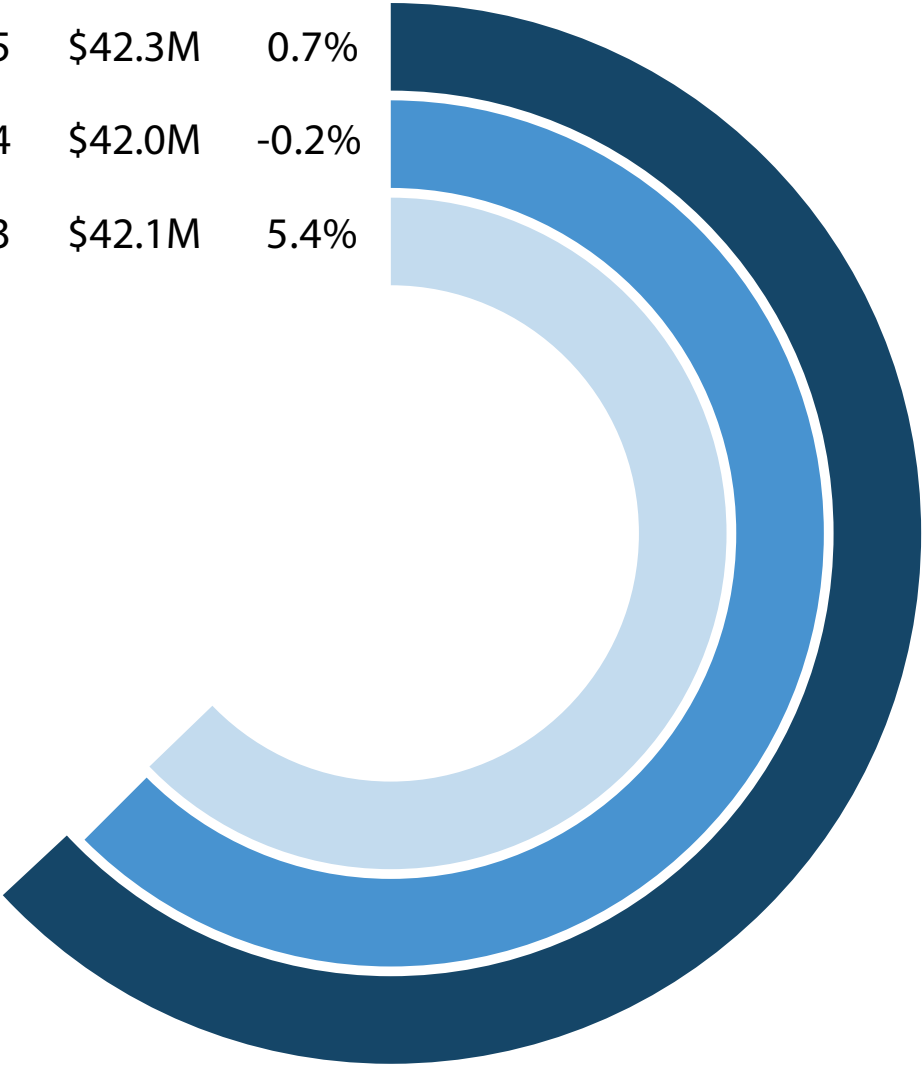
# SALES & USE TAX REVENUE

YTD, JANUARY - SEPTEMBER, 2025 - 2023, CITY & COUNTY COMBINED (2.0%)

Source: Jonesboro & Craighead County, AR Sales & Use Tax Collection Reports

## COLLECTIONS

YR	AMT	% INCR
2025	\$42.3M	0.7%
2024	\$42.0M	-0.2%
2023	\$42.1M	5.4%



## 2025 QUARTERLY COLLECTIONS (ACTUALS)

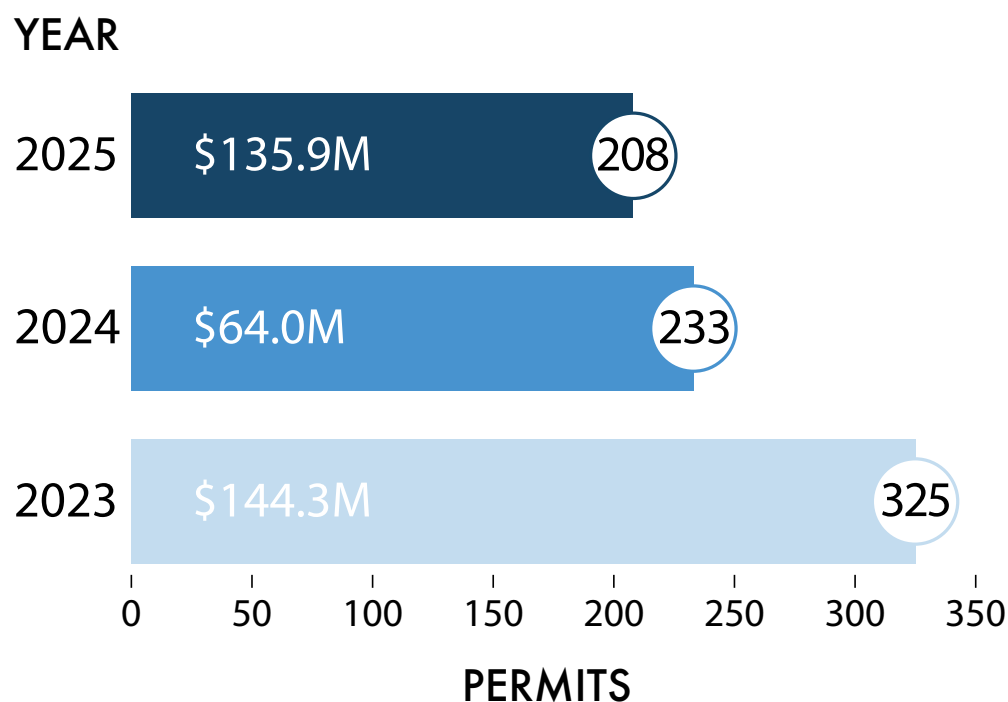
Q1 - \$14,235,500.58      Q2 - \$13,847,796.87  
Q3 - \$14,221,159.79

# COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

YTD, JANUARY - SEPTEMBER, 2025 - 2023

*Source: City of Jonesboro Inspection Department Monthly Permit Reports.  
Totals only include new building construction, apartments, additions, alterations, and signs.*

## PERMIT & PROJECT COST TOTALS



## NEW BUILDING CONSTRUCTION TOTALS

2025 - 16 Permits | \$96.8M Combined Value

2024 - 15 Permits | \$21.8M Combined Value

2023 - 36 Permits | \$69.1M Combined Value



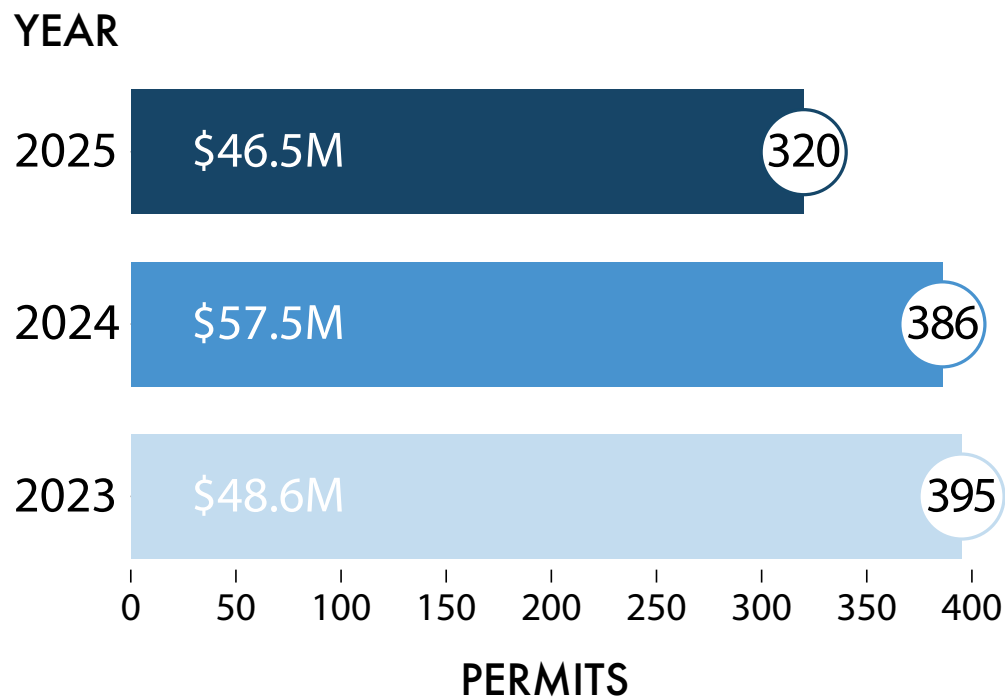
# RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

YTD, JANUARY - SEPTEMBER, 2025 - 2023

*Source: City of Jonesboro Inspection Department Monthly Permit Reports.*

*Totals include new home construction, additions, alterations, duplexes, storage, storm shelters, and swimming pools.*

## PERMIT & PROJECT COST TOTALS



## NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION TOTALS

2025 - 175 Permits | \$37.4M Combined Value

2024 - 226 Permits | \$48.1M Combined Value

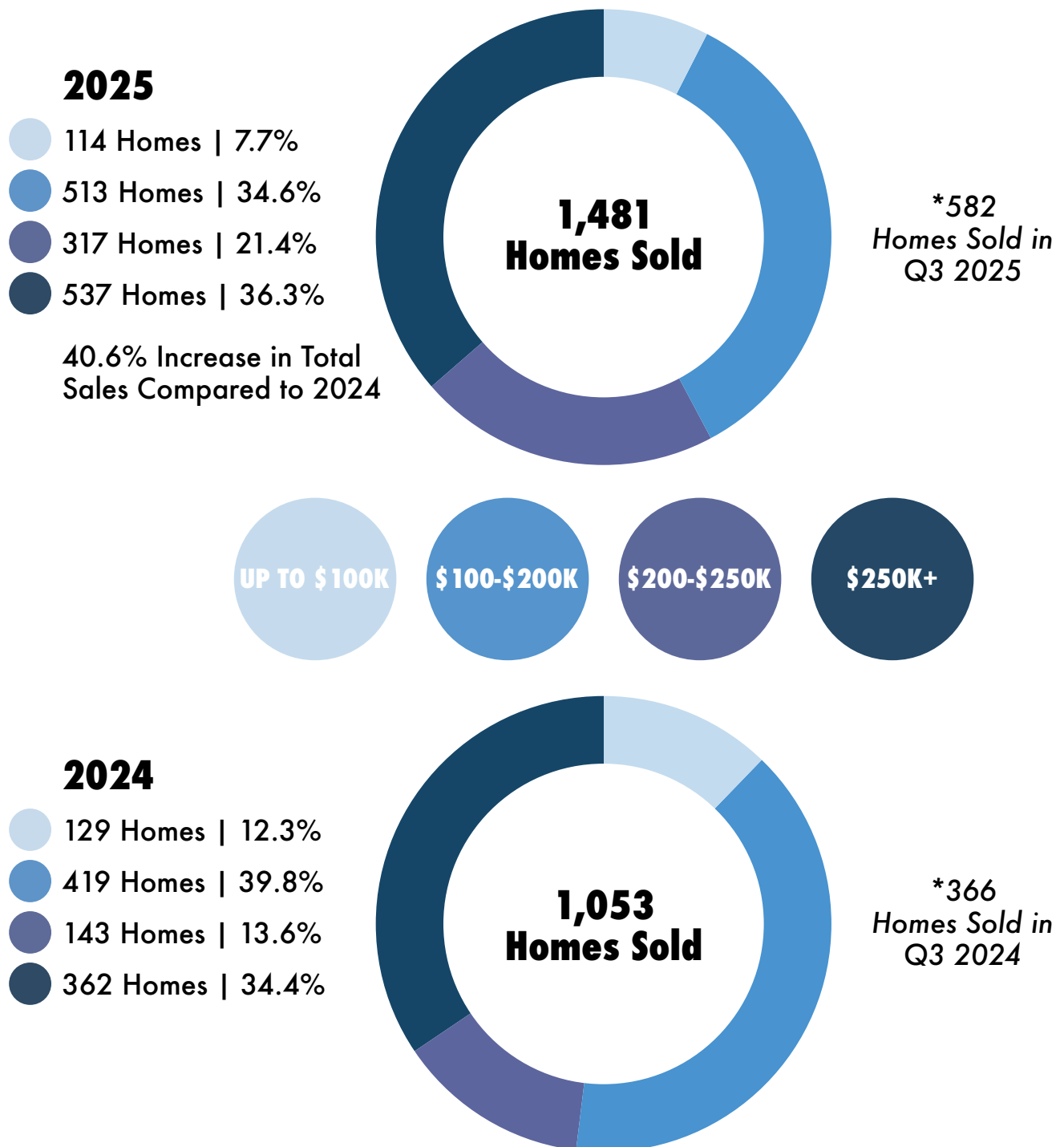
2023 - 193 Permits | \$37.6M Combined Value

# HOME SALES

YTD, JANUARY - SEPTEMBER, 2025 - 2024

Source: NEA Board of Realtors Home Sales Reports.

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





**JONESBORO**  
**U N L I M I T E D**

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